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**SAINT VLADIMIR OF ZETA
BETWEEN HISTORIOGRAPHY AND HAGIOGRAPHY**

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University

Budapest

May 2012

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Stefan Trajković Filipović

(Serbia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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I, the undersigned, **Stefan Trajković Filipović**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 16 May 2012

Signature

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Department of Medieval Studies for the time and energy invested in me during this academic year. I would like to give special thanks to my supervisor Marianne Saghy for support and useful advice in the process of writing this thesis. Her comments provided me with the opportunity to have a better understanding of my topic. I am also grateful for the motivation and support I have received from my colleagues and friends who always had enough patience to listen to me and will to offer me new ideas and insightful questions.

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INTRODUCTION

...’Come quickly my soldiers, come quickly and save me for Vladimir wishes to kill me!’ Having said that he rose from his throne and tried to escape. Suddenly he was struck by an Angel, fell to the ground and died both in the body and the soul... And so it happened that the vicious murderer, who, at lunch, had ordered blessed Vladimir to be beheaded and thus made him a martyr, was killed while dinning. He became Satan’s angel.¹

This is how *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea* describes the death of John Vladislav, Bulgarian Tsar and the murderer of Vladimir of Zeta.² In Serbian hagiography and historiography Vladimir is considered the first Serbian “holy king,” preceding the holy kings of the Nemanjid dynasty in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. What is more, Vladimir of Zeta is also seen as the first Serbian “martyr ruler,” which differentiates him from the later tradition of Nemanjid holy rulers.³

Chapter XXXVI of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea* offers a full account of the life and death of Vladimir. This thesis does not attempt to evaluate the credibility of the information in Chapter XXXVI of *The Annals*; it will not deal with the reconstruction of the historical reality of the eleventh century history and the reign of Vladimir of Zeta. The focus will be on the text of the Chapter itself, its structure, possible literary contexts, and construction. I will address the results of previous research dealing with the analysis of the text and discuss them, focusing on their implications and possible alternatives. However, before dealing with the problems and questions that Chapter XXXVI carries with it there are two topics that should be discussed. The first topic

¹ *Currite mei milites, currite et defendite me quia Vladimirus occidere me vult!” Et haec dicens surrexit de solio suo ut fugeret. Statimque percussus ab angelo corruit in terram et mortuus est corpore et anima... Sicque factum est ut nequissimus homicida, qui sedens ad prandium beatum Vladimirus decollari iusserat et martyrem fecerat, ipse hora cenae percuteretur ut angelus Satanae efficeretur.* [Tibor Živković] Тибор Живковић, *Gesta Regum Sclavorum I* (Belgrade: Institute of History – Ostrog Monastery, 2009): 138-139.

² Zeta (Dioclea) was a small medieval Serbian principality on the Adriatic coast (in modern Montenegro).

concerns *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*, a source where the story about Vladimir is found. It is a problematic source burdened with many different interpretations from both academic and non-academic circles. The second concerns the main theme of the story about Vladimir – the death of a holy ruler as a martyr. Therefore, it would be useful to make a survey of development of the literature dealing with martyred rulers in the early medieval Christian world. The literary context of martyred rulers deserves more attention because it was of special importance for the analysis of the Chapter XXXVI of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*.

³ The next martyr ruler in medieval Serbian literature was Prince Lazar, who died fighting the Turks at the battle of Kosovo in 1389. See Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić, “Patterns of Royal Sanctity in the Royal Ideology of Medieval Serbia. Continuity and Change,” *Balkanica* 37 (2006): 69-79.

CHAPTER I

THE ANNALS OF A PRIEST OF DIOCLEA AND ITS PROBLEMS

Much has been written about *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*. It is a controversial text burdened with never-ending historiographical debates. In this chapter I focus on the points from previous research that dealt with issues that will be relevant for my thesis, not trying to make a survey of all the previous research into *The Annals*.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, in 1601, Mauro Orbini (1555/6 - 1610), a Benedictine monk and historian from Ragusa (Dubrovnik),⁴ published a book entitled *The Realm of the Slavs* on the history of the Slavic peoples, their dynasties and eminent rulers in the Balkans. In the introduction Orbini reproduced *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*, an anonymous chronicle whose author, as well as the place, time and context of creation are unknown. *The Annals* tell a story of a glorious Slavic state and the famous Slavic dynasty that governed it for generations and centuries. The story begins with the settling of the Slavs in the Balkans and the foundation of their state. The territory of this state covered the territories of several medieval and modern political entities and the history covered the period from Late Antique times to the High Middle Ages. According to *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*, the territory of the Slav state broke up and the members of the Slavic dynasty become more and more numerous, often to a point that confuses the reader. The last ruler of the dynasty governed Dioclea and had pretensions to regaining the kingdom of his ancestors.

Modern historiography has offered many different interpretations of *The Annals*, usually doubting its authenticity as a historical source. The “Slavic state” is mentioned only in *The Annals* and nowhere else. The same applies to most of the names in *The Annals* which cannot be found in other relevant source material. At the end of *The Annals* the accounts of the reigns of Slavic kings seem more credible, closer to the accounts from other

source material, but they are often put in politically and chronologically specific and impossible frameworks.⁵ However, in spite of the doubts about its credibility, especially when it comes to the earliest periods of the history of the “Slavic state,” *The Annals* is an interesting source material that attracts scholarly attention. There have been many attempts to find historically credible information or frameworks within the fictional narrative; *The Annals* give a survey of early medieval Balkan history, the period of Balkan history that is often lacking in other source material. Scholars have tended to address *The Annals* so they could fill in the gaps in research.⁶

Orbini’s edition of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea* as a part of his *Realm of the Slavs* is the oldest edition of the source. It was published in Italian, therefore it has been considered as the Italian redaction of the text. The text of *The Annals* is also found in two manuscripts dating from the middle of the seventeenth century written in Latin (the Latin redaction).⁷ The third redaction of the text is the Croatian redaction, a sixteenth-century manuscript. While the differences between the Italian and Latin redaction are small, the Croatian redaction is a much shorter text that differs from the other redactions and gives its own ending to the story of the Slavic state.⁸

After Orbini’s publication, the next edition of *The Annals* dates to the second half of the seventeenth century. In 1668, Johannes Lucius published *The Annals* based on the Latin redaction, that is, on the manuscript tradition of the seventeenth century,⁹ as well as the Latin

⁴ On Orbini, see [Miroslav Pantić] Мирослав Панџић, “Мавро Орбин – живот и рад,” [Mauro Orbini – Life and Work] in *Краљевство Словена* [The Realm of the Slavs] (Beograd: Sezam Book, 2006): XI-CXV.

