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RHYTHMICAL AND THEMATIC STRUCTURES IN THE CROATIAN CHURCH SLAVIC *LIFE OF SAINT WENCESLAUS*

The first Slavic version of the mediaeval Life of St Wenceslaus (FSL) offers myriad opportunities for scholarly research on a number of levels, rhetorical, stylistic and thematic. The current article seeks to coordinate an understanding of how the formal rhythmical structures of the *vita* enhance the work's thematic material. In this regard it is shown that the FSL is composed in rhythmically structured prose as described in R. Picchio's theory of the isocolic principle and that the rhythmical patterns of the texts play a significant role in both enhancing the oral performance aspects of the work and, in turn, in highlighting the work's themes and messages. Including both the exposition of Wenceslaus as a good and saintly prince and martyr, and the implied exhortation to the listeners to follow the example of Christian behaviour, these theologically oriented and biblically inspired leitmotifs are skilfully applied to the events of Wenceslaus' pious life. From the rhetorical and compositional point of view it is shown that the interplay of isocolic rhythms with their contrasting patterns enhances the presentation of the themes through artistic juxtapositions and contrasts, parallels, disjunctions, and similar rhetorical devices. It is concluded that contrary to some assessments of the FSL as a somewhat 'primitive' composition, the *Life* is an artistic complex of Christian themes and motifs, artfully presented.

Key words: Croatian Church Slavic Life of Wenceslaus, Mediaeval Slavic Rhetorics, Isocolic Principle, Oral Textual Performance, Biblical Thematic Clues

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The First Slavic Life of Duke Wenceslaus

The earliest mediaeval Slavic *vitae* offer numerous scholarly challenges, ranging from broad linguistic questions to historical anomalies, to theologically

debatable issues. Within this range of topics, the literary critic might fruitfully consider any number of aspects of the text, also of great range. In the following pages I have concentrated on the problem of how the textual material, presented in written form on the page, is related to any 'oral performance' (reading aloud) of that text and how both the text and the performance taken together might present a message or messages to the reader and listener. Our target work is the so-called *First Slavic Life* (acr. FSL) of Wenceslaus I (ob. 929), who ruled as Duke of Bohemia from 920 to 929. As one of the earliest works of native Slavic literature, the FSL offers material that can and should be approached from a number of critical points of view. Besides historical data, the work presents insights into the mediaeval Slavic attitudes to history and the millennial year 1000, and attitudes to the changes of dynasty and culture in tenth-century Bohemia, as well as information on the processes of canonization in the mediaeval church. Perhaps most importantly the work's seemingly straightforward narrative belies a sophisticated presentation of the theological basis for Wenceslaus' canonization in a complex of biblical citations and allusions, narrative events and direct quotations, that are often rhythmically marked for emphasis and rhetorical effect.

Among the many questions that arise concerning the oral and aural nature of mediaeval Slavic works in relation to their forms and functions, two stand out. First, were these texts read aloud and second, how was any oral performance tied, if at all, to meaning in these texts.¹ In this paper I approach the two questions in tandem. As for the latter question, while acknowledging that 'meaning' can be a contentious term and that many approaches to an understanding of the term in the realms of literary criticism, historical analysis, linguistics, philosophy, and the like are possible, for practical purposes I have assumed a broad sense of the word: that 'meaning' refers to the conveyance of a message through the signification of words composed in various ways. In this article I approach the issue from a thematic viewpoint, based on various theoretical propositions concerning the juncture of formal structures and meaning that have been offered in recent decades, especially those of a biblical nature.

¹ The relationship of themes to the rhythmical structures is discussed below at 4.0 *ff.* For basic details on the formal structures of biblical referential 'clues' in mediaeval Slavdom see PICCHIO 1977.

1.2. The oral performance of medieval texts

On the question of oral presentation, studies conducted over the past few decades on the oral-aural nature of mediaeval Slavic texts and the formal structures of rhythmically arranged prose texts, and especially those studies that have sought to define the details of the rhythmical prose guidelines known as the ‘isocolic principle’, are of immense importance in the continuing attempt to understand the formal nature of the oral performance aspects of mediaeval Slavic writings. As we shall see, the graphic markings that help indicate the rhythmical isocolic structures found in manuscripts of the Croatian Glagolitic corpus are powerful indicators that the oral performance of these texts rely to a certain extent on an understanding of their regular rhythmical patterns and that these patterns often enhance the presentation of the work’s themes. Before proceeding with a detailed description of these graphical markers and their relationship to the oral nature of the Glagolitic texts it is worth considering in more general terms the connexions between ‘meaning’ and oral presentation.

In an article on the relationship of philology to the discourse of the mediaeval text, Suzanne Fleischman asks if any given text might have been the result of either recording oral readings or the result of a conscious effort to produce a document that was to be read aloud (FLEISCHMAN 1990: 20–21). The question is especially applicable in our case since many mediaeval texts were clearly intended to be read aloud; indeed, orality was an essential feature of the Glagolites’ cultural understanding of the theological truths they saw embodied in the texts that they were transmitting to their listeners.² In fact, the assumption that written works were guided primarily by a principle of ‘silent reading’ is in itself anachronistic. As Marija-Ana Dürriegl has affirmed in relation to the mediaeval Croatian conception of oral reading (*čtenie*):

² It can be argued that there was, in fact, a certain ‘official orality’ to the liturgical texts of the Mass and Divine Office in both their sung and recited variants. Whether these liturgies were celebrated with sung parts or recited without music in abridged forms, the rubrics required that the celebrant pronounce certain parts of the Mass and Office aloud, at either full voice or in a whisper. But while it is certain that the texts of the Mass, the Office and other liturgical services, and that a text like St Benedict’s *Regula* were intended for oral performance, it is perhaps less evident that other texts, both liturgical and non-liturgical, also had their oral performance aspects. Given the essential orality of these most important texts, it is not surprising to find that other texts like inscriptions, marginal notes found in the liturgical books, and the like, often reflect isocolic structures and may rightly be considered examples of the oral culture of the mediaeval Slavic literary heritage.

“Čtenie seems to have two meanings: it can denote a composition which is supposed to be read, or the act of reading – which could be silent, or, more probably – communal reading to a larger audience, or even performance in a stronger sense of the word (...) Linguistic analyses of Croatian Glagolitic texts have shown that orality played a role in the choice of linguistic features. Texts had to be understood and accessible – they were made highly accessible by or through translation, and also by ‘writing down’ and public reading/performance. It can be generally stated that Croatian Glagolitic literary production was to a high degree intended for auditory, aural reception, which is clearly reflected in stylistic and other linguistic traits.” (DÜRRIGL 2014: 49)

Although Dürrigl’s conclusions refer mainly to works titled *čtenie*, the obvious possibility that any written text might be presented publicly likely guided the mediaeval author’s hand. This ‘oral discipline’ would certainly have influenced the composition on many levels, including choice of language, language level, dialect, style and rhetorical features. In particular, if the content – *scilicet* the topic or theme of a given piece of whatever length or provenance – assumed that the work was for an audience beyond those who might need the text for relatively narrow purposes (for example, as a written or legal record of a financial transaction), then the oral nature of the text could easily and logically have taken precedence. In such circumstances the author would assuredly conform his style to the prevailing norms of orality.³

2. RHYTHMICAL AND THEMATIC STRUCTURES

2.1. The ‘isocolic principle’ in medieval Slavic prose

Given this understanding of the oral orientation of large segments of the Church Slavic literary corpus, it is not surprising to find that the various ‘lives’ produced in both *Slavia Orthodoxa* and *Slavia Romana* are composed in accordance with the isocolic principle mentioned above and discussed more in detail below.⁴ Within this mediaeval Slavic literary tradition falls the tenth-

³ I hope to publish soon an extended study showing that the oral discipline so obvious in the liturgical texts is carried over to non-liturgical texts such as, among others, certain inscriptions (cf. The *Baška Tablet*), and the descriptions of historically momentous events recorded on the pages of the Missals and Breviaries.

⁴ Thus, works such as the eastern *Life of Aleksandr Nevsky* (CRNKOVIĆ 1985), the *Discourse on Dmitry Donskoy* (ZIOLKOWSKI 1978) and the corpus of *žitija* dedicated to the mediaeval south Slavic princes (PICCHIO 1973) present convincing evidence of compositional

-century *vita* of Duke Wenceslaus, variously known as the *First Slavic Life* (FSL) or *Legend*. Indeed, our investigations have shown that the prosodic structures of the extant versions of the early FSL reveal a high reliance on isocolically rhythmical regularity, thus revealing an assumption of oral presentation of the texts. Moreover, the graphical and graphic features of the manuscripts enhance this conclusion, pointing to the phraseological and attendant rhythmical make-up of the texts.

The existence of the rhythmical isocolon as a prominent feature of mediaeval Slavic prose is well established. As a prosodic structure the isocolon pervades the mediaeval Slavic prose corpus in both *Slavia Orthodoxa*, i.e. in lands stretching from south-eastern Europe to Muscovy, and *Slavia Romana*, from the Croatian lands to Bohemia and the Polish territories. When, however, the late Slavist Riccardo Picchio first suggested that the persistent rhythmical structures of mediaeval Slavic literatures were based on an isocolic arrangement of the prose phrasing, the Slavic philological world was alternately sceptical and enthusiastic. In the ensuing four decades issues surrounding the nature and use of the Slavic isocolon have been discussed with some thoroughness, although studies that concentrate on the isocolic structure of individual works are still scarce. The general consensus is that the isocolic principle that Picchio suggested governed large portions of mediaeval Slavic writings was indeed geographically and chronologically persistent from the ninth century into the early modern period in the lands of *Slavia Orthodoxa* and the transitional lands between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic patrimonies.⁵

These publications notwithstanding, the number of scholars engaged in researching the rhythmical features of mediaeval Slavic prose is minimal. Whether this is due to the perceived ‘obscurity’ of the field – current scholarly research emphasises the more philosophical aspects of literary production – or to a lack of scholarly preparation in a challenging field, the dearth of studies has had a bearing on the perception of the mediaeval Slavic isocolon as either a fanciful reconstruction of a non-existent literary form, or as an unexplored feature of a sophisticated application of such a form. Without meaning to say that the use of the isocolon was exclusive in mediaeval Slavic literature or that it reflects a slavish application of rhythmical prose patterns in all areas, all works, and all types of Slavic mediaeval literary production, I would affirm

techniques consistent with both rhythmically isocolic constructions and recent theories of the mediaeval reliance on oral presentation as a motivating force of literary composition.

⁵ The list of works that study the mediaeval Slavic isocolon has grown over the years. For a thorough history of the discussions surrounding this theory see VALIAVITCHARSKA 2013.

that the isocolon – in its myriad variations – can be seen as a significant and even defining feature of mediaeval Slavic literary forms (*figurae verborum*), used in conjunction with a variety of *figurae* of form that can and often do contribute to the *sententia* (sense) and meaning of discrete passages. In this regard, it is also necessary to give some consideration to the nature of these rhythmically isocolic forms and their relationship to the notion of reading aloud in mediaeval Slavdom. Central to our understanding of form and meaning is the idea that the relationship of the formal, oral and aural oriented structures to the text represents a case of the rhetorical structure following the oral essence so that the rhythmical forms, their oral performance, and their meaning are interrelated in such a way that the text's meaning may be carried – at least in part – by the formal structures themselves.⁶

These general considerations of the status of research into the rhythmical isocolon and its frequent appearance in the mediaeval Slavic literary world are brief here by necessity. Before proceeding with a presentation of any general rules (the term loosely applied) that might be collated from the mediaeval Slavic textual corpus, it is worthwhile to review briefly the data base of the types of isocolic forms that are attested and, more broadly, of how these isocola are presented and dispersed in the mediaeval Slavic works under study. Picchio first described the outlines of an isocolic principle that guided much of the compositional practice in medieval Slavic literature:

“This consists in organizing the exposition, by forming series – or alternant series – of sentences with equal number of stresses. Each of these series seeks to correspond to a logical or stylistic unit and, notwithstanding its rhetorical function which in many cases falls within the properties of the *ornatus*, helps the reader to grasp a general meaning, stretching beyond a sentence or set of sentences. These are accentual units, and the number of syllables does not affect their consistence. In addition to the regular distribution of the stresses, various signals can mark the beginning or end of each unit, and also their stylistic and/or logical interdependence (...) The isocolic constructions consist of accentual units with two, three, four or five stresses, or resulting from a combination of these measure, up to a maximum of six or seven stresses per unit.” (PICCHIO 1973.b: 302–304)

Indeed, these rhythmically and syntactically parallel structures may emphasize words, phrases, and even entire passages by the artful juxtaposition

⁶ It is essential here to note that the mediaeval notion of learning and understanding was crucial to their Christian philosophy of social responsibility and leadership. On this, see again PICCHIO 1977 and CRNKOVIĆ 1985: 77–88.