⁵ [Tibor, Živković] Тибор Живковић, *Портрети српских владара (IX-XII век)* [Portraits of Serbian Rulers (IX-XII century)] (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2006): 5.

⁶ The geographic information of *The Annals* is usually considered credible. A good example of using the data of *The Annals* is *Историја Црне Горе I* [History of Montenegro I] (Titograd: Redakcija za istoriju Crne Gore, 1967): 421.

⁷ One manuscript is kept in the Vatican, the other, discovered in 1962, in Belgrade.

⁸ The shorter Croatian redaction does not contain the story of St. Vladimir of Zeta.

⁹ Solange Bujan argues that Latin redaction of *The Annals* is based on the Italian redaction, that is, on Mauro Orbini’s text. Therefore, she opposes the accepted opinion that the manuscript tradition proves that an earlier version of the chronicle existed before Orbini’s publication. See Solange Bujan, “La chronique de prêtre de Dioclée: un faux document historique,” *Revue des études byzantine* 66 (2008): 30-36. See also Solange Bujan,

translation of the Croatian redaction. Several editions followed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries based on the Latin and/or Croatian redactions. Critical editions were also prepared;¹⁰ the latest critical edition of *The Annals* is by Tibor Živković. This is the edition that I use in this thesis.¹¹

The Annals has raised one important question, namely, the dating of the source and its context. It has been suspected for long a time that *The Annals* were written in the twelfth century and various explanations and contexts have been offered. The chronicle may have been written between 1150 and 1180, during the conflict between the archbishoprics of Bar and Dubrovnik, or in the context of the conflict between the rulers of Zeta and the emerging power of the rulers of Raška.¹²

The dating of the chronicle to the twelfth century is widely accepted, but three alternative datings have also been offered. Slavko Mijušković argues that *The Annals* is not a finished work and that its text is part of a lost broader history, now lost, which originally also included the history of the later Serbian Nemanjid dynasty. One of the arguments for this opinion is that at the end of *The Annals* the narrative becomes confusing; if the chronicle were written in the twelfth century, its author would not have been able to write in this manner about events that were familiar to his contemporaries. Mijušković further argues that the chronicle was written in the second half of fourteenth century or in the first half of

“Orbinijevo izdanje “Ljetopisa popa Dukljanina:” povijesni falsifikat,” [Orbini’s Edition of the “Annals of a Priest of Dioclea:” A Historical Forgery] *Radovi – Zavod za hrvatsku povijest* 43 (2011): 53-77.

¹⁰ See [Ferdo Šišić] Фердо Шишић, *Летопис попа Дукљанина* [*The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*] (Beograd-Zagreb: Zaklada tiskare Narodnih novina, 1928), and Vladimir Mošin, *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina : latinski tekst sa hrvatskim prijevodom i "Hrvatska kronika"* [*The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea: Latin Text with Croatian Translation and “Croatian Chronicle”*] (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1950), and [Slavko Mijušković] Славко Мијушковић, *Летопис попа Дукљанина* [*The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1988).

¹¹ [Tibor Živković] Тибор Живковић, *Gesta Regum Sclavorum I-II* (Belgrade: Institute of History - Ostrog Monastery, 2009).

¹² See [Nikola Banašević] Никола Банашевић, *Летопис попа Дукљанина и народна предања* [*The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea and Folk Tales*] (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1971): 279. Tibor Živković gives an even more precise dating of *The Annals*, putting its creation between the years of 1143 and 1164/5 [Tibor Živković] Тибор Живковић, “Легенда о Павлимиру Белу,” [Legend on Pavlimir Belo] *Istorijski časopis* Vol. 50 (2003): 12.

fifteenth century as an ideological text ordered by the local Balšić family from Zeta to prove its legitimate rule over the area.¹³

Mijušković's dating and contextualization have not been accepted and have been criticized.¹⁴ Tibor Živković has offered another alternative to the dating in the twelfth century in the second volume of his critical edition of *The Annals*.¹⁵ He concludes that *The Annals* was written on two occasions, in two different places, in a short time period. Živković even argues that he found the probable name of the author of the chronicle; a Cistercian monk of Bohemian origin called Rudger, who is supposed to have written *The Annals* between 1295 and 1301.

Živković's opinion, like Mijušković's, has also been criticized.¹⁶ Solange Bujan, offering the third alternative to the dating in the twelfth century, takes a different approach to the text of the chronicle. She tries to reconstruct the way in which the text was constructed, starting from the possibility that it was invented by Mauro Orbini. She argues that as a fictional narrative *The Annals* belong to the context of strengthening of South Slavic identity and unity in the late sixteenth century.¹⁷

The Croatian redaction has been considered a short version of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*, written in the twelfth century, and as such it has received little attention. Bujan

¹³ See [Slavko Mijušković] Славко Мијушковић, *Љетопис попа Дукљанина*.

¹⁴ [Tibor Živković] Тибор Живковић, *Gesta Regum Sclavorum II* (Belgrade: Institute of History - Ostrog Monastery, 2009): 30.

¹⁵ In his edition of the source Tibor Živković changed his opinion about the dating of the chronicle; in his earlier works he argued for the dating in the twelfth century. *Ibid.*, 373-379.

¹⁶ Mladen Ančić has pointed out, among other things, that Živković used source material selectively. Mladen Ančić, "Kako čitati Ljetopis popa Dukljanina nakon monografije Tibora Živkovića" [How to Read *The Annals* of a Priest of Dioclea after Tibor Živković's edition] (unpublished paper presented at the international conference: "Ljetopis popa Dukljanina pred izazovima novije istoriografije" [*The Annals* of a Priest of Dioclea and the Challenges of Contemporary Historiography], Zagreb, 2011).