(or disjunction) of similar and dissimilar units and cola. Thus an author might underscore the semantic function of a word, words, phrases, or even entire passages in the work as a whole by using the (rhythmical) rhetorical tools available to him. Isocolic sequences, limited of course by the fitness of each isocolic unit to become part of any given isocolic construction, may help the 'reader-performer' arrange his use of pauses in the text and the raising and lowering of his voice according to the logical texture of their compositions (CRNKOVIĆ 2006: 35).⁷

Unfortunately, visual clues like punctuating markers in mediaeval Slavic texts in neither the Orthodox nor Roman Slavic traditions do not consistently provide a detailed 'roadmap' for the reader to determine a given text's isocolic patterns. However, the relevance of such markings as accents, full stops (marked by the *punctum*), *capitula*, and the like for determining isocolic patterns may be more or less strong, since they are not necessarily meant to indicate the isocolicity of the text alone, serving more than one purpose, one of which can be reflecting the texts rhythmical structures. Indeed, as we shall see, the marking for isocolicity as I have found them in the Croatian Church Slavic (CCS) FSL manuscripts, and especially of the *punctum* and the blank space, can be quite helpful indicators that the oral performance of these texts relied on an understanding of their isocolic patterns.⁸

2.2 Isocolic structures in the *Life of St Wenceslaus*

With these preliminary remarks in mind let us first proceed with a discussion of the CCS texts of the FSL, which provide valuable visual graphic material for our research, before showing how these rhythmical features often coordinate with the presentation of the work's themes. The Church Slavic versions of the FSL have come down to us in a number of variants, preserved in both the Glagolitic and Eastern Slavic literary *corpora*, and offer a splendid opportunity to compare and contrast how the isocolic structures find their expression in differing geographical, ecclesiastical, and literary-cultural traditions.

The primary sources for the current paper are found in the printed, photographic and digital reproductions of the manuscripts of the FSL. There

⁷ For a thorough discussion of Picchio's development and subsequent revisions of his isocolic principle see GARZONIO 2012 and VALIAVITCHARSKA 2013.

⁸ The research that I have conducted for an extended discussion of the widespread use of isocolic rhythms in the Glagolitic tradition bears out many of the conclusions I make here. I hope to publish these findings in the near future.

are five extant Glagolitic manuscripts that contain full or partial versions of the FSL.⁹ Complete versions are found in: Vat₆ (176a–177b), the oldest extant copy of the FSL, Ber₁ (133d–136b) and N₁ (424b–425d). Two fragments exist in Mos (211bc) which contains only the beginning of the FSL and in N₂ (487d) containing only the first five sentences of the FSL. In addition, there are Eastern Slavic ('Russian') versions of the FSL, of which the most oft-cited is the so-called Vostokov (Vos) or Moscow variant (MAREŠ 1979: 104, 110), an eastern Cyrillic Slavic version first classified by A. H. Vostokov in 1865.¹⁰ I have also had recourse to the apparatus compiled by J. Vajs and others. Our approach to 'scanning' the rhythmical textual forms has been straightforward, following the guidelines used in previous studies of the isocolic principle. In addition, I have attempted to coordinate the use of these isocolic structures as tools for enhancing the work's themes, relying on established studies of the FSL's meaning and messages.

Given that Slavic mediaeval graphical practices are crucial for discerning the isocolic phrasing, I have relied on the readily available reproductions of these manuscripts as the basis for my isocolic scansions, since they offer the clearest visual markers for the cola, that is, for the phrasing and accentual patterns of the text. Moreover, these manuscript texts represent sufficient diversity for highlighting how variations in the basic text often do not destroy the overall rhythmicality of the larger textual body even though they might be 'scanned' in various ways.

Each of these variants offers helpful palaeographic, graphic and textual material for our analysis. The texts available contain a large amount of common textual material, which has allowed us to examine the various treatments of the isocolic structures in some detail, and to discern both the common and divergent rhythmical figures in common passages. Given that mediaeval Slavic literary production operated within an open tradition that allowed for the incorporation or revision of previously existing texts into any given work, these variations are not unanticipated. Thus, even though the textual material of 'eastern' versions of the FSL (e.g. Vos), represents a text removed some distance from the CCS versions, rhythmical isocolic structures remain as one of the *vita*'s underlying compositional features.

⁹ See the bibliography for details on the patrimonies and current locations of these primary sources, and their availability in photographic or digital form.

¹⁰ Since the current paper is concerned primarily with the Glagolitic versions of the text, I have not had recourse to Cyrillic versions other than Vos. Comparisons with the eastern menology versions of the FSL await another study (see MAREŠ 1979: 116–23).

A few examples from the texts of the FSL will illustrate the isocolic structures. Determining overall isocolic patterns is aided, of course, by comparing manuscripts in the tradition, especially those that have a fair amount of text in common. In form, the very opening lines of all the manuscripts I have looked at are clearly composed of regular isocolic series. As for meaning, the rather enigmatic content of this introductory passage places Wenceslaus' life in the larger context of Christian history, most notably in what the author considers to be its final stages, or the 'end times', so pondered and feared in the tenth century as the first millennium approached its completion.¹¹ The introduction of an Apocalyptic vision here is not accidental and helps underscore two thematic trails in the FSL – Wenceslaus' martyrdom and his brother Boleslav's merciful conversion – which I shall discuss in detail below. The oldest manuscript copy (Vat₆) reads:

	Vat ₆ 176b
5	Se nne bst pŕčskoe slvo
4	eže isamъgъ nšъ
3	išhъ rče·
3	budety v'poslédne dni
4	eže mnimъ nne suče·
5 = 3	vstanety braty nabrata
+2	snъ naosa
4	ivrazi čku domači ego·
4	čcibo sebê buduty nemili·
4	ivzdasty imъ gъ podělomъ ihъ. ¹²

The dominant stress (i.e. number of stresses in each isocolic phrase) in the first lines alternates from three to five and the logical syntactical breaks into phrases occur in places that produce a rhythmical regularization based on three, four or five stresses in each given phrase. Aside from the logical

¹¹ An intriguing study by Richard Erdoes discusses the general sense of an approaching Christian apocalypse that pervaded much of Europe at the end of the tenth century (ERDOES 1998).

¹² I have used what has become a standard method of presenting the isocolic series, i.e. the numbers to the left of the text indicate the number of stresses in the phrase. On the other hand, I have chosen not to separate stressed units with the virgule, so the graphic features of the Glagolitic texts may be more easily seen. As will be increasingly clear from our discussion below, the graphical features of the Glagolitic manuscripts – i.e. the “look on the page” – often helps the reader determine the isocolic patterns. I have thus opted to retain the word spacing as it occurs in the original manuscripts. See especially ŽAGAR 2000.

phraseology of the text, the rhythmical divisions of the text are marked in various ways, as is customary in texts composed according to the isocolic principle. These markings include lexical and phonological repetitions and parallels, evidenced here in both the initial and ending stress units in the second and fourth lines (*eže – eže*) and in the first stress units at lines 8 and 10 (*ivrazi – ivzdastb*). In the latter, the repetitions of the phonemes *i*, *v*, *z* and *a* help demarcate the opening of a new isocolic line. Likewise, the homoeoteuton and grammatical parallel (preposition + noun accusative) that ends the sixth and seventh lines (the semicolonic line at *vstanetb bratb na brata // sinb na oca*) points to the rhythmical structural divisions.

Moreover, and rather intuitively, graphic indicators also contribute to our understanding of the isocolic structures. As was the graphical practice in the CCS and other traditions, the manuscript aerates the text, that is, it spaces the words or word units based primarily on whether that word or unit has a stressed syllable.¹³ Although this use of the white space is not always clear, it nonetheless plays quite a useful role in determining the isocolic patterns. In fact, as I have shown elsewhere, by paying attention to any number of graphic markers the reader/lector could be guided in his interpretation of how to most effectively present the oral text in order to convey its message(s) (CRNKOVIĆ 2006; CRNKOVIĆ 2008). In the ecclesiastical environment in which these texts were usually presented orally either to the congregation of lay faithful or, more often, to the community of monks, friars and clerics, maintaining the orthodoxy of the message was of paramount concern. The writers would assuredly have used any graphical markers at their disposal to help underscore a work's truthful message. This is not to say that there was a single 'best' way of presenting the text to a group of listeners; certainly there was an acceptable leeway in the performance of the text, given the openness of the textual tradition and the allowance for individual interpretation, within the limits demarcated by the nature of the rhythmical text and its message. Thus, the restrictions of the overall rhythmical patterns do not prevent the reader from lending his own interpretation to those

¹³ It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the nature of 'stress' in the mediaeval CCS. In the current paper I find it sufficient to use the term 'stress' to indicate a syllable whose emphasis is in some way greater than that of the other syllables in the given word or word unit. The relationship between stress and other acoustic variables such as tone and length in the isocolic structures awaits its own investigation. As Eduard Hercigonja points out, given the tonal nature of south Slavic syllabification, it is possible to think of these isocolic structures as 'isotonic', although the two terms are not, to my mind, mutually exclusive (HERCIGONJA 1975: 142 ff.).

phrases that are open to various oral articulations as long as they fall within the established isocolic parameters of the series in which they occur.

Phrases written in abbreviated form offer some challenges for discerning the rhythm, as is the case here with the conventional shortening of the formula ‘Our Lord, Jesus Christ’ (e.g. *isambъ nšb* and *ishъ*). The Vat₆ here has the graphic representation *eže isambъ nšb / ishъ rče*.

	Vat ₆ 176a
4	eže isambъ gъ nšb
3	ishъ rče·
3	budetъ v’poslédne dni
4	eže mnimъ nne suče·

A comparison of these lines with the other four manuscripts shows slight variations in the introduction to this quotation:

	N ₂ 487d		N ₁ 424b
4	eže ismъ gъ nšb	4	eže ismъ gъ nšb
2	ishъ rče·	2	isuhъ reče·
4	Budet’bo rče v’poslédnêeže dni·	4	Budet’bo reče v’pos’léd’nee dni·
4	ežože mnimъ nne suče	4	eže mnimъ nne suče·

	Ber ₁ 134a		Vos 54b
4	ko smъ gъ nšb	6 (4+2)	еже / глше / гъ / нашъ / ісь / хъ
2	ishъ rče·	4	Будет бо / рече / в послѣдняя / дни·
4	Budet’bo rče v’poslédnee dni·	4	якож / мнимъ / (ннѣ) / соуща· ¹⁴
4	eže mnimъ nne buduče·		

The interpretation of the rhythmical forms centres on the number of stresses assigned to the grapheme of the *nomina sacra*, *ishъ*, that is, the contraction of *isusъ hrъstъ*, which can be read as either two stresses or one, depending on the lector’s preference. The possibility of a single stress is attested in

¹⁴ It will be noted that I have followed the accepted tradition of transliterating the Glagolitic texts, but, having access to a photographic reproduction the Vos manuscript, have opted to retain the Cyrillic to allow the reader to better visualize how, as with the Glagolitic manuscripts, the graphical look of the Vos often helps determine the isocolic patterning. I have also resorted to the convention of separating stressed units with the virgule, since the Cyrillic manuscript does not make use of word spacing.

various places in the CCS tradition where the name is rendered as *isuhřbstь*.¹⁵ Whatever the interpretation of the rhythmical pattern here (4+2 or 4+3) by lengthening this phrase and contrasting it with the established 4-stress pattern of the surrounding cola, an oral reading of the text necessarily emphasizes the name of Jesus Christ and thus enhances the ultimate authority of the quotation.

2.3. Isocolic structures and thematic content in the FSL

The isocolic readings of the above versions of the FSL offer varying rhythmical interpretations all of which enhance the passage's message that Wenceslaus represents a holy leader appearing in difficult times to aid his people on the Christian path to eternal salvation. For example, one can cite the series in N_2 :

	N_2 487d
5	se nne s'biřzese přřskoe s·
4	eře ismь ġь nřь
3	iřhь řče·
4	Budet'bo řče v'poslědněeže dni·
4	ekože mnimь nne suče·
5 = 3	vstanetьbo bratь nabrata·
+2	snь nьoca·
4	ivrazi čku domači ego·
4	Čcibo sbě budutь nemili· (ivzda...)

The full stop after the word *dni* nicely signals the end of the rhythmical phrase. Likewise, the full stop mark (*punctum*) after the word unit *nabrata* in the next line justifies interpreting this as the end of the rhythmical phrase. Considering that this line is crucial to the deeper, hagiographical understanding presented here – a major theme is the obvious consequences of murderous

¹⁵ See RJCHR 2015: 201, which cites a number of instances under the entry for *gospodь*. The issue of stress on the *nomina sacra* here may help illustrate the use of phraseological stress and intonation and the suprasegmental nature of the isocolic structures. The question concerns the ways that the reader could emphasize either or both elements of the word unit (*združenica*) in the context of reading aloud. Stressing each element equally would render two stresses (*isusь hrě'stь*). On the other hand, giving a primary stress to one element and a secondary stress to the other (*isusь hrě'stь* or *isusь hrě'stь*) would show a stress pattern that also convenes more closely with the make up of a single stress unit. A more or less 'weak' emphasis on one of the elements would allow the reader to fit the phrase to the overall pattern (4244). A fuller understand of the relationship of primary and secondary stress in the word units of the isocolic structures awaits further study.

sibling rivalry – the 5-stress compound colon stands out as the pivot of the framed 44544 series. Moreover, the *punctum* here signals the division of the 3//2 semicolon, a further rhythmical ‘hesitation’ added after the crucial line ‘brother against brother’.

The text of the N_1 offers a more extensive use of the *punctum* here:

	N_1 424b
5	Se nine zbistse pročskoe slovo·
4	eže ismь гь ншь
2	isuһь řeče·
4	Budet’bo řeče v’poslédnee dni·
4	eže mnimь nine suče·
5 = 3	vstanetь bratь nabrata·
+ 2	snь naosa·
4	ivrazi člviku domači ego·
4	Čcibo sbê budutь nemili·
5	iv’zdas’t imь бь podelomь ihь·

Tellingly, though, the text of the Ber_1 punctuates the isocolic series differently, while offering the same message:

	Ber_1 134ab
5	se nine s’bistse prorčskoe slvo
4	ko smь гь ншь
3	ishь řeče·
4	Budet’bo řeče v’poslédnee dni·
4	eže mnimь nine buduče·
5 = 3	Vstanetь bratь nabrta
+2	snь n’osa·
4	ivrazi čku domači ego·
4	Čcibo budь sbê nemili·
4	iv’zdas’timь бь podelomь ihь·

It should be noted that the last line might show *imь* as an enclitic, attached to the word unit *iv’zdas’timь* but it is not manifestly clear if there is white spacing between *iv’zdas’tь* and *imь*. If one considers the *lectio difficilior*, that is, that *imь* is not attached to the previous word, then N_1 and N_2 agree that both third person pronouns in this phrase (*imь* and *ihь*) are stress units. Indeed, the text of the N_1 here clearly separates both pronouns from any host word (*iv’zdas’tь imь бь podelomь ihь*). If both texts do indeed agree, then exposition of the just punishment awaiting the *nemili* is doubly emphasized. If there is

a perceived rhythmical inconsistency in the emphasis on the pronouns in the N_1 , however, it nonetheless falls within the range of flexibility that the isocolic patterning provides. Rather than reflecting the general observation that short pronouns are usually presented as unstressed enclitic forms, this phrase witnesses one instance of the opposite possibility: The stress may indeed fall on a one-syllable pronoun for the sake of emphasis. The sense here is that those who choose to be unkind (*nemili*) are those (*ihъ*) who will be dealt with according to their deeds. Both semantically equivalent terms occur at the end of the cola and are thus equated by the natural emphasis that the end of the rhythmical phrase provides. Moreover, by emphasizing both pronouns, the N_1 makes possible a rather dramatic condemnation of the *nemili* in the oral performance of the passage ('And God will render unto *them* according to *their* deeds'). Other graphic visuals here provide further clues to the isocolic patterns: the capitals at *Budetbo*, *Vstanetъ* and *Čcibo* help establish the longer rhythmical passages that correspond to the syntactical *sententiae*.

Given the flexibility of interpreting the isocolic rhythms of any given text, it is possible to suggest a simpler set of series here; this flexibility in no way undermines the rhythmical flow of the passages and certainly does not undermine the lector's ability to interpret the reading aloud within the parameters given him, that is, within the restrictions of 4- and 5-stress cola. Rhythmically, this interpretation relies on the graphic representation of the text, thus assuming that the 'white spacing' helps indicate the rhythmical patterning (CRNKOVIĆ 2006; CRNKOVIĆ 2008; CRNKOVIĆ 2011). Given this, it is possible to assign only a single stress to the word units *isamъgъ* and *ishъ* receive in their respective phrases. It is also interesting to note that the aorist form *reče* – which is lacking in the Vat_6 – is indeed a *lacuna* there.

	Vat_6 176a
5	Se nne bst prrěskoe slvo
5	eže isamъgъ nъsh ishъ rče·
4	budetъ (rče) v'poslědne dni
4	eže mnimъ nne suče·
5 = 3+2	Vstanetъ bratъ nabrata snъ naoca
4	ivrazi čku domači ego·
4	čcibo sebě budutъ nemili·
5	ivzdaсть imъ gъ podělomъ ihъ

The Cyrillic Vostokov version offers differing but intriguing evidence for the isocolic regularity of this passage. The lexical items in this Eastern Church Slavic

text correspond closely to those of the Glagolitic versions although the Cyrillic texts, written *scripta continua*, obviously do not show word boundaries and thus do not reflect word units as do the Glagolitic variants. The rhythmical patterning here, however, is easily determined by the logical syntactical structures, the grammatical and lexical parallels, and in a few places by the punctuation:

Vos 54ab	
5	Се / ннѣ / сбиса / прроческое / словн
6 = 4+2	еже / глше / гъ / нашъ / исъ / хъ
4	Будет бо / рече / в послѣдняя / дни·
4	якож / мнимъ / (ннѣ) / соуща·
4	въстанеть бо / братъ / на брата / своего
5 = 3+2	и снъ / на оць / свой, // и врази / домашнїи·
4	члвци бо / себѣ / немили / боудут
5	да въздасть / имъ / бѣ / по дѣлом / ихъ. ¹⁶

It should be noted that the rhythmical patterning is marked not simply by graphic signals, but also by various figures of form and sense. Thus the *eže* – *eže* vertical parallels in the second and fourth cola, the consonant vowel harmony of *rče* – *suče* at the end of the same cola, the three repetitions of the phonemes *v*, *z* and *i* in the fifth, sixth and eighth cola (*vstanetъ* – *ivrazi* – *ivzdastъ* and other markers both guide the lector in reading the passage artistically and guide the audience in understanding the text.

The phrasing of these cola is clear, each being marked in the first stress unit by either a relative pronoun (*еже*) or a conjunction (*бо*, *якож*, *бо*, *и*, *бо*, *да*). The punctuating stops after *дни*, *суца*, *домашнїи* and *ихъ* nicely mark the end of their respective cola. An interesting use of the comma occurs at *и снъ на оць свой*, marking the semicolon, a usage not generally seen in our research to date. The anomalous lack of *нынѣ* in the fourth colon of the first series is rather easily explained as a lacuna given that it occurs in most of the Glagolitic manuscripts.

Curiously, removing the 4-stress line *eže mnić nne suče* renders a more regular isocolic series in each of the manuscripts. It is possible to conjecture,

¹⁶ I have transcribed the text from the photographic reproduction (KANTOR 1983: 141–53). Since the text is written *scripta continua*, I have added word spacing according to modern conventions, but have not reconstructed expanded word forms from the abbreviated forms found in the manuscript.

given the nature of this phrase as the author's opinion, that it is an addendum of a sort. If one reads the series without this line, the isocola become:

N ₂ 487d		N ₁ 424b	
5	se nne s' bístžese přčskoe s·	5	Se nine zbístse pročskoe slovo·
4	eže ismь gь nšь	4	eže ismь gь nšь
2	išhь rče·	2	isuhь reče·
4	Budet'bo rče v'poslédnēeže dni·	4	Budet'bo reče v'poslédnee dni·
5 = 3	vstanet'ьbo brat'ь nabrata·	5 = 3	vstanet'ь brat'ь nabrata·
+2	snь n'oca·	+2	snь naoca·
4	ivrazi čku domači ego·	4	ivrazi člviku domači ego·
4	Čsibo sbê budut'ь nemili·	4	Čsibo sbê budut'ь nemili·
		5	iv'zdašt'ь imь bь podelomь ihь·

Ber ₁ 134a		Vos 54ab	
5	se nine s' bístse prorčskoe slvo·	5	Се / ннѣ / сбыса / прроческое / словн
4	ko smь gь nšь	6 = 4(+2)	еже / глше / гь / нашь // ісь / хь
2	išhь rče·	4	Будет бо / рече / в послѣдняя / дни.
4	Budet'bo rče v'poslédnee dni·	4	встанетъ бо / братъ / на брата / своего
5 = 3	Vstanet'ь brat'ь nabrta	5	и snь / на оць / свой, // и врази / домашній.
+2	snь n'oca·	4	члвци бо / себѣ / немили / боудут
4	ivrazi čku domači ego·	5	да въздасть / имь / бь / по дѣлом / ихь
4	Čsibo budt'ь sbê nemili·		
4	iv'zdašt'ь imь bь podelomь ihь·		

In these variant readings the sacred name, Jesus Christ, becomes a marked aside and the regularity of the 'pivot' series (54245) stands out. This reading is, nevertheless, a conjecture and ultimately cannot be conclusively confirmed. On the other hand, it offers an intriguing example of the flexibility of the phrasal stress in isocolic texts and underscores how isocolic patterning might in certain cases differ given the interplay of formal structures and meaning.

I have dwelt here on this passage in detail to show how the isocola can be variously interpreted in terms of their rhetorical, mainly ornamental function. As I hope to show below, the rhythmical cola here can also help the reader/listener to grasp the passage's important didactic content. It is indeed necessary to bear in mind that the rhythmically consistent patterns of this opening passage help highlight the thematic content.

3. THE INTEGRATION OF RHETORICAL FORMS AND THEMES IN THE FSL

Having explained how the isocola function in the opening lines of the FSL, let us now concentrate on the integration of the rhetorical forms with the work's thematic content. While the aesthetic component of the rhythmical isocola is by itself an outstanding feature of the CCS and mediaeval Slavic literary traditions it does not constitute the sole purpose of the rhythmical patterning. In fact, as I have hinted throughout, the rhythmical cadences themselves can be powerful carriers of the textual message and the oral presentation is a means not only to please with its harmonious sounds, but also to teach a theology of salvation. Thus, while the oral performance was subject to some interpretation, however restricted by the overall rhythmical patterns, it is good to bear in mind that the oral performance served primarily to deliver the text's message(s).

It is precisely the isocolon's flexibility in employing acoustical stress in combination with suprasegmental stress features that lends the textual phrasing – with their grammatical, syntactical and ornamental parallels – its rhythmical regularity and its ability to emphasize or de-emphasise any given word, phrase or passage. Acoustical, strictly 'physical' stress thus makes up the basis of the rhythmical patterning only insofar as it is a part of the larger, suprasegmental structures. Indeed Picchio insists that the isocolic sequence, though limited by the "structural fitness of each isocolic unit to become a part of an isocolic construction", may help the "reader-performer arrange his use of pauses in the text and the raising and lowering of his voice according to the logical texture of their compositions" (PICCHIO 1973.a: 150).¹⁷ One need bear in mind, of course, that the actual pattern of the isocolic structures is dependent to some extent on its performance at any given moment, i.e. on its reading aloud to a specific audience by a specific reader. Thus, the public reading of isocolic texts requires an interpretation by the 'performer' such that for many passages various out-loud readings are possible and different lectors might interpret the isocola in differing ways (PICCHIO 1973.b: 316). In many senses, the mediaeval lector and his reader/listener enjoyed a great number of ways of 'understanding' the text and its meanings. The storyline

¹⁷ Kostova reiterates this essential point – that literary rhythmical structures rest on the regular but not slavish, mathematically countable arrangement of stresses – at length and with copious reference to Classical, medieval and modern authorities in her most extensive article on isocolic structures in the Bulgarian Glagolitic tradition (KOSTOVA 1998: 132–136).

of a particular narrative might have both ‘entertainment’ and didactic aspects. The more schooled reader, however, could access the countless biblical and other allusions that would help him place the narrative in the context of Christian doctrine.