¹⁷ Invented historical narratives were not unknown phenomena in the period. At the end of sixteenth century, the Ottomans governed most of the Balkans. Rebellions against their rule at the end of the sixteenth century inspired a new wave of ideas about a crusade against the Turks. That was the context in which *The Realm of the Slavs* was published. The book remained an important reference for history of south Slavic peoples in the following centuries. Bujan. "La chronique de prêtre de Dioclée: un faux document historique," 75. See also Zdenko Zlatar, "Kraljevstvo Slavena u međunarodnom političkom, ekonomskom i kulturnom kontekstu (o. 1550-1610)," [The Realm of the Slavs in Its International Political, Economic and Cultural Context (c. 1550-1610)] *Radovi-Zavod za hrvatsku povijest* 43 (2011): 13-34.

reverses the argument. She argues that the Croatian redaction was a popular text in the sixteenth century and that Orbini used it as one of the two main sources when writing *The Annals* at the end of sixteenth century. The second main source he used was the medieval text of the *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, written between twelfth and fourteenth century.¹⁸ However, these two sources were not enough to create a chronicle. Orbini also used other source material, for example, Byzantine sources, and that explains various similarities between details found in *The Annals* and other medieval sources.¹⁹ In this way, stories from *The Annals* could gained a historical framework, with the goal of writing a work that would resemble a medieval chronicle about South Slavic peoples united in one state, as an introduction to the later chapters of *The Realm of the Slavs*.²⁰

As early as 1951, Nikola Radojčić said that *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea* was being researched, but it was never actually researched, that is, the source is the object of a never-ending debate.²¹ However, for the purpose of my thesis, I will consider the alternative dating and contextualization suggested by Solange Bujan, as well as the traditional one in the twelfth century, as relevant references for my work.

¹⁸ Bujan. “La chronique de prêtre de Dioclée,” 13.

¹⁹ Mauro Orbini also used Byzantine sources for the rest of *The Realm of the Slavs*. Not only did Orbini use various sources but he also copied references from them, see Sima Ćirković, “Izvori Mavra Orbina: addenda et corrigenda,” [The sources of Mauro Orbini: addenda et corrigenda] *Radovi-Zavod za hrvatsku povijest* 43 (2011): 55-62 and [Sima Ćirković] Сима Ћирковић, “Извори Мавра Орбина,” [Sources of Mauro Orbini] in *Краљевство Словена* [The Realm of the Slavs] (Beograd: Sezam Book, 2006): 439-519.

²⁰ Ludwig Steindorff opposes Bujan’s interpretation, claiming that the Croatian redaction could not be an older version than Orbini’s Italian redaction, nor that Orbini’s text could be the basis of the later edition of Johannes Lucius. He argues that Orbini was not inventing the text; he claims that Orbini was careful when referring to other authors. He also argues for the traditional dating of *The Annals* to the twelfth century, Ludwig Steindorff, “Vizija popa Dukljanina i nje(z)ni izvori: u duhu kojeg vremena?” [The Vision of Priest of Dioclea and Its Sources: in the Spirit of which Age?] (unpublished paper presented at the international conference: “Ljetopis popa Dukljanina pred izazovima novije istoriografije” [The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea and the Challenges of Contemporary Historiography], Zagreb, 2011).

²¹ [Nikola Radojčić] Никола Радојчић, *О најтамнијем одељку Барског родослова* [On the Darkest Part of the Bar Genealogy] (Cetinje, 1951): 71.

CHAPTER II

HOLY KINGS AND MARTYRED RULERS IN EARLY MEDIEVAL EUROPE

Martyred rulers were a particular type of “holy king.”²² Belief in the sanctity of the king in the Middle Ages has been traced back variously to Classical emperor worship, pagan sacred kingship,²³ and the Christian cult of the saints.

Although the Christian concept of holiness excluded and even opposed rulers in the beginning,²⁴ holy rulers appeared from the fifth century on, modeled after venerated Christian martyrs. The Merovingian kings were considered holy not because of their positions as rulers, but because of personal worth and virtue: they rejected kingship, withdrew to monasteries, or died for the Christian faith. The notion of “martyrdom,” however, broadened over time and started to include all Christians who died a violent death. Thus, victims of treason were also held to be “martyrs” such as Saint Dagobert II, king of Austrasia (676-679), killed in a conspiracy while hunting and Saint Sigismund of Burgundy (516-523), killed after losing a battle against Chlodomer, king of the Franks. Chlodomer captured Sigismund and his family and beheaded them, at the same time making Sigismund the first holy martyred king in medieval Europe.

Before the ninth century, holy kings were all of the martyr type. They were especially numerous in Anglo-Saxon England: Saint Edwin and Saint Oswald -- martyr kings of Northumbria; Saint Oswin -- king of Deira; Saint Sigbert the Good -- king of the East

²² Robert Folz, “Les saints rois du Moyen Age en Occident (VI-XIII siècles),” *Subsidia Hagiographica* 68 (1984): 23-67.

²³ Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses. Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 63. As for the pagan origins, Folz argues that the sources are fragmentary and insufficient for understanding the exact nature of their influences on cults of Christian saint rulers, Folz, “Les saints rois du Moyen Age,” 19.

²⁴[Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić] Смиља Марјановић-Душанић, *Свети краљ. Култ Стефана Дечанског* [The Saint King. The Cult of Stefan od Dečani] (Belgrade: Clío, 2007): 26.

Saxons; Saint Ethelbert -- king of East Anglia; and Saint Edward the Martyr -- king of Essex.²⁵

In the tenth century a new wave of martyred rulers began. As the cult of martyred kings was most popular in Anglo-Saxon England, Scandinavia, Bohemia and Kievan Rus' in the tenth-eleventh centuries, the phenomenon has been explained in terms of "center" and "periphery". According to Robert Bartlett, the center was "Frankish Europe," that is, the former Carolingian possessions. This is the zone in Europe where the highest concentration of population and highest level of economic activity could be attested. That was the center, the "core" or "metropolitan region" of Europe. Around it, there was a periphery, a space influenced by the center.²⁶

Patrick Geary has noted that in the model of center and of periphery elaborated by Bartlett little space is left for the agency from the periphery.²⁷ Geary attempts to understand the relations between the center and the periphery by examining it from the perspective of the periphery; he tries to make it also a subject, not just an object in that relationship. In order to do this, he reverses the situation: the center becomes something that is being recognized by the periphery and, therefore, the importance of moving from the center to the periphery is less that of moving from the periphery to the center. For example, when one speaks about the conversion of the peripheral areas the role of the missionaries coming from the center is overshadowed by the role of the ruler who brought Christianity to his land and people.²⁸

In my view, the phenomenon of saintly rulers turns Bartlett's theory upside down. It can be explained in two different ways: not only did it enable newly Christianized peoples and their ruling dynasties to position themselves in the Christian history of salvation, but it

²⁵ Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*, 69, 78-80.

²⁶ Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe. Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950-1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993): 18-23.

²⁷ Patrick Geary, "Reflections on Historiography and the Holy: Center and Periphery" In *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom (c. 1000-1300)* (University of Copenhagen, 2006): 323-329.

also positioned them in the center. Thus, this creates a changed perspective in which the periphery becomes the center. Its centrality was ensured through hagiographical narratives of saints, relics, and miracles. This also explains why the first written records produced in Bartlett's "periphery" are all about local saints. Newly Christianized areas tended to position themselves in the center of the imagined Christian world and history by creating their own saints, that is, by providing themselves with evidence of God's presence and power that would position them in the center. Therefore, from that perspective, not only did the earlier periphery become the center, but the division between the center and periphery lost its relevance. Wherever God's presence was manifested through a saintly ruler, his people were in the center of the Christian world.²⁹ Sainted sovereigns, therefore, became the most obvious topics of writings in the newly Christianized areas in the tenth and eleventh centuries; they were, as Geary says, the "most important inhabitants" of the new Christian states.³⁰ Holy rulers, kings, princes and princesses came into focus and their stories and cults served the needs of dynasties as they supported the participation of newly converted peoples in the Christian history of salvation. Literary models of the king's sainthood developed there influenced the rest of Christian Europe.³¹

The role and popularity of saintly rulers in the newly Christianized areas is clear if one names them: Saint Olaf in Norway, Saint Vladimir, Boris and Gleb in Kievan Rus, Saint Wenceslaus in Bohemia, Saint Stephen and Emeric in Hungary.³² Many of them were not only holy kings, but also venerated as martyrs. The first Christian "martyred rulers" gained their sanctity not because they were kings, but because they rejected the kingship. Around the

²⁸ Ibid, 324.

²⁹ Ibid, 328. Klaniczay argues that Central European spaces should be considered as representative for the medieval Christendom instead as "peripheral" because of the models of king's sainthood developed there. Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*, 399.

³⁰ Patrick Geary. "Reflections on Historiography and the Holy: Center and Periphery," 327.

³¹ The prominence of royal and dynastic sainthood in newly Christianized areas influenced the earlier Christianized "core" areas of Europe, which can be seen in the fact that a saint in a dynasty became a necessity in the following centuries, see Klaniczay *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*: 398.

³² Ibid, 122.

year 1000, a new model of holy kingship appeared. The king was not supposed to abdicate to become a saint; now, it was possible to hold the office and still become a saint. The king had to follow defined patterns of Christian conduct³³ and sacrifice himself as a ruler for the sake of his people or men and for the greater good. Imitating Christ became central in the making of holy kings.

Martyrdom was the utmost example of imitating Christ. The change that occurred in the tenth century regarding the way in which a holy king died can be seen in a comparative analysis of hagiographies. Similarities exist among various martyr stories from the newly converted countries, most notably from Bohemia, Kievan Rus, England and Scandinavia.

Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* relates the legends of the earliest martyr rulers: Edwin, Oswald, and Oswin of Northumbria and Ethelbert of Hereford. These legends follow a pattern: The king dying in a battle or being assassinated, being betrayed, miracles happening at the king's grave, or the king leading a pious life and being generous to the poor. Compared with the martyred rulers from tenth and eleventh centuries, the early martyred kings lacked the motives of self-sacrifice and non-resistance when meeting their death.³⁴ These ideas, however, were dominant in the lives of Saint Wenceslaus and Ss. Boris and Gleb, representatives of the Slavic group of hagiographic martyr texts. According to Norman Ingham, these texts form a specific model of a ruler's martyrdom that will be discussed later in this chapter. Another element that is missing from the early Anglo-Saxon examples is an emphasis on the king's virtuous and holy life.

Abbo of Fleury's life of Saint Edmund, a ninth-century king of East Anglia, described the sovereign as a modest, good, yet powerful king. Edmund's land was attacked by pagan Danish invaders; Edmund, because he could not resist them with his weaker forces, decided that he would rather die than accept the rule of pagans. He states that he wishes to follow

³³ Ibid, 115.

Christ's example and is taken a prisoner by his enemies with no resistance, tortured and finally killed. Like him, first Scandinavian martyr ruler, King Olaf of Norway, also died at the hands of pagans. Also described as a good Christian ruler, he was ready to suffer for Christ's sake and was longed for a martyr's death for the sake of the faith.³⁵

In contrast to Edmund and Olaf, Canute IV, King of Denmark was not killed by foreign invaders, but by his own people. The *Passio sancti Kanuti regis et martiris*, written probably in 1095-6, depicts him as a good king who died after praying in church and after being surrounded by the rebels. A spear inflicted a deadly wound on this king, who died resolved to follow Christ's path.³⁶

A special group of martyred rulers consists of Slavic martyred rulers such as Saint Ludmila, Wenceslaus, Boris and Gleb. The texts about them emphasize the innocence of their protagonists. Similarities have been noted between the stories about Saint Wenceslas and Ss. Boris and Gleb. These saints are of special significance for this thesis because the stories about them have been important in the comparative approach to the story of Saint Vladimir of Zeta that will be discussed later.

In the tenth century, four or five legends and texts were produced about the faith of Saint Wenceslaus.³⁷ In the legends, Wenceslas is depicted as a pious, ascetic, and righteous ruler who entered into a conflict with his brother, Boleslav, that ended with saint willingly

³⁴ Norman W. Ingham, "The Sovereign as Martyr, East and West," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 17, no. 1 (1973): 4.

³⁵ Ibid, 5-6.

³⁶ St. Magnus of Orkney can be put in this group of martyr rulers from the tenth and eleventh centuries even though his martyr death occurred at the beginning of the twelfth century, in 1115. The story about him can be found in three Old Norse Sagas that were probably based on the lost *Vita sancti Magni*. He was lured into a trap by his cousin. Seeing the situation, Magnus refused to resist because he did not want his men to risk their lives. After he prayed, he was killed by an ax blow to the skull, *ibid*, 6-8.

³⁷ The first text was probably composed shortly after the death of Wenceslaus (929 or 935) and is called the *First Slavonic Life*. Another text that is relevant for understanding the martyrdom of St. Wenceslaus in the tenth and eleventh century context was composed by Gumpold, bishop of Mantua, at the end of the tenth century. The text was basis for other legends about the saint and for the *Second Slavonic Life*, written in the eleventh century. Klaniczay. *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*, 102.

choosing a martyr's death. Boris and Gleb³⁸ are usually considered to represent the Christian type saint called *strastoterptsi*,³⁹ that is, saints who suffered and died a martyr's death offering no resistance. They were lured and murdered by the orders of their older brother Svjatopolk.