3.1. Christian themes in the FSL

Before proceeding with our discussion of how the isocolic patterning might help the reader and listener to grasp higher meanings, let us review the work’s main messages. In the FSL the biblical thematic references present an underlying theological foundation for Wenceslaus’ *vita*. Indeed, the story line combined with the biblical ‘clues’ not only describes Wenceslaus’ martyrdom as an historical event, but also speaks to both his divinely sanctioned role as a ruler and to his personal sanctity. Somewhat more surprisingly, the work also provides a theological defence of Boleslav’s conversion after he carries out his brother’s murder.¹⁸ The complex of biblical references at the beginning of the FSL prepares the reader to discern a theology of salvation based on the mediaeval Christian concepts of soteriology. The story of Wenceslaus as saint and martyr is evident. More than that, the complex of biblical references in conjunction with the narrative, plot turns and events, and the rhetorical ways in which they might be presented effectively to a gathering of listeners gives a complete picture of the Church’s teachings on eternal salvation.

The emphasis on the end of days describes an apocalyptic vision of the end of the salvation story, one closely tied to the Church’s teaching on the end times. Three points underpin the *exemplum* set up in Wenceslaus’ story. First, salvation is a personal choice (even and especially if it is given its impetus from a pious parental upbringing) so that Wenceslaus, having once committed a serious sin against his mother, chooses to repent. Second, salvation is available to all at any time, as is the case with Boleslav’s own ‘late’ conversion. Third and most overriding is the affirmation that *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (“there is no salvation outside of the Church”). The first two of these points constitute the Church’s soteriological teachings on individual salvation: Wenceslaus’ path is a model of nearly constant piety, humility and charity and, of course, martyrdom which results in sainthood recognized by the Church. Boleslav’s

¹⁸ On the motif of conversion of nations and, consequently of individuals and its formal structures in mediaeval Slavic literature, see PICCHIO 1977: 11–13 and GOLDBLATT 1993: 157–159.

salvation is affected by his recognition of sin, confession and reparation and is thus one of conversion to right belief and action as a result of the salvific graces granted through the Church. This second theme enhances the third theme of the return of the prodigal to the fold. An opposite result – condemnation of the unrepentant – is illustrated by the scattering of Wenceslaus' enemies.

Although the writer never explicitly uses the terms 'saint' or 'blessed', he nonetheless presents at least a preliminary case for Wenceslaus' sainthood. Moreover, unlike Antonsson's conclusion that "little attempt is made in this work to present the killing of Duke Wenceslaus within a wider historical and salvific context" (ANTONSSON 2007: 40), the life presents two exemplars (that is, Wenceslaus as martyr, his brother and murderer, Boleslav, as repentant sinner) of the salvific action of grace as the defined by mediaeval Christian theology. On a larger scale, by citing biblical texts concerning the end of the world, the author places the story of Wenceslaus' life and death against the broad ecclesiological background of the universal and timeless Church, seeing him not only as an effective secular ruler, 'apostle', and martyr of his own time, but also as a model of Christian piety for all ages.

3.2. Biblical thematic clues and references

The entire story of Wenceslaus' life is placed within the teleological framework of the Church's salvific mission, which benefits both brothers. Apocalyptic vision and the continuing apostolic mission are set prominently before the reader as Wenceslaus is directly connected to the ecclesial mission of bringing all nations to redemption. In this regard, Norman W. Ingham justly concludes that the life of the supreme model, Jesus Christ Himself, plays a great role in the story structure of the FSL (INGHAM 2006). Ingham's masterful piece, which offers a complete analysis of the parallels between the FSL and the Gospels, suggests that a closer look at the details of the FSL's compositional details can be helpful for understanding the theological underpinnings of the work. Moreover, as Marie Anne Mayeski has recently exhorted, researchers should not overlook the fact that mediaeval hagiographies in general contain a wealth of theological teachings. Having "learned their theological language almost entirely through the Bible itself", she asserts, "(...) mediaeval writers would certainly have understood the theological nature of the narrative form" whether presented as direct citations or paraphrased (MAYESKI 2002: 692–693). Some decades ago, in an article on the role of biblical citations in mediaeval Slavic works, Riccardo Picchio made similar, if more formally

oriented, observations about the structures of mediaeval Slavic narratives in general, including mediaeval Slavic *vitæ*:

“In several Orthodox Slavic works a special compositional device appears to be consistently used. Its purpose seems to be that of bridging the semantic gap between the literal and the spiritual sense. To achieve this effect, the writer presents to his reader, within the conventional framework of rhetorical structures, the main theme, that is, the ‘higher’ theme which explains the hidden meaning of any earthly event related in the narration. Since the ‘true meaning, that is, the spiritual sense of a verbal expression can only be detected in the light of inspired words, the Bible is often used as general referent. It is the reader’s task to establish the proper semantic connection by interpreting whatever pertains to the letter without separating it from the spirit. I call this device a *thematic clue*. It may consist either of direct citations from Scriptures or of indirect references to sacred texts (...) *Biblical thematic clues* occur in structurally marked places, usually at the beginning of the *expositio*, that is, either in the first lines of a text or immediately after any introductory section of it (...) Once the reader had located the main thematic clue, the entire text acquired for him a new meaning. A theme announced at the beginning could develop into a leit-motif governing the semantic system of a work.” (PICCHIO 1977: 5–6)

This pioneering research into the formal structure of biblical thematic clues in *Slavia Orthodoxa*, and thus into the importance of biblical allusion for nearly all mediaeval Slavic texts, has proven a good starting point for subsequent expansion and clarification. Recently Cristiano Diddi has argued that the ‘biblical thematic clue’ of mediaeval Slavic literature is a localized variant of well-established literary practices from the Classical world and onward, well into the Renaissance. Diddi makes the astute observation that ‘citations’ or ‘references’ or even less formal ‘allusions’ to well-known phrases (often recognized because of their frequent use in liturgical services) can be more or less literal, and thus intertextual, or less structured and thus ‘interdiscursive’ (DIDDI 2013: 14). The latter observation describes well the function of biblical citations and allusion in the FSL, where the frequent biblical allusions present a complex of ideas that explain and justify the work’s themes as I have enumerated them above.

These themes can be recognized by the reader or listener on numerous levels. Thus, Ingham sees that on a basic narrative level the *vita* can be thematically associated with the life of Jesus so that understanding the Wenceslaus tale as an edifying story would have been especially aimed at the layman or less erudite listener or reader. On the other hand, if one heeds Picchio’s theory of

the biblical thematic clue and others' exhortations to consider carefully the role of biblical citations in presenting Christian theology, it becomes certain that the skilled reader or listener can discern the deeper purpose behind the tale of murder and martyrdom, i.e. to teach a lesson on the nature of eternal salvation and the Church's role therein.

3.3. *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*

The author presents the history of the church of Christ as the background of the uplifting moral tale of Wenceslaus' life and martyrdom, beginning with the enigmatic reference to the end times whose rhythmical structure examined above:

*se nine s'bistse prorčskoe slvo·
ko smъ gъ nšъ
ishъ rče.
Budetbo rče v'poslédnee dni·
eže mnimъ nine buduče, Ber₁ 134a*

Although it has been shown that these opening lines loosely paraphrase the biblical passages from Mark and Matthew's Gospels, little has been said to indicate how the ordering of biblical allusions constitutes the opening of an argument for the more profound themes discussed above (KANTOR 1983: 155). Certainly, the reference to brothers rising against brothers foreshadows the fratricide that Boleslav will commit. Yet few scholars have noted how the narrator's assertion that the end times are upon them helps establish an ecclesiological footing for the ensuing story and ties in with the subsequent biblically referenced themes.

After the opening lines the author alludes to the Gospels of Matthew and Mark:

*Vstanetъ bratъ nabrta
snъ n'oca·
ivrazi čku domači ego·
Čcibo budť sbê nemili·
iv'zdastъimъ bъ podêlomъ ihъ, Ber₁ 134a*

The passages contain terse allusions to the Gospel accounts of the apocalyptic end times in which the Evangelists Mark and Matthew report Jesus's prediction that His disciples will face fierce opposition and hardship:

And brother shall betray his brother unto death, and the father the son: and the children shall rise up against the parents and shall put them to death (Mark 13:12).¹⁹

And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household. (Matt. 10:36)

For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. (Matt. 10:35)

These three references are of particular significance for the transferred biblical themes that Picchio describes as significant for meaning in mediaeval Slavic works, foretelling the lethal strife that will occur in the subsequent narrative where brother is pitted against brother, and Wenceslaus' brother's retinue against him. They also briefly set the tone of the work while simultaneously presenting a theological basis for Wenceslaus' sanctity against the larger background of the mediaeval ecclesiological understanding of the nature of martyrdom, redemption and the Church role on earth and in human time (*in saeculo*). Thus, Wenceslaus is an example of those Christian rulers who are martyred, most importantly, for the steadfastness of their faith more than for the retention of their earthly kingdoms. In more precise doctrinal terms, Wenceslaus is to be lauded for his preservation of the kingdom of God on earth – that is, the temporal branch of the immortal Church – above his role as leader of a divinely sanctioned but secular political entity.

By presenting the theme of sanctity as paramount the author gives an argument that is necessarily replete with references to the highest model of Christian behaviour, i.e. to biblical passages that themselves spell out *argumenta* for a distinctly Christian theology of salvation through the Church. In this regard Picchio's hypothesis that the biblical thematic clue(s) refers the knowledgeable reader to the main theme of the biblical chapter whence they come is especially astute. Thus, the overriding theme of Wenceslaus' martyrdom is most closely tied to the main theme of Matthew's tenth chapter.

The first verses of this biblical chapter (Matt. 10:1–5) recount Christ's calling of the twelve original Apostles, thus placing Wenceslaus by analogy in the company of those called to serve Christianity in outstanding ways as confessor, Christian ruler and eventually martyr. While this does not necessarily equate Wenceslaus with the grand apostleship that is customarily attributed to Cyril and Methodius, marking Wenceslaus as equal in some measure to Jesus' first disciples gives him a pride of place in the conversion of the Bohemians to the

¹⁹ Kantor details the biblical citations in his English translation of the Old Church Slavonic FSL (KANTOR 1990: 61–65). The biblical references for the Vos variant in their modern Czech translation were also noted (ROGOV et al. 1976: 68–73).

Christian religion. The following verses (Matt. 10:6–15) are Jesus' instructions to His disciples, as it were, and include His teachings on how the disciples are to preach, teach and provide themselves as examples of ideal Christian behaviour to all manner of peoples, Jews and Gentiles alike. Wenceslaus, given his influential position as ruler of his people, is therefore beholden to these high levels of virtue and, according to the text, attains these levels (albeit with pitfalls on the way). Of most interest, however, for the confluence of themes and teaching in Matthew and the FSL, are the biblical verses in Matt. 10:16–39, in which Christ details the hardships and persecutions that will befall His Apostles as they practice and preach their Christianity: *Behold, I am sending you forth like sheep in the midst of wolves*. One can also compare here the similar idea expressed in Matt. 10:39: *He that findeth his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for me, shall find it*. Clearly, Wenceslaus' experience encompasses many of the hardships that Christ predicts will torment His faithful disciples. Thus, Matthew's tenth chapter provides a link between the story of Wenceslaus' life and the lives of the original disciples.

That the tenets of this biblical chapter are applicable to Wenceslaus' life is abundantly clear even in the rather short FSL, whose compactness of storyline does not exclude a density of theological teaching. Matthew's Jesus explains that even the closest of relatives may be enemies: *For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law* (Matt. 10:35), which sentiment is clearly echoed in the opening lines of the FSL (*vstaneť bratř na brata sně na oca i vrazi čku domači ego*). What's more, the references to the difficulty of preaching and maintaining the words of the Christ are set against the backdrop of the end times in both Matthew's tenth (*Amen I say to you, you shall not finish all the cities of Israel, till the Son of man come*, Matt. 10:23) and Mark's thirteenth chapter (Mark 13:9–13), as well as, most significantly, against the FSL author's belief that the end times have arrived. Jesus' description of the strife His followers will encounter and the destruction of the secular order at the end of the world (Mark 13:21–27) are tied together here in the author's vision of Wenceslaus' life and his place in the history of salvation.

The understanding that the end times as described by Jesus Christ were imminent was common in the Apostolic era and reappeared with some vigour as the Christian millennium approached. Although there are problems with dating, timing and interpretation, it is known that there was a significant belief around the turn of the first millennium that the apocalyptic era was approaching (ERDOES 1998: 10–11). These prevailing attitudes of the 990's help explained the terse comment by the FSL author that *we believe it to be*

the end of time. Having set his story of Wenceslaus against this nebulous background, the author gives what he believes to be a historical time to events that have timeless lessons and eternal results (i.e. Wenceslaus' accession to the palm of martyrdom) and his brother's eventual conversion, which presumably result in their attaining the ultimate reward of eternal life. In this context, the author finds it necessary to reference the apocalyptic visions of the biblical accounts in order to find a theological explanation for obviously senseless and evils deeds: Why would a brother kill a brother, and the household entourage take part in the murder and suggest the murder of Wenceslaus' mother? The ferocity of the hatred must have impressed the author to the extent that he saw the events of Wenceslaus' death as indicative of the impending doomsday.