The legends of Saint Wenceslaus, Boris and Gleb emphasize the theme of the righteous ruler who is an innocent sufferer.⁴⁰ In the Slavic context, the role of the brother is noteworthy. Saint Wenceslas refuses to fight against his brother;⁴¹ he does not want to kill Boleslav. The same idea is present in the story about Boris and Gleb, particularly in Boris's thoughts about the situation in which he found himself. He does not wish to oppose his brother Svjatopolk because he does not wish to harm him or oppose his pretensions to the throne and he even fears God's judgment if he were to hurt his older brother.⁴² Another detail is important for the motif of the brother in these stories: the murderous brother acts out of mistaken belief that the hero of the story is plotting against him or has bad intentions.

³⁸ For Saint Boris and Gleb (died in 1015) there are also source materials where stories about them can be found. The *Primary Chronicle*, written at the beginning of the twelfth century, gives two entries that deal with Ss. Boris and Gleb. However, one can find a more elaborate story about these martyrs in the *Lessons on the Life and Murder of the Blessed Passion-Sufferers Boris and Gleb*, written in the second half of the eleventh century by the same author, Monk Nestor. Two more texts (*The Tale and Passion and Encomium of the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb* and *The Tale of the Miracles of the Holy Passion-Sufferers of Christ Roman and David*) are also relevant source material for this period and provide stories about the faith of two martyrs, both during their lives and after their death, see Paul Hollingsworth "The Cult of Boris and Gleb," in *The Hagiography of Kievan Rus'* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1992): XXXI-LVII.

³⁹ *Strastoterptsi* means "enduring martyrdom" (from *strast*, "passion" and *terpets*, "to endure") Franklin A. Sciacca, "In Imitation of Christ: Boris and Gleb and the Ritual Consecration of the Russian Land," *Slavic Review* 49, no. 2 (1990): 258.

⁴⁰ Norman W. Ingham notes thirteen similarities in the plotline dealing with the death of these saints. The stories are similar in many details such as a conspiracy led by the brother of the future martyr, the hero of the story being deceived, but also warned about the danger, the hero being killed in a place that is away from his lands, the hero is killed in the morning, he prays before dying, he is killed from ambush, he does not resist, he is not killed by the conspirator (his brother) himself, his remains are neglected, his followers are also killed without delay, the saint's remains are later retrieved and treated with honor, see Norman W. Ingham, "The Martyred Prince and the Question of Slavic Cultural Continuity in the Early Middle Ages," in *Medieval Russian Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984): 37-38.

⁴¹ Indeed, in the *First Slavonic Life*, Wenceslaus resists his brother Boleslav, but he does not wish do him harm after defeating him.

⁴² *Ibid*, 43-44.

Boleslav is told by other conspirators that Wenceslaus plans to harm him. The same is the case with Svjatopolk who thinks that Boris is organizing a conspiracy against him.⁴³

The oldest source about Saint Wenceslaus, the *First Slavonic Life*, is a good example of the importance of structure in texts about early Slavic martyrs.⁴⁴ Saint Wenceslaus's life and death are an image of Christ's life and passion. The text follows the story about Christ and is, at the same time, is the basis for interpreting the life of the hero of the story. The Gospels have been the model matrix for writing on martyr kings. The repentance of Wenceslas' brother Boleslav at the end is not only the way to diminish his guilt for conspiracy against his brother and killing him but it is also a part of the general structure of the narrative that carries with itself lessons about both martyrdom and personal salvation.⁴⁵

Earlier scholarship considered Boris and Gleb as a unique "Russian" phenomenon, a special religious innovation by the newly converted Russian people.⁴⁶ Fedotov considered the sanctification of suffering as a distinguishing "Russian" characteristic.⁴⁷ However, not only did they share the same manner of dying as other martyrs in the tenth and eleventh centuries, but they also participated in the general trend of creating "centers" in newly Christianized areas.⁴⁸ Boris and Gleb followed Christ; their sacrifice is presented as a new covenant between God and the land of Rus'.⁴⁹

⁴³ Although the idea of a misunderstanding between the brothers is not developed in most of the texts about Saint Boris and Gleb, it is still present. In *Lessons on the Life and Murder of the Blessed Passion-Sufferers Boris and Gleb*, however, the motive is explicitly stated. Ibid, 46-47.

⁴⁴ Norman W. Ingham uses the term "structure as meaning." Norman W. Ingham, "Structure as Meaning in the First Slavonic Life of St. Wenceslaus," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 28 (2006): 501.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 500-509.

⁴⁶ See Geogre Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind. Kievan Christianity: the 10th to the 13th Centuries* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960).

⁴⁷ Franklin A. Sciacca, "In Imitation of Christ," 258-259.

⁴⁸ Other interpretation were offered, such as the earlier, pagan, Varangian tradition as the basis of the Boris and Gleb cult, see Edward S. Reisman, "The Cult of Boris and Gleb: Remnant of a Varangian Tradition?" *Russian Review* 37, no. 2 (1978): 141-157, and Stephen Maczke, "Boris and Gleb: Sainly Princes of Princely Saints?" *Russian History* 2 (1975): 68-80.

⁴⁹ The martyred ruler is also able to build a covenant between God and his people through his sacrifice. Here another level of meaning in the death of a martyr (especially a martyred ruler) should be noted. Sacrifice is the key notion of martyrdom. In the Old Testament animal sacrifice was a way of making a covenant: through animal sacrifice God made a covenant with Abraham. Christ was compared to a lamb that was to be sacrificed by a divine plan for the sins of the humanity. This level of meaning is important for the role of martyr rulers of

Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian martyred rulers bear clear similarities with the stories from the Slavic group of martyred rulers. The motif of nonresistance and therefore choice of a martyr's death is essential for both groups of martyred rulers. There are similarities in other details, too, for example, in motifs of the future martyr praying before being killed or being lured into a trap by his enemy. Furthermore, these texts and *topoi* were communicated and exchanged through political ties and communications. Such ties existed between the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian worlds, as well as between Bohemia and Kievan Rus'.⁵⁰ Regarding these similarities, the existence of communication and exchange of ideas and *topoi* between Scandinavia and Kievan Rus' cannot be excluded.⁵¹

The problem with comparative analysis of hagiographic texts, however, is that it is hard to distinguish between details and motifs that would allow creating broader models and patterns and those details and motifs that can result from coincidence. Similarities between different narratives can easily be explained by a universal model of imitation of Christ. Therefore, many details that can be found in the hagiographic stories can be seen as results of an attempt to portray the martyr as an image of Christ, to imitate the betrayal of Christ and his death. Thus, in the broader literary context of imitating Christ, the ideas and motifs of a martyred ruler's innocence and nonresistance were crucial for reenacting Christ's faith; the narrative strategy of reenacting Christ's faith has been present in Christian writings from early Christian times.⁵²

This does not mean that it is impossible to distinguish specific traditions in the creation of hagiographic texts. Although most of the narrative details in hagiographic texts can be explained by the use of the universal model of imitating Christ, some of them can be

the tenth and eleventh centuries because their sacrifice was not only a manifestation of God's presence but also the making of a covenant and creating of a new Christian nation., see Sciacca. "In Imitation of Christ," 254-257.