Yet for all of this drama, the apocalyptic vision plays only a background role – a tacit teleological backdrop – to the events of Wenceslaus' life and death. Beyond Ingham's analysis, which introduces an important understanding of the tale as it was intended for a readership that had an in-depth knowledge of the Gospel story of Jesus, there is a deeper and subtler meaning to be understood on the tale's theological level. This is not just edifying pious storytelling; it is also a discussion of the role of secular-saints and ruler-saints in the mediaeval Christian milieu. As Mayeski has argued, it is not only possible but desirable to see the theological arguments present in mediaeval hagiographies before dismissing them as simple political tracts designed to justify a particular ruler's or dynasty's rights to power.²⁰ Hence, the presentation of a medley of biblical references here and throughout the introduction makes it clear that the author is sympathetic both to Wenceslaus' cause and to Wenceslaus' rightful place among the legitimate rulers of ninth-century central Europe as well as in the history of Christian salvation. The young duke is placed not only in the line of legitimate political rulers, but also in the new line of 'holy princes' which includes other Western sovereigns like St Edmund of East Anglia, St Olaf of Norway, and Magnus of Orkney, a line of saintly Christian rulers that also includes eastern saints like the holy prince Alexander Nevsky (INGHAM 1973: 4–8).

As anticipated, this set of biblical thematic clues is positioned in the very prologue to the *vita* and presented in a series of mid-length cola (54344), after which the remaining sentence, with its clear biblical allusion, takes up the 5-stress colon and resolves into a series of 4-stress cola. The 3-stress colon of

²⁰ Mayeski cogently argues that mediaeval literary society would not have made clear distinctions between hagiography, biography and theological writings and rightly champions reading these texts with a broad approach that understands their varied functions (MAYESKI 2002).

the first series stands out as the pivot point of the sentence. Indeed, the reader / lector is compelled here to emphasize the phrase *is(us)ъ h(rst)ъ r(e)če* ('Jesus Christ said ...') and the following phrase *budet bo r(e)če v'poslédnee dni* ('For there will be, he said, in the last days ...'). These shorter cola are in contrast to the slightly longer 5-stress cola framing the series and, in fact, the latter line is especially emphatic given the repetition of *r(e)če*. Having caught the listener's attention, he can proceed to make his references to the end times in the return to a 5-stress colon followed by the more staid 4-stress series. While other factors certainly contribute to the oral performance here, the rhythmical cola assuredly aid in emphasizing the importance of the passage. Mid-length cola, as opposed to more elaborate compound cola, or shorter two- and three-stress cola, are often the default for passages of an explanatory or simple narrative nature. By rendering these opening lines in a consistent series of 5- and 4-stress cola this passage underscores the thematic unity of Wenceslaus' holiness within the overall picture of the mediaeval Church's vision of the history of salvation.

4. WENCESLAUS' CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

After this brief summary of the thematic motifs of the opening lines of the FSL, let us continue our analysis, coordinating the work's ongoing message with the rhetorical forms. The story line detailing Wenceslaus' early life is simple: his parentage is noted, as are his naming, the important 'tonsuring' ceremony, which is given an extended treatment, and his education in the Slavic and Latin books. It will be seen that the rhythmical cola often present historical events in shorter 3- and 4-stress cola, while longer cola serve both to emphasise and interpolate these straightforward facts.

Following the introductory lines described above, the texts of Vat₆ and Ber₁ state the details of Wenceslaus' lineage:

	Vat ₆ 176b		Ber ₁ 134b
5 = 3+2	Bisže knzъ včesěhъ imnmъ vratislavъ	5 = 3+2	Bist'že k'nezъ včesěhъ imenmъ vratis'lavъ·
4	ženaže ego imnmъ d'ragomira·	4	ženaže ego n'ricaema dragomira
5 = 4+1	Rodivši snъ svoi prvncъ k'rstistai ²¹	5 = 4+1	Irožd'ša snъ svoi prvênacъ krstistai
4	Narêstaže ime emu večeslvъ·	4	inarêsta ime emu večeslavъ·

²¹ The Vat₆ has *k'rstista||stai*, an evident scribal error, reduplicating the syllable *sta* after the line break (||).

Clearly the isocola are carried through as the story narrative begins. The excerpt above serves as a good example of how the simpler series (5454), the ‘story telling’ use of the isocola, stands both in contrast to and in harmony with the more didactic introductory lines discussed earlier. As expected, various lexical, phonic, phonemic and graphic features indicate the divisions of the cola and semicola into phrases, which in turn emphasise certain lexical items and phrases.

Even a cursory glance shows how remarkably regularly the isocola are presented in three of the series in both the Vat₆ and Ber₁ variants, in which the first series is punctuated as an alternating 5454 series. Obvious lexical and phonic elements mark the initial stress units as do the repeated intensifier *že* (*bist’že; ženaže; Narêstaže*) and, in the Ber₁, the repetition of the conjunction *i* (*irožd’sa; inaresta*). Likewise in both texts, the final stress units of this series are composed of parallel nouns, that is, the three names of parents and son, and one verb (the dual aorist form *krstista*, ‘the two christened’) with an attendant direct object pronoun (*i* ‘him’, i. e. Wenceslaus). Rather cleverly, if these final stress units are read vertically, they constitute a sentence that unequivocally places emphasis on the event of Wenceslaus’ baptism: **vratislavъ dragomira krъstistai večeslavъ* (‘Vratislav (and) Dragomira christened him Wenceslaus’). This is not to say, of course, that the lector would have read the lines vertically when publicly performing the text, but that their position at the end of each rhythmical phrase gives them a natural emphasis that enhances the message that Wenceslaus was indeed baptized Christian.

Tellingly, the more extensive punctuation in the N₁ manuscript offers even more concrete possibilities for interpreting the oral performance, which, in turn, underscore the writer’s interpretation of the importance that these events had in Wenceslaus’ life as a holy prince.

	N ₁ 424b
6 = 4+2	Bisiže knezъ eterъ včesêhъ imenemъ vratislavъ·
4	ženaže ego naricaema dragomira·
4	Irodša snъ svoi prvênacъ·
5=1	ikrstistai·
+3	inarêsta ime emu·
+1	večeslavъ·

The seeming imbalance of the series (6445) should not disconcert us since it falls within the normal range of rhythmical variations and, especially since the first line contains a textual variation not attested to elsewhere, i. e. the

appearance of the adjective *eterь* ('a certain'). Obviously if one considers this a scribal addition, then its removal renders the phrase as **Bisiže knezь ... včesêhь imenemь vřatislavь*, which produces a cleanly framed isocolic series (5445). Particularly illuminating is how the placement of the *puncta* make a rhythmical reading possible that emphasizes in a different way the importance of the young duke's Christian baptism as do the parallel readings in other texts. In fact, the N_1 emphatically calls attention to the baptism by setting off the stress units *ikřstistai* ('and the two christened him') and the child's name with the *punctum*. Thus, the N_1 presents a different rhythmical interpretation here in the form of a tripartite colon in which the initial and final single-stress units frame the interior 3-stress semicolon

1	... ikrstistai·
3	... inarêsta ime ego·
1	... večeslavь·

The punctuation offers the lector the possibility of dramatic pauses at the passage's most important junctures. Whereas in the Vat_6 and Ber_1 one can infer the importance of the Christian baptism via a vertical reading of the parallels, here the scriptor clearly marks the rhythmical pauses that emphasize the christening, the naming and the name itself.

From an oral performance standpoint, the final words of each colon or semicolon (in the case of the N_1) are naturally emphasized and are heard as the highlights of the crucial importance of Wenceslaus' Catholic heritage. Given the unstable and still rather weak hold that Christianity had on central Europe in the tenth century, this emphasis on the parents' having the child baptised holds a special significance since Wenceslaus' contribution to Czech, Bohemian, and Moravian culture was dependent on his Christian cultural upbringing and death as a Christian martyr. The isocola here present an aurally stark and strikingly simple telling of the events of his birth and initiation into the Church.

4.1. Baptism and tonsure

The motif of the good and practising Christian is elaborated in the subsequent isocolic series, which rhythmically and rhetorically highlight the young prince's destiny. When the young Wenceslaus reaches the age of his first haircut, Vratislav, by tradition, calls in the bishop to give his son the tonsure. By following this pious tradition, the ducal family has the opportunity

to witness the ‘just and righteous’ bishop’s prediction of Wenceslaus’ future saintliness (ANTONÍN 2017: 36–38, 72–76). The Vat₆ and Ber₁ read:

	Vat ₆ 176b		Ber ₁ 134b
5 = 3+2 6	Vzrast’šuze emu êk bis pods’tričii êk vratislvъ ось ego napotstriženie ego·	5 = 3+2 6	V’zrast’uže emu· êko bsi pod’stričii· prizva vratislavъ ось ego n’podъs- triženie ego·
5 = 3+2 3	prizva bžngo bskpa immъ notara s’svoimъ emu klerikomъ·	3 = 2+2 3	bžngo bskpa immъ notara· s’svoimъ emu k’liromъ·

The series here is composed of complex rhythms that are nonetheless consistent within an overall alternating stress pattern. Again, the *punctum* marks the various rhythmical breaks between the cola and semicola in the Vat₆ and Ber₁. There are, as anticipated, other markers of the isocolic phrasing. The final stress units of the first two semicola end in the semantically equivalent pronouns *emu* and *i*, as does the second colon (*ego*), all of these pronouns referring to Wenceslaus. The posited semicola at *V’zrast’šuze emu· êk bsi podstričii·* is punctuated thus in Ber₁, and in Vat₆ is chiasmatically parallel to the posited semicola at *prizva bžngo bskpa immъ notara*. These latter semicola are also marked by the homoioteleuton at the end of each semicolon (*bskpa – notara*). Thus, the initial stress unit of the second colon is an obvious new phrase introduced by the conjunction *êko*, the end of the same phrase is punctuated, and there is a natural rhythmical break at the end of the appositive phrase *immъ notara*. In contrast, the Ber₁ manuscript is less clear here. Given the witness of the Vat₆ and N₁, however, it is not unreasonable to speculate a scribal choice that places the verb *prizva* either before the subject *vratislavъ* or before the direct object phrase *bžngo bskpa*. It will be noted that either choice renders a 6-stress line here. Whatever the case, the variation in the number of stress units is not so far out of the general pattern to cause a breakdown of the overall isocolic rhythm. The final line of the series is a 3-stress *cauda*, or ‘ending colon’, a phrase rhythmically shorter than the preceding cola. As has been shown elsewhere the *caudae* are a common feature of the isocolic principle and are often used to signal the end of the larger *sententia* (v. PICCHIO 1973.b: 304–305).²² The *cauda* here is also consonant with the alternating 2- and 3-stress semicola that make up the 5-stress cola in the first and second phrases.

²² My ongoing research into the isocolon in the Glagolitic literary corpus supports Picchio’s assertion.

The N_1 offers challenging variations and is characterized, as above, by a thorough presence of the *punctum*.

	N_1 424b
4	Vzrastšuze emu êko podštričii·
5	prizva vratislavъ ось ego napodstriženie·
5 = 3	biskupa imenemъ notara·
+2	iskliriki ego·

One sees here an alternative interpretation of the oral presentation. The lexical fount is smaller than in the other two manuscripts and the word order differs such that the clues at the end of the cola and semicola do not obtain here. The *punctum*, however, clearly marks the ending of each colon and semicolon so that the textual rhythm emphasizes the same ideas as in the Vat_6 and Ber_1 . Interestingly, the introduction of Bishop Notarius' name comes in a stand-alone rhythmical phrase, which attaches his role as bishop directly to his name without the adjective 'blessed' (*blaženago*). Setting aside and thus underscoring the title and rank of bishop lends the proper dignity to his role in tonsuring and blessing the youthful Wenceslaus. Whatever the rhythmical variations, there is no disharmony in meaning: the complexity of the rhythmical patterning again explains the importance of Wenceslaus' blessing and tonsuring by the prominent and just bishop Notarius.

4.2. Episcopal blessing

The actual description of Notarius' blessing is no less artistically presented, even given the textual variations among the manuscripts. It will nonetheless be helpful to look at some of the possible textual transmission anomalies in the disparate versions.

	Vat_6 176b		Ber_1 134b
6 = 3	Vspêvšimže imъ misu·	6	V'spêv'semže imъ mašu v'zamy
+3	vzamy bskupъ otrče·		bskupъ otroka·
6 = 4	postavii nakrili stepen'nomъ	6 = 4	ipostavi ga nъkrilê stepen'nemъ
	pred'oltaremъ		pred'oltremъ
+2	iblvî reki·	+2	iblvii reki·
6	Gi be ishe blvi otrka sego·	5	Gi ishe blvi otroka sego·
5	êkže blvlъ esi prvdnie tvoe·	6	êkže blvlъ esi vse prvdnie tvoe·
4	Siceže sblniemъ bis pod'striženъ	4	Sicže s'blvlniemъ bis pod'striženъ·

N ₁ 424bc	
7 = 4	Ivspêvšimъže imъ mašu emu·
+3	vazamъ biskupъ otroka·
7 = 5	postavii nakrilê crêkve sterenъnêemъ predъoltaromъ
+2	iplvii reki·
7 = 4	Gi be isuhe·
+3	blvi otroka sego·
5	êkože blavi vse prvdniki tvoe·
4	Siceže zblniemъ podъstriženъ bistъ·

The Ber₁ is punctuated overall for 6-stress cola with a 4-stress *cauda*, the first three being possible compounds: 6(3+3), 6(4+2), 6(3+3), 4. The Vat₆ text differs with its less frequent use of the *punctum*, although other markers help indicate the divisions of the cola and semicola. The possible division of the second colon into semicola rests on the phrase *iblvii reki* and in Ber₁ on the repetition of the conjunction *i* in the initial stress units of the semicola (*i postavii ga – i blagoslovi i*), as well as on their grammatical parallelism (conj. + verb aorist + accusative object pronoun). The phrasing is depicted even more graphically in the Ber₁ which presents parallels similar to those in the Vat₆, along with a regular use of the *punctum*. Again, the N₁ offers some lexical variations and, interestingly, shows the longest rhythmical phrases, the three 7-stress compound cola that depict the singing of the Mass and Notar's tonsorial blessing. As noted above, assigning two stresses to *isuhe* is well within the variations allowed to the lector. Given that the textual tradition of this particular passage seems less stable than that in the Vat₆ and Ber₁ texts, it is not unreasonable to guess that the rhythmical regularity was in some wise lost in transmission. This fact, of course, does not interfere with the overriding presence of the isocolic structures in the FSL corpus and does not prevent us from speculating about how these texts might have been read aloud.

In the Ber₁ the ensuing cola, which gives the wording of the blessing itself and which I have interpreted as a 6-stress compound colon, can also be read as a 5-stress colon depending on how – as above – the lector reads the abbreviated *ishe* (*isuhr̃ste* as opposed to *isu(s) hr̃ste*). The variant texts offer an obvious resolution: Vat₆ and N₁ have the vocative form *b(ož)e* after *G(ospod)i* in this phrase which renders a 6-stress colon.

A similar textual anomaly occurs in the following cola where Vat₆ deviates from the rest of the tradition at *êk(o) že bl(agoslo)vilъ esi pravъdъnie tvoe*. The punctuation in Vat₆ clearly marks a 5-stress colon here while the Ber₁ and other texts have the additional pronoun *vse* which produces the 6-stress colon *êk(o)-*

že *bl(agoslo)vilь esi vse pravьdьnie tvoe*. The series ends with 4-stress *cauda* that tersely sums up the event. The Ber₁ reads: *Sicže sbllniemь bsi pod'striženь*. One could say, then, that the 'ideal' text may be read approximately as follows:

	Ber ₁ 176b
*6 = 3	V'spěv'sem že imь mašu·
+3	v'zamь b(i)sk(u)рь otroka·
6 = 4	i postavi ga нь krilē stepen'nêemь predь oлыt(a)remь·
+2	i bl(agoslo)vi i reki·
6 = 3	G(ospod)i i su(sь) hrъste·
+3	<i>bl(agoslo)vi</i> otroka sego·
6	êk(o) že bl(agoslo)vilь esi vse pr(ava)dьnie tvoe·
4	Sice s'bl(agos)l(ovle)niemь bisi pod'striženь·

While this hypothetical reading is helpful for showing the rhythmical patterns in the text, it must be remembered, of course, that no such ideal text exists. Obviously, the reader's interpretation of any single colon or semicolon plays a pivotal role in the oral performance of the text, which he effects by discerning the overall phraseological stress by means of the graphical, lexical, parallelistic and other textual hints in the manuscripts. Whatever the lector's oral presentation might be, it cannot be ignored that this particular series with its longer cola stands in contrast to the shorter cola of the two series that surround it. From the listener's side, then, the contrasting rhythmical patterns highlight the change in sense and mood from passage to passage.

In the final series in this thematic section of the FSL, the writer injects an interpolation of the importance of the episcopal blessing for Wenceslaus' future. Three of the manuscripts read:

	Vat ₆ 176b		Ber ₁ 134b
2	Têmže mnimь	2	Têmže mnimь·
5	êk bniemь bskpa togo prvdngo	5	êko blvniemь bskpa togo prvdngo
2	imlvmi ego·	3	nače otrokь rasti·
3	načetь otrkь rasti·	3	blgodêtiû bžieû hranimь·
3	Iblgodêtiû bžieû h'ramь. ²³	6	Navičeže iknigi slověnskie ilatin'skie zêlo
5	naviče knge slvnskie ilatinskied√. ²⁴		dobrê ~

²³ Thus in the Vat₆, N₁ and Mos have *hranimь*, cf. VAJS 1929: 37.

²⁴ At the end of the line, the Ms has the letter *d* and a check mark (√) attached to the end of the unit *ilatinskie*. The subsequent line begins with the *čte* directive, i.e. the marking for a new reading in the Office. Quite obviously the word *dobrê* was intended here but left out.

	N ₁ 424c
2	Tēmže mnimь
5	êko bliemь biskupa togo prvdnago·
2	imlitvami ego·
6	načety otrokь rasti blgodêtiû bžieû hranimь·
3	Navičeže knigi slovênskie·
2	ilatinskie dobrê·

After the preceding complex series, the 2-stress phrase *Tēmže mnimь* attracts attention with its laconic forcefulness; moreover, the Ber₁ clearly marks this phrase as the introduction to a new textual division and the Ber₁ and N₁ rubricate the initial letter *t*.²⁵ In Vat₆ and N₁ these new series are not obviously regular (252335 and 252632), although the first 5-stress colon in the Vat₆ falls within the variations of isocolic patterning since it mirrors the 5-stress colon at the end. The N₁ offers the least regular of the isocola, though one might posit variations for designating the stress patterns of the cola and semicola. In fact, the picture changes somewhat when examining possible textual variations. One may consider that the missing phrase *i m(o)l(it)v(a)mi ego* in Vat₆ is a scribal lacuna which, when included, presents a series of long 6- and 7-stress cola. Based on Ber₁ and N₁, one can posit the following:

2	Tēmže mnimь·
7 = 5	êko blvlniemь bskpra togo prvdngo·
*+2	i molitvami ego·
6 = 3	nače otrkь rasti·
+3	blgodêtiû bžieû hranimь·
6 = 4	navičeže ikngi slovênskie ilatinskie
+2	zêlo dobrê·

The opening phrase remains purposefully contrastive, while the remainder of the series consists of a long 7-stress compound colon and two long, 6-stress cola. This gives an even greater rhythmical emphasis to the crucial lines *nače otrkь rasti· blgodêtiû bžieû hranimь* ('and the youth began to grow, nourished by the grace of God'). The *punctum* placed after the infinitive *rasti* in N₁ hints at a rhythmical pause here, which I have interpreted as a short stop between the two semicola of the 6-stress colon. Whether or not one numbers this as a

²⁵ In the monastic tradition in the Office of Matins, where this *vita* would likely have been read, the various parts of the work are interspersed with psalms and antiphons. The rubric *čte* (*čbtenie*) here certainly marks one of those divisions.

6-stress colon with two 3-stress semicola or as reduplicated 3-stress cola, the lines constitute the ‘pivot point’ of the frame series, which itself highlights the crucial development of Wenceslaus’ morally upright character. Indeed, it has been pointed out that this phrasing mirrors the biblical passage describing the adolescent Jesus when he returns to Nazareth and how he *increased in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and man* (Luke 2:52) after being found among the elders in the temple at Jerusalem (INGHAM 2006: 503; ANTONÍN 2017: 74–75). The final semicola serves the secondary purpose of ending the series in a 2-stress *cauda* that rhythmically mirrors the opening line *Têmže mnimь*. Though unusual in form, the series itself is a serious element of the work’s theological argument that Wenceslaus’ sanctity is based on the soundest of Christian foundations, a Christ-like typology (INGHAM 2006). In fact, the author’s somewhat emphatic use of the formula *Têmže mnimь* draws the reader’s or listener’s attention to the interpretation of events, as it does similarly in the very opening lines of the FSL.

4.3. *Princeps bonus*

Two further incidents in the FSL address the question of Wenceslaus’ saintly character; one directly depicts him showing the saintly traits of mercy and almsgiving, the other of the more mercurial ‘virtue’ of repentance. As part of the catechetical aspect of the FSL, Wenceslaus is shown following the admonitions of the Church to adhere to Christ’s command to perform acts of mercy and kindness:

	Vat ₆ 176b
5	Blgdětiûže bžieû vistinu večeslvь knzь·
4	netkmo knġi naviče dobro·
3	naivrou̇ svršenь bê·
3	Vsêmže ničimь dobratvoraše·
2	nagie oděvaše·
2	lačučeє pitaše·
4	s’tran’nie priemaše poejlskomь ġlasu·
3	v’dovicze nedaděše ozlobiti·
4	lůdi vse ubogie mlovaše·
3	bu služečimь rabotaše·
5	crkvьmže iv’sêmь služečimь vniň dob’ratvoraše·

At this point the Vat₆ lacks the explanatory sentence found in the other manuscripts describing Wenceslaus’ actions as the result of his adherence to the faith. The Ber₁ reads:

	Ber ₁ 134b		N ₁ 424c
4	B'lgdētiūže bžieū večeslavъ k'nezъ·	5	B'lgdētiūže bžieū vistinu večeslavъ
4	netak'mo knigi naviče dobrê·		knezъ·
3	naivrou s'vršēnъ bē·	4	netkmo knigi naviče dobrê·
4	Vsēmže ničimъ dob'ra tvoraše·	3	naveroū s'vršēnъ bē·
4 = 2	nagie odēvaše	4	Vsēmže ničimъ dobra tvoraše·
+2	lačūcee pitēče	5 = 2	nagie odēvaše·
4	s'tran'nie priemaše poejlsku glsu·	+2	lačūcee pitēša·
3	V'dovic'že nedadēše obidēti	4	stran'nie priemaše poejlsku glasu·
5	lūdi vse ubogie ibogtie milovše	3	Vdovic'že obidēti nedadiše·
3	bu rabotaūcimъ služaše·	4	lūdi uboge ibogate milovše
4	crkvi mnogie zlatъ krašaše·	3	bu rabotaūcimъ služaše
		4	crēkvi mnogie zlatomъ krašaše·

The obvious affirmation here is that Wenceslaus put into practice what he had learned in the holy books, presumably the Bible and other Christian writings. What's more, the underlying assertion here that praxis follows knowledge and understanding is basic to the argument for Wenceslaus' sanctity: even though in the 10th century the processes for canonization were established by local custom and were not universal in the Church, it was nowhere a given that a violent death at the hands of one's persecutors automatically granted the victim sainthood. This was particularly true if the death had been politically motivated. It was necessary everywhere to show that those murdered for the faith had shown an adherence to Church doctrine and had actively practised the Christian way of life. Thus, the ensuing list of Wenceslaus' good deeds and works of mercy are needed to emphasize the prince's exemplary life (CARIDI 2016: 29–31; 44).

The isocolic structures here reflect the 'bullet point' listing of Wenceslaus' virtuous acts. Presented in series of 3- and 4-stress cola and semicola, the short rhythmical lines lend themselves to an almost litany-like oral presentation. Here again, the lexis, syntax, and other rhetorical features help determine the 'line breaks' for the oral presenter. For example, while the Vat₆ consistently marks the ending of the cola with the *punctum*, the N₁ does not. Yet, the syntactical and phonic structures of the final four cola quoted here indicate the logical termination of the 'lines' and the overall isocolic pattern (3434). Thus, three of the four cola begin with a direct object *Vdovic'že – lūdi – crēkvi* and terminate in an imperfect tense verb in the third person singular (*nedadiše – milovše – krašaše*), while the third colon continues the verbal pattern (*služaše*). The rhythmical regularity is notably consistent across the textual

tradition even with the few anomalous cola. In fact, these passages are good examples of the rhythmical variations described elsewhere: the extension of one or two isocolic lines in an otherwise regular series is a common feature of Slavic isocolic prose, part of the natural phraseological stress, and often used to affect artistic variation (CRNKOVIĆ 2006: 34–35; CRNKOVIĆ 2008: 49–50; VALIAVITCHARSKA 2013: 154–156).