⁵⁰ In the story related to the translation of the remains of Boris and Gleb one finds a direct reference to Saint Wenceslaus. See Norman W. Ingham, "Czech Hagiography in Kiev: The Prisoner Miracles of Boris and Gleb," *Die Welt der Slaven* 10 (1965): 166-182.

⁵¹ Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*, 132.

seen as more unusual, especially if one speaks about the parallels in the Slavic group.⁵³ What is more important, details that tend to reenact Christ's life and death also, taken together, construct unique narrative patterns. Again, this is more evident in the case of the Slavic group of martyred rulers, with parallels among the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian martyrs (Saint Magnus of Orkney is the best example of a narrative parallel with the Slavic group). At the end, the result of unique patterns that share similarities is a phenomenon of a martyred ruler that developed in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Martyred rulers from that period, in spite of their local contexts and variations, together formed a new tradition of ruler's martyrdom where the ruler could become a martyr because he was a good, righteous ruler who died an innocent death, showing no resistance, only his willingness to be a martyr for a greater good, to be an imitator of Christ, becoming also a local saint who could legitimize the existence of newly Christianized peoples and positioning them at the same time in the center of the Christian world by forging a covenant between them and the Lord.⁵⁴

⁵² Ingham, "The Martyred Prince and the Question of Slavic Cultural Continuity in the Early Middle Ages," 44.

⁵³ Other Biblical motifs, except those connected with Christ's life and death, were also used in constructing hagiographical narratives. For example, the motif of a murderous brother in a Slavic group of martyr rulers has a parallel with the motif of Cain and Abel from the Old Testament. However, the role of the brother in the stories from the Slavic group is a unique aspect that enabled the creation of a Slavic model of a ruler's martyrdom, *ibid.* 38, 45.

CHAPTER III

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON THE CHAPTER XXXVI OF *THE ANNALS OF A PRIEST OF DIOCLEA*

Chapter XXXVI of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*, where the legend of Saint Vladimir of Zeta is found, starts with a short description of Vladimir's childhood and his ascension to the throne following his father, Petrislav. The Bulgarian Tsar Samuel starts a military expedition against Vladimir, who, not wanting his people to die in war, retreats with his army to Oblik Hill. The hill was a habitat of poisonous snakes that killed many. With tears in his eyes, Vladimir addresses the Lord who answers his prayer: the snakes stopped biting his men. In the meantime, Samuel's army waits bellow the hill. A local *župan* betrays Vladimir. Vladimir surrenders to Samuel to save his men from certain death. The tsar banishes him to a prison in Prespa, the city where Samuel had his court. During his stay in the dungeon of Prespa Vladimir spends his days and nights praying and fasting and is granted two important visits, one spiritual, the other physical. The Angel of God appears to him in a vision, telling him his future, that he will be delivered from the dungeon and that he will receive reward in Heaven for his martyrdom in the times to come. The second visitor is Kosara, daughter of Tsar Samuel. She falls in love with Vladimir and asks her father for permission to marry him. Kosara says that she would rather die than marry someone else. Samuel accepts and frees Vladimir, giving him his country and his daughter Kosara for a wife.

At the death of Tsar Samuel the Byzantine Emperor Basil convinces John Vladislav to kill Radomir, Samuel's son and heir to the throne. After the murder, John Vladislav claims the throne and decides to kill Vladimir too. After several attempts, with the help of two bishops and a hermit, John Vladislav manages to entice Vladimir to come visit him. He orders his soldiers to execute Vladimir as the ambush he had set on the road failed because

⁵⁴ Gábor Klaniczay has suggested that these martyr cults were not impeded by paradigms of sainthood inherited from Late Antiquity. Newly Christianized peoples were not concerned with the traditional contradiction

Vladimir was protected by angels on his way to Prespa. The soldiers find Vladimir in the church and they behead him at the church doorstep after a last prayer. Vladimir's body is buried in the church and miracles happen at his grave. Troubled by his conscience, John Vladislav allows Kosara to bury the body in a location of her choice. The story ends with the death of John Vladislav at the siege of Dyrrachium; as he is about to have lunch outside the city, Vladimir of Zeta appears to him. With one deadly blow an angel revenges the death of Vladimir.⁵⁵

Chapter XXXVI of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea* gives an elaborate narrative about Vladimir of Zeta. Aside from being one of the longest chapters in *The Annals* this account also contains many hagiographic elements. *The Annals* is not the first document to mention Vladimir of Zeta. The first extant reference to Vladimir of Zeta is found in Johannes Skylitzes' *Synopsis of Byzantine History* written during the reign of Alexios I Komnenos in the second half of the eleventh century. Skylitzes' *Synopsis* describes the reigns of the Byzantine emperors. Some chapters have only a few pages, others have as many as forty pages; that is the case with the chapter that describes the reign of Basil II, nicknamed "the Bulgar-Slayer" (928-1025). Skylitzes focuses on the emperor's character: events and cosmic or natural phenomena alike are connected with imperial actions. Time is defined by imperial reigns, space by the expansion of the empire.⁵⁶

The chapter dealing with the reign of Basil II dedicates many pages to the conflict between the emperor and his worst enemy, Tsar Samuel of Bulgaria, whom Basil defeated at the Battle of Kleidion in 1014. Samuel died soon after, allegedly having seen his soldiers

between sainthood and rulership, see Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*, 99, 398.

⁵⁵ [Tibor Živković], *Gesta Regum Sclavorum I*, 124-139.

⁵⁶ Born before 1050, Johannes Skylitzes, also known as Thraakesios, received an excellent education and had a successful career during the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118). He was the first Skylitzes to rise in the civil service of the empire. The year of his death is unknown; he might have been alive at the beginning of the twelfth century. The *Synopsis of Byzantine History*, covering the period from the death of Nikephoros I in 811 to the abdication of Michael VI in 1051, was a popular work; nine manuscripts survive, later Byzantine writers used his work, see John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811-1057* (Cambridge: Cambridge

blinded to a man after the battle. In 1015, after taking the city of Ohrid, Basil started moving towards the city of Dyrrachium, which was under his command. It is at this point that Skylitzes mentions Vladimir of Zeta for the first time:

As long as Vladimir, the husband of Samuel's daughter, was ruling Tribalia⁵⁷ and the nearer parts of Serbia, things were calm at Dyrrachion, for he was a man of integrity, peace and virtue. But when Gabriel was slain by John [Vladislav], Vladimir also was betrayed. He had put his trust in the oaths which John had sworn by the agency of David, archbishop of Bulgaria, and surrendered to him only to be slain by him a little later.⁵⁸

Skylitzes also mentions the death of John Vladislav in 1018. The Byzantine chronicler lists the members of the Tsar Samuel's clan who died in the war or surrendered to Basil:

...[In Ohrid, Basil II] received the wife of John Vladislav who had been brought to him, together with three sons, six daughters, the bastard son of Samuel, two daughters of Radomir, son of Samuel, and five sons of whom the first had lost his sight having been mutilated by John when he slew Radomir, son of Samuel together with his wife and Vladimir his brother-in-law.⁵⁹

Besides the *Synopsis of Byzantine History* historians have tried to find other source material for reconstructing the reign of Vladimir of Zeta. A document from the monastery of Laura from September 993 mentions a Serbian embassy captured by pirates on the way to Constantinople. Emperor Basil II urged the pirates to free the prisoners and the embassy finally reached its destination. In George Ostrogorsky's view the embassy might have been sent by Vladimir of Zeta. If that is correct it would attest that the Byzantine emperor and the

University Press, 2010): IX-XXXIII, and Catherine Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976-1025)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 66-240.

⁵⁷ The name for a Serbian coastal region (Zeta).

⁵⁸ John Skylitzes, *A synopsis of Byzantine history, 811-1057*, 335.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 340.

ruler of Zeta were allies, with Vladimir supporting Basil in the war against Tsar Samuel.⁶⁰ A Byzantine seal dated to the end of the tenth-beginning of the eleventh century with the Greek inscription “Petrislav” is taken as proof of Vladimir’s existence.⁶¹

Chapter XXXVI differs in many respects from the rest of the text of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*. Most scholars agree that the Chapter is actually an earlier text incorporated in the chronicle, or is at least based on an earlier text. The author of the Chapter indicates the existence for such text:

One who wishes to know which and what miracles and goods God designed to give through blessed Vladimir, his servant, let him read his history and he will see that this saintly man was one spirit with the God and that God dwelled in him, to whom is the honor etc.⁶²

This sentence has been taken as evidence of the existence of a lost text about Vladimir written shortly after his death at the beginning of the eleventh century. Therefore, Chapter XXXVI can be considered a short version of a lost hagiography of Saint Vladimir, or at least of a hagiographic text about him. Banašević concludes that the author of the Chapter

incorporated in his compilation a typical Life of a saint, that is *vitam sancti*, not even trying to adapt it to the quasi-historical character of other chapters of his work or to exclude or minimize its numerous hagiographic elements.⁶³

And

⁶⁰ See [George Ostrogorsky] Георгије Острогорски, “Српско посланство Василију II,” [The Serbian Embassy to Basil II] in *Византија и Словени* [Byzantium and the Slavs] (Belgrade, 1970):147-158.

⁶¹ [Tibor Živković], [Portraits of Serbian Rulers (IX-XII century)], 67.

⁶² *Quantes et quales virtutes et prodigia Deus aperare dignatus est per beatum Vladimirus, famulum suum, qui scire desiderat, librum gestorum eius relegat quo acta eius per ordinem scripta sunt et agnoscet profecto quod ipse vir sanctus unus spiritus cum Domino fuit et Deus habitavit cum eo, cui honor etc.* [Tibor, Živković], *Gesta Regum Sclavorum I*, 138-139.

⁶³ [Nikola Banašević] [*The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea and Folk Tales*], 142.

Therefore, last sentence of Chapter XXXVI is completely on its place and it clearly shows that a more elaborate, independent, work about life of the prince Vladimir existed.⁶⁴

While the answer to the question of the existence of an earlier and separate text about Vladimir seems clear (it did exist), another question has started more complex discussions. As part of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*, Chapter XXXVI also posed the question of its authenticity as a historical source, this time for the history of events on Balkans in the late tenth and early eleventh century. Johannes Skylitzes' *Synopsis of Byzantine History* played here an important role because it resonates well with Chapter XXXVI.

Both *The Annals* and *Synopsis* make Vladimir of Zeta Tsar Samuel's son-in-law. Both affirm that Vladimir was betrayed by clerics and killed by John Vladislav; both claim that Vladimir trusted John Vladislav's oath and the clerics. In the *Synopsis*, the archbishop of Bulgaria is the mediator between Vladimir and John, in *The Annals* two unnamed bishops and a hermit fulfill this function. *The Annals* resembles *Skylitzes'* work not only in describing the life and death of Vladimir, but also other characters. Both affirm that John Vladislav killed the son of Tsar Samuel on a hunt so as to seize power. Both report that John Vladislav died at the siege of Dyrrachium. In *The Annals* Kosara meets Vladimir as a prisoner in the dungeon of her father; she starts talking with him and falls in love with him. Then she addresses her father, telling him that she would rather die than marry anyone else but Vladimir. Samuel gives in to his daughter demands and agrees that the two should marry. In the *Synopsis* almost the same short story appears about Asotios and Miroslava:

When Samuel returned safely to his homeland he took Asotios, son of Taronites, out of prison and made him his son-in-law by marrying him to his daughter. For she, Miroslava, had fallen in love with him and was threatening to kill herself unless she could be legally married to him.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Ibid, 171.

After Vladimir and Kosara married, Samuel returned Vladimir's lands and the area of Dyrrachium; when Asotios and Miroslava got married, they were sent to Dyrrachium. The only significant difference between the two stories is that Vladimir remained in peaceful relations with his father-in-law while Asotios betrayed Tsar Samuel.

Given the similarities between these two texts, the question is now whether there was any connection between these two accounts or whether they are two separate unconnected accounts. I will note several interpretations of this problem that have been given so far.