4.4 Sin and repentance

Although Wenceslaus' saintliness is a given throughout the text, his life is not depicted as without blemish. Thus, in a brief passage directly following the enumeration of his Christian characteristics, reference is made to the historical fact that he had exiled his mother, Dragomira, presumably as a political move precipitated by her alleged complicity in the murder of her mother-in-law, Ljudmila. As with other isocolic series, this scene of 'sin and repentance' is given varied rhythmical treatment:

	Vat ₆ 176c		Ber ₁ 134cd
3	Ti p'si zali·	3	Ti p'si zali
6	ivečeslva bhu naustili mtrъ iz'gnati	4	ivečeslva bhu prêzde naustili·
4	bezvini·	4	matrъ svoû bez'vini izag'nati
3	Saže razumê strahъ bži·	4	Navečeslavъ razumêvъ strah' bži
5	uboêse slvse glûca·	3	uboêse slvse glûca
5	Čti oca tvoego imtrъ tvoû·	5	Čti oca tvoego imtrъ tvoû·
4	iv'zlûbi iskrn'nago tvoego êk samъsebe·	5(?)	iv'zlûbiši is'kr'nago svoego kko smъ sbe· ²⁷
4	Hotêže isplniti vsku prvdu·	5	Hoteže is'plniti vsku prvdu bžiû
3	v'zvrati mtrъ svoû v'pragъ	3	v'zati matrъ svoû
4	velmi kaese igle	4	ivelmi kaese s'plačemъ govoraše·
3	gi nepostavi mnê zagrêhъ	6	Gi be nepostavi mnê sego zagrêhъ·
4	ipomnaes dvda prrka·	5	Ipominae slvo dvda prrka govoraše·
3	Glaše grêhъ ûnostimoee ²⁶	3	Grêhъ ûnosti moee
4	inevdêniê moego gi·	4	inevdêniê moego nepomeni gi·
3	kaezese čtêaše mtrъ svoû·	4	kaezese č'têêše matrъ svoû·
4	Onaže radvšese ovrê	4	Onaže radovašese ovêrê ego
	iblgdêti ego ûže tvoraše·	4	ioblgdêti ego ûže t'voraše·

²⁶ The manuscript does not have a white space between *ûnosti* and *moee*. Clearly, however, a rhythmical separation seems justified rendering a 4-stress colon here.

²⁷ See below at 4.5. I am inclined to posit a 5-stress colon here based on the witness of Vat₆ and Vos, which show *smъsbê* and *самса* as single units. The photographic reproduction of the N₁ available to me is not clear enough to determine the white spacing.

	N ₁ 424d
3	Тi psi zali
4	večeslava bêhu prêžde naustili
4	materь svoû bezvini izignati·
4	Navečeslvъ razumêvъ strahъ bži
3	uboêse sse glûča·
5	čti oca tvoego imaterь tvoû·
5(6?)	ivъzlûbiši iskrъnago svoego êko smъ sbê·
5	Hotêže isplniti vsku prvdu bžû·
4	vzvratilъ è materь svoû·
4	Ivlmise kaе splaçemъ glše·
5 (6?)	Gi be nepostavi mnê sego zagrêhъ·
4 (4+1)	Irominaše slvo davda proka· glše·
5	Grêhъ ûnosti moeє inевdeniê moego·
2	nevъspomeni gi·
4	Kaežese čtovaše materь svoû·
4	onaže radovašese ovrê ego·
2	ioblgodêtiûže tvoraše·

The Vostokov variant rather consistently and neatly punctuates the cola and semicola:

	Vos 56b
2	пси злии.
4	иже бѣша вачеслава наоучили.
4	выдати мтръ свою безвины.
4	вачеславъ же разумѣвъ страхъ бжий.
4	поману слово апла глща
6	чти отца и мтръ свою яко и самса.
5	и възлюбиши ближнаго своего яко и самса.
5	хотѧ исполнити всю правду бжию.
4	и приведе паки мтръ свою
5 = 2	велми плакашеса
+3	но каешеса гла.
5	ги бже не пвстави ми грѣха сего.
4	поману же слово прорка двда.
5	грѣхъ уности моеѧ и невидѣниѧ моего
2	не помани оубоги
4	тѣмже чташе мтръ свою.
5	вна же радовашеса вѣрѣ сна своего.
4	и ѡ блгдгню юже твораше оубогимъ

Assuredly the sophisticated reader or listener of this tale would understand the theological nuance presented here: Following the classical manner of the Church's list of steps necessary for forgiveness, Wenceslaus recognizes his sin and is remorseful – although his contrition is of the 'imperfect' variety based on the fear of divine wrath – which leads to his confession and reparation. The scene is integral to the text's theological arguments that salvation is in fact available to all sinners since everyone, including the future martyr Wenceslaus, is inclined to sin and is therefore in need of forgiveness. Crucial to the Church's sacramental view of forgiveness of sins is the necessity of reparation, which Wenceslaus effects by means of intense reparative deeds, enumerated both before and after this section (INGHAM 2006: 505–506).

As always, the lector reading had leeway in his oral performance so long as he did not destroy the basic isocolic structures inherent in the text. Thus, the rhythmical isocola here lend themselves to underlining the interplay of the story's action with the crucial theme of forgiveness. The prince's entrapment by his dodgy fellow countrymen is introduced with a curt, invective-like 3-stress colon (*Ti pьsi zali*), indicting the malefactors who would force the young ruler into doing evil. This expression can be read as a logical separate phrase and in the Vostokov variant is followed by a relative clause introduced by the pronoun *уже*. The Vat and Vos versions encourage this interpretation, placing the *punctum* after *zali* / *злuiu*.²⁸

4.5. Rhythmical series as dramatic exposition

No less dramatic is the resolution of this neatly framed rhythmical series (34343 Vat₆, N₁) that spells out Wenceslaus' fear at having realized his sin. What's more, this final colon leads directly to the biblical and theological justification of, and thus the Christian social necessity for, Wenceslaus' political decision to return his mother from exile. All of the manuscripts employ a rhythmical interplay of longer cola of 5-stresses used for direct quotations and shorter cola of 3- and 4-stresses, used for narration and interpolation. For example, the Vat₆ shows a clean division of the cola, marked by the *puncta*, in the series

²⁸ Modern translators recognize the phrasal nature of this line as well. The online Russian translation of the Vos adds a comma here, “злы псы, поговорили...” (for the online reference see the bibliography), while the Czech translation renders the phrase as a relative clause, “Tíž psové zlí, kteří Václava dříve navedli...” (ROGOV 1976: 72). Kantor's English version of the FSL uses an exclamation point: “Evil dogs!” (KANTOR 1990: 62).

	Vat ₆ 176c
5	Čti oca tvoego imtrъ tvoû·
5	ivzlûbi iskrn'nago tvoego ê ^k samъsebe·
4	Hotêže isplniti vsku prvdu·
4	vzvratî mtrъ svoû v'pragъ

where the first two 5-stress cola paraphrase the biblical commandments to honour one's parents (Exod. 20:12) and to love's one's neighbour as oneself (Matt. 19:19) and are then followed by the 4-stress couplet that show Wenceslaus putting the commandments into personal practice. Both the Ber₁ and N₁ have anomalous word spacing at the phrase *samъ sebe*:

	Ber ₁ 134cd		N ₁ 424d
5	Čti oca tvoego imtrъ tvoû·	5	čti oca tvoego imaterъ tvoû·
5 (6?)	iv'zlûbiši is'krn'nago svoego kko smъ sbe·	5 (6?)	ivъzlûbiši iskrnъnago svoego êko smъ sbê·
5	Hotêže is'plniti vsku prvdu bžiû	5	Hotêže isplniti vsku prvdu bžiû·
3	v'zrati matrъ svoû	4	vzvratilъ è materъ svoû·
4	ivelmi kaese s'plačemъ govoraše·	4	ivlmise kae splačemъ glše·

Although our interpretation of the second colon as 5-stresses is not consonant with the white spacing in Ber₁ and N₁, as noted elsewhere, such minor variations in the isocolic rhythm do not vitiate the overall validity of the isocolic principle. In fact, the Vat₆ conjoins the reflexive and emphatic forms as one stress unit (*samъsebe*), while the other two manuscripts present them separately (*smъ sbe* and *smъ sbê*). The Vostokov manuscript of the FSL also joins the two as *самса*. It seems reasonable to affirm here that the various manuscripts confirm our earlier assertions that there is a certain amount of flexibility to the isocolic principle of which the mediaeval writers took advantage in composing their texts. However, one may interpret these passages, the rhythmical regularity is a persistent feature of the FSL here in all its variants.

Ingham was among the first to note the thematic importance of both this passage and the narrative of Boleslav's remorse for his brother's murder as examples of humble Christian behaviour, solidifying the Catholic doctrine of salvific grace (INGHAM 2006: 505–507). Indeed, Ingham's discussion of both Wenceslaus' and his brother's acts of repentance shows an astute recognition of the paramount importance that biblical references played in the early Slavic FSL. On the other hand, it is less easy to accept his assertion that the FSL shows a 'lack of surface sophistication' (INGHAM 2006: 501), being, he infers, 'rather unpolished'. As I have shown throughout, the connexions between the themes

and motifs of the work are presented in rather sophisticated rhythmical isocola. It is not surprising, then, that the thematic parallels that Ingham points to are also artistically composed in ways consistent with the masterful use of the isocolon and the pervasive structural marking of biblical references.

4.6. The martyr-prince

Certainly the theme of repentance and salvation is strongly emphasized in the FSL, yet, in spite of the lack of directly naming Wenceslaus a saint, the theme of martyrdom is equally emphatic. Thus, the passage depicting the duke's murder is crucial to establishing his *cultus* as a martyr and, aside from being the most dramatic scene in the work, is quite illustrative of the rhythmical alternation between interpretive and factual presentations. The three manuscripts show a masterful use of the isocolic rhythm to convey the fast pace of the murderous death scene in dramatic contrast to the slower rhythm of both Boleslav's and Wenceslaus' direct speech. The action parts are composed primarily of 3- and 4-stress cola, whereas the quotations are made of longer, 5- and 6-stress cola. On hearing the Matins bell and arising, Wenceslaus offers the formulaic morning prayer, presented in short cola in all three versions, and heads off to the morning office. Although the manuscripts are not in lock step agreement in all details, each of them incorporates a 4-stress colon for the opening phrases followed by a 3-stress series. As usual, seemingly anomalous cola fall within acceptable rhythmical tolerances. The rhythmical variations in the opening lines of this scene serve as a good example of the limited flexibility the individual cola have within the serial units.

	Vat ₆ 176d		Ber ₁ 135b		N ₁ 425b
4	Ūtruže bivšu v'zvoniše naūtrnū·	4	Ūtruže biv'shu v'zvoni- še naūtrnū·	4	Ūtruže bivšu zvoniše naūtrnū·
4	Večeslvže slišavъ zvонъ irče	4	večeslavže slišav' zvонъ rče	4	večeslavže slišavъ zvонъ reče
3	Hvla tbê gi	3	Slva tbê gi	3	Hvla tebê gi
4	iže daľ esi nmъ	3	iže daľ esi	3	iže daľ esi
3	dobiti ūtra sego·	3	dobiti ūtra sego	3	doživiti doŭtra sego·
3	ivstvъ ide naūtrnū·	3	iv'stavъ poide naūtrnū·	3	ivstvъ poide naūtrnū
6	iabie sastiže i bratъ ego boleslvъ v'ratehъ	5	abieže sastižei boleslvъ v'vratêhъ crkvnihъ·	4	Abieže sastignui bole- slavъ vavratêhъ·
4	Irče emu bratъ večes- lvъ·	4	večeslvže ozrêv'se reče k'nemu	4	Večeslav'že ozrêse knemu ireče·
5	Dobrê nmъ službenъ bê včera	6	Brate dobarъ bê namъ služabnikъ v'čera·	6(5)	Brate dobarъ bê nmъ služabnikъ včera·

All of the manuscripts begin with the 4-stress double cola, followed by varying 3- and 4-stress cola and ending with both the change of scene, and of rhythmical pattern that signals Boleslav's entrance. The Vat₆ has the addition of the dative pronoun *namь*, lending the fourth line here 4-stresses, while the other two manuscripts lack the pronoun and thus have a 3-stress line here. The lector of the Vat₆ could interpret the oral reading in a few ways here. The three lines (*Hvla tbê ... ūtra sego*) may be seen as a framed series (343, with the *punctum* at the end), terminating in 3-stress colon, also ending with the *punctum*. This interpretation allows for a more forceful reading of the final line (*ivstvь ide naűtrnŭ*), which underlines Wenceslaus' fateful decision to attend Matins and heightening the irony that his pious lifestyle sends him into his brother's trap. On the other hand, the Ber₁ and N₁, lacking the pronoun *namь*, continue the 3-stress pattern of the series and show less contrast. It can be noted, though, that the N₁ is punctuated after the third (*doživiti doūtra sego*) and fourth lines (*iv'stavь poide naűtrnŭ*), lending the same possibility for emphasis as in the Vat₆. From whichever manuscript the lector might have read these series to his audience, he was still restrained to a short, almost clipped and dramatically fast-paced presentation of the scene.

Following the duke's rush not to miss morning prayers, the pace of the narrative slows as Boleslav appears and halts his brother's progress into the church. The rhythmical switch to longer cola adds to the sense of hesitation: Vat₆ has a punctuated 6-stress colon, the Ber₁ has a 5-stress colon here, while the N₁, with its 4-stress colon, continues the rhythmical pattern established at the beginning of the scene. The isocolic regularity of this series remains problematic, no manuscript being perfect in form (the Vat₆ has 645; Ber₁ has 456; N₁ has the more regular 446). Again, one may see this as part and parcel of the minor variations and normal flexibility of the isocolon in general. Indeed, the somewhat hesitant nature of the rhythmical structures here parallel Wenceslaus' hesitation in halting his entrance into the church. Whatever the oral interpretation, the dramatic pace is slowed here and renewed in the next scene of murderous violence.

The series begins primarily as 3- and 4-stress cola, re-establishing the sense of urgency created earlier and stepping up the tempo. Boleslav's fall into the devil's temptation is decisive and consequential:

	Vat ₆ 176d		Ber ₁ 135b		N ₁ 425b
4	Boleslvuže d'êvlu i prinikšu vsrce	4	Boleslavuže d'êv'lu prinik'shu v'uho	4	Boleslvuže prinikšu dêvlu vauho·
3	irač'shu aki iūdê·	3	iraz'vrač'shu srce ego·	5 = 3	irazvrzšu srce ego·
3	iizvlěkь mčь rče·	4	daizvlěkь mečь otvêca reki·	+ 2	daizvlěkь mečь·
3	Nnete hoču ubiti·			3	otveča knemu reki·
4	Seže rekь udarii pog'lavê·	4	Nine tbe hoču ubiti·	5	nine tbê hoču uni biti·
3	Večeslvže obračse irče·	5	Seže rekь udarii mečemь poglvê·	5	Sieže rekь udarii poglavi mečemь·
4	Čto esi umislilь brate·	4	Večeslavže obrač'se k'nemu rče·	4	Večeslvь obrač'se knemu ireče·
3	iêmi vržei nazmlû·	4	Čto esi umislil' brate·	3	Čto esi umislilь brate·
3	ietrь d'ruža pritekь	3	iêmь povržei nazmlû·	3	iêmь podvržei nazmlû
3	udri večeslva vruku	3	Slugažь eterь pritekь	3	Tužažь eterь pritekь·
3	večeslvže vrějensi rukoû	3	ute večeslava v'ruku·	3	iute večeslva porucê·
4	puč' brata pobêže k'crkvê	3	Saže vrêdan'si rukoû·	3	Saže vrêždenь rukoû·
		4	pučь bratra pobêže k'c'rkvi·	4	pučь brata pobêže vcrêkavь·

There is no small irony in Wenceslaus' renewed haste to the church, the matter of life and death spurring on his desire and, now pressing, need for prayer. The rhythmical variations found among the three texts are generally within the norms, while a few may be explained by changes throughout the textual transmission process. The Vat₆ and Ber₁ testify here to Boleslav's desire to kill his brother (*N(i)ne te(be) hoču ubiti*). The N₁ and Vos attribute a differing, if more piercingly sarcastic, line to Boleslav (*nine t(e)bê hoču uni biti*). Either evil sentiment fits the context and the sense of betrayal that Wenceslaus experiences, even if the prosodic structure is more regular in the Vat₆ and Ber₁. Without the comparative *uni*, the colon has four stresses, which fits a more consistent isocolic pattern of 3- and 4-stress cola. A similar rhythmical anomaly occurs in the following line, in which the Ber₁ and N₁ indicate the weapon (*mečemь*) of Boleslav's assault, which lacks in the Vat₆. Yet, as in many other instances, the single stress difference in these lines does not upset the overall rhythmical patterns here, all of which forcefully end the series with Boleslav's condemning words.

The artistic swing from shorter to longer cola continues in the 'end game' as the duke is mortally stricken, depicted in a more moderated, explanatory rhythm:

	Vat ₆ 177a		Ber ₁ 135b		N ₁ 425d
5	zlodêêže· b· rekoma	5	Zlodêêže d'va rekoma	5	Zlodêêže· b· rekoma· tira·
	tira ičasta		tira ičasta		ičasta·
3	ubistai v'vratehь	3	ubistai v'vratêhь crkve-	3	ubistai vavratêhь crêkv-
	crkvnihь·		nih'·		enihь
5 = 3	Boleslvže pritekь	4	Gnêvisaže prišadь rebra	5	Gnêvisaže etetрь pripadь
	vgnêvê		emu		rebra emu
+2	probodei mečemь·	2	probode mečemь·	2	probode mečemь·
6	Večeslvže abie is'pu-	6	Večeslavže abie ispusti dhь	6	Večeslavže abie ispusti
	sti dhь svoi rki·		svoi reki·		duhь svoi reki
6	Vrucê t'voi gi predaû	6	Vrucê tvoi gi predaû dhь	6	Vrucê tvoi gi predaû
	duhь moi·		moi·		dhь moi·
6	Ubišeže mastinû	6	Ubišeže tudêžde v'tomь	6	Ubišeže tkoe vtomь
	etra častna mža		gradê		gradê
	večeslva·	3	imastinû etera	3	imastinu· etera·
			častna mža večeslavla·		častna mža večeslavla·

The final death blows conclude Wenceslaus' desperate run to the church and are presented in increasingly longer cola and ultimately in resigned and plaintive tones. The formulaic 'giving up the ghost' and remitting his soul to God again show Wenceslaus as personally pious and saintly regardless of his circumstances. Thus, his martyr's death is laid out as more than a political assassination, but as a requisite proof for sainthood (CARIDI 2016: 102–106). It is important to note, as Ingham has (INGHAM 2006: 504), that equating Wenceslaus' final words with those of Christ crucified reveals the dying ruler's humility. Standing in rhythmical contrast to the more staccato series preceding it, the 6-stress cola here present this act of ultimate resignation to God in a *legato* colon that underscores Wenceslaus' tragic end and his quiet acceptance to his fate. The martyrdom scene, an affair full of both murderous frenzy and humble piety, reveals a clever use of rhythmical patterns that enhance the contrast between the violent action of murder and the calm certitude of faith in salvation. Again, in addition to its function as textual adornment, the isocolic structures act as motivators for the lector and the listener to pay attention to the work's higher meanings.

5. CONCLUSION

Theme and form are clearly and artfully intertwined in the compositional layers of the FSL. As our examples have shown, the verbal texture of the work is presented in rhythmical isocolic prose throughout and takes masterful advantage of the Slavic language's rhythms to vary the pace and emphasis of any given passage in concert with the passage's importance and message. The overriding themes of grace, sin, repentance, atonement and, in Wenceslaus' case, martyrdom are likewise enhanced by the rhetorical compositional effects inherent in the isocola.

The FSL is composed following the tenets of the isocolic principle, the use of the isocolon that often characterised the rhetorical structures of mediaeval Slavic prose. The FSL shows many of the features of the Slavic isocolon as heretofore defined, including diverse simple, alternating and framed series made of either simple or compound cola. In turn, these various rhythmical patterns indicate that the lector, i.e. the reader charged with reading the text aloud, was guided in his oral performance by the rhythmical patterns of the isocola. While graphic, lexical and parallel constructions, among others, help reveal these rhythmical structures, the lector nonetheless had some discretion in his interpretation of the oral presentation. Nor were these isocolic structures limited to adding solely to the text's ornamental functions, to giving the lector a guide for an aesthetically pleasing and sonorous public reading. Thus throughout our analysis it is shown that the major thematic material of the FSL – the story's meaning, if you will – can be enhanced for the listener if the lector artistically reads the text in a way that the isocola suggest are important passages. In general, shorter, simple isocolic series often depict swift action, or list traits, and the like, whereas compound cola often offer didactic or catechetical interpolations. These interpretive passages are, in their own right, often based on the assumption of the listener's ability to recognise their direct or implied connexions to the Christian Scriptures and serve as clues for grasping the work's higher meaning. Thus the rhetorical features that constitute the isocolic principle at play here can be seen as invaluable aids in the presentation of the overall meaning of the FSL: that Wenceslaus was a faithful Catholic who, in spite of certain faults, adhered to the admonitions of the Church to live and rule in the spirit of charity and humility and should be ranked among the saints for his martyrdom and exemplary life.

SOURCES

- Vat₆ = *Vatican Breviary Illyrico 6*, mid- or third quarter of the 14th century, Rome, Vatican Apostolic Library, call number *Borg. illir. 6*. Photographs of originals at the Old Church Slavonic Institute, Zagreb.
- Ber₁ = *The First Beram (Ljubljana) Breviary*, late 14th century, Ljubljana, National and University Library, call number *MS 161*. URL: <https://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:IMG-RYDYCFUG> (15. 9. 2021.)
- Mosk = *Moscow Breviary*, 1442–1443, Moscow, Russian State Library, Rumjancev Collection, call number *F.270 51/1481*.
- N₁ = *The First Novi Breviary*, 1459, Novi Vinodolski, parish office. Printed photo reproduction in PASTRNEK 1903.
- N₂ = *The Second Novi Breviary*, 1495, Novi Vinodolski, parish office. Printed photo reproduction in PANTELIC; NAZOR 1977.
- RCJHR = *Rječnik crkvenoslavenskoga jezika hrvatske redakcije*. Vol. II. 2015. Z. Hauptová, M. Klenovar, I. Mulc, Z. Ribarova, J. Vela, A. Nazor (ur.). Zagreb: Staroslavenski institut.
- Vos = *Vostokov* eastern Cyrillic Slavic version of FSL first classified by A. H. Vostokov, the beginning of the 16th century, Moscow, Russian State Library, N. P. Rumjancev Collection RGB f. 256, No. 436. Moscow. Printed photo reproduction in KANTOR 1983: 140–161.

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Summary

Denis CRNKOVIĆ

RITMIČKE I TEMATSKÉ STUKTURE U HRVATSKOCRKVENO-SLAVENSKOM ŽIVOTU SV. VEĆESLAVA

Prva slavenska inačica srednjovjekovnoga *Života sv. Većeslava* nudi mogućnosti za razna retorička, stilistička i tematska istraživanja. U ovome se radu predstavlja kako formalne ritmičke strukture obogaćuju tematski svijet *Života sv. Većeslava*. Pokazuje se da je *Život* sastavljen od ritmički strukturirane proze, kako je opisana u teoriji *izokoličnog principa* Richarda Picchija, te da ritmički obrasci igraju važnu ulogu u pojačavanju izvedbenih aspekata djela i, obratno, u isticanju njegove tematike. Uključujući i sam opis sv. Većeslava kao dobroga i svetoga kneza i mučenika, koji se slušateljima istodobno predstavlja kao primjer kršćanskoga ponašanja, ovi se teološki orijentirani i biblijski nadahnuti lajtmotivi vješto primjenjuju na događaje iz njegova pobožnoga života. S retoričkoga i kompozicijskoga gledišta pokazuje se da uzajamno djelovanje kontrastnih ritmičkih obrazaca i izokoličnih struktura poboljšava obradu tema posredstvom različitih jukstapozicija, kontrasta, paralelizama, disjunkcija i sličnih retoričkih figura. Za razliku od ocjena da je *Život sv. Većeslava* prilično primitivan tekst, zaključuje se da je riječ o složenom i vješto napisanom književnom djelu.

Ključne riječi: hrvatska crkvenoslavenska inačica *Života sv. Većeslava*, srednjovjekovna slavenska retorika, isokolička načela, usmena tekstualna izvedba

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