Nikola Banašević wrote a detailed comparative analysis of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*, analyzing it chapter by chapter, including Chapter XXXVI. Among other questions, Banašević addressed the problem of the similarities between Skylitzes' *Synopsis* and *The Annals*, especially the similarities between the love stories of Vladimir-Kosara, and Asotios-Miroslava love stories. While building his argumentation Banašević criticizes the conclusions of the Belgian Byzantinist, Nicolas Adontz, active in the first half of the twentieth century.⁶⁶ Adontz argued that Vladimir never married Kosara and never became Samuel's son-in-law; overlaps between the two love stories are too large and it would be too bold to think that two love adventures of the same kind happened in the family of Tsar Samuel, and that the tsar afterwards sent them both to the same place, Dyrrachium. For Adontz, the only historical fact that can be drawn from the narrative of *The Annals* is the tragic death of Vladimir. Everything else is the result of the adaptation of passages from the *Synopsis* by the author of the Chapter XXXVI of the chronicle, who also added several hagiographic elements.⁶⁷

Banašević opposes the opinion that the author of the story of Vladimir used the love story from the *Synopsis* about Asotios and Miroslava so he could invent his own. For him it is

⁶⁵ John Scylitzes, *A synopsis of Byzantine history, 811-1057*, 324.

⁶⁶ See Nicolas Adontz, "Samuel l'Armenien roi des Bulgares," *Memoires de l'Academie royale de Belgique, Classe des lettres* 39 (1938): 35-62.

⁶⁷ Adontz even argued that the war between Samuel and Vladimir, which is usually accepted as another historical fact that can be drawn from the Chapter XXXVI, was invented so that Vladimir would become Samuel's prisoner and the love story could be more easily adapted, [Nikola Banašević] [*The Annals of a Priest*

unacceptable that the author of Chapter XXXVI used the *Synopsis* as a source of inspiration because it would be difficult to imagine that, considering that *The Annals* were written in the twelfth century, their compiler used the *Synopsis*, which was written far away from Dioclea (considering that *The Annals* were written in Dioclea) and in a foreign language, to write a story about a saint that is buried in Dioclea.⁶⁸ Therefore, at one point in his book, Banašević argues that both Vladimir and Asotios married Tsar Samuel's daughters and that both love stories are probably based on historical facts:

...Samuel's two daughters could also get married out of love but led, by their female nature, by somewhat different motives. Grown up in wild mountain surroundings, in the narrowness of insular city of Prespa, originating from a, one may say, nouveau riche family, reaching great power and glamour, they easily and naturally fell in love with young prisoners of noble origin from much more gentle environments. Asotios belonged to a noble, maybe even ruling family from Asia Minor that played considerable role in Byzantium, and Vladimir was independent ruler of the coastal Dioclea where the influences from the Byzantium and Rome intersected and influenced manners and life style of highest social orders. .. Kosara and Miroslava, out of inherent need to have sympathy, to be thrilled and to refine themselves, could be attracted by the destinies, looks and ranks of the two foreign princes. One should also consider that ... Samuel did not yet take the title of the Tsar that had never been even recognized by others: by contemporary standards, these marriages socially improved the positions of his daughters...⁶⁹

Trying to explain the similarity between the narratives about the love stories, Banašević looks upon the story of the second marriage of Rodomir, son of Samuel, to a Greek prisoner. Rodomir married her after rejecting his pregnant first wife, the daughter of the king of Hungary. In Banašević's view:

One can rightly suggest that the arbitrary and inappropriate marriage of brother of Kosara and Miroslava have echoed so much that it was reflected in some news, in some legends about the marriages of his sisters, marriages that

of Dioclea and Folk Tales], 149. See also *Византијски извори за историју народа Југославије III* [Byzantine Sources for the History of Peoples of Yugoslavia III] (Belgrade, 1966): 91-92.

⁶⁸ [Nikola Banašević] [*The Annals* of a Priest of Dioclea and Folk Tales], 167.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 165-6.

were, similar to his, contracted with the prisoners of foreign origin. Therefore, both Skylitzes and the author of the Chapter XXXVI of *The Annals* could independently hear some stories about marriages on the court of Samuel, and could easily transmit a marriage story from one family member to other one, because all of those marriages had something common - relationship between spouses from hostile parties.⁷⁰

Banašević accepts the *Synopsis* and *The Annals* as valid sources for reconstructing the historical reality of the period and the chronology of events. Tibor Živković adopted basically the same approach. He also argues that both marriages can be seen as historical facts, and their description in source material as a result of time distance (Skylitzes wrote around 100 years after the events, and *The Annals* were written around 150 years after the events) and folk legends and stories that were incorporated in the source material over time.⁷¹ However, he argues that the story that is found in the Chapter XXXVI of *The Annals* is more credible because one can suspect that the Chapter XXXVI is actually a *Life of Saint Vladimir of Zeta*, probably written in the eleventh century, before Skylitzes wrote his *Synopsis*.⁷² Therefore:

Duties that Samuel's sons-in-law carried out in the area of Dyrrachium contributed to further contamination of story and possibly to less awareness of Skylitzes about the events in Dioclea and northern Albania, especially about family ties of local rulers.⁷³

As for the similarity between the accounts of Vladimir's death after being betrayed by clerics (the archbishop of Bulgaria or bishops and a hermit), Živković concludes that it can only mean that one should look at it as a credible historical fact because two different sources note the same thing, or at least give similar accounts.

Most recently Solange Bujan has rejected the historical argument. Bujan is not interested in reconstructing a historical reality behind the text of *The Annals*, but in the

⁷⁰ Ibid, 167.

⁷¹[Tibor Živković] [Portraits of Serbian Rulers (IX-XII century)], 70.

⁷² Ibid, 70.

⁷³ Ibid.

construction of the chronicle. According to Bujan, Mauro Orbini wrote *The Annals* at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Orbini used a variety of sources and composed a fake medieval chronicle to introduce his book on *The Kingdom of the Slavs*. One of the sources Orbini used was the medieval *Life of Saint Vladimir of Zeta*.⁷⁴ Bujan agrees that Chapter XXXVI of the chronicle reproduces earlier source material and notes that when compiling *The Annals*, Orbini also used Byzantine sources, among others Skylitzes, so he could give a historical context to his invented and compiled narrative.⁷⁵ The love story of Vladimir and Kosara is the place where Orbini used *Synopsis* as a source.⁷⁶ Orbini, therefore, might have used the narrative about Tsar Samuel and John Vladislav that he found in the *Synopsis* so he could give a veritable historical dimension to *The Annals*; on one hand, he used a hagiographical text about Saint Vladimir of Zeta that he incorporated in the invented narrative about the invented Slavic dynasty, and then, on the other hand, he supplemented it with passages from the *Synopsis* to provide a historical context.

Banašević and Živković did not want to explain the connection between the *Synopsis* and *The Annals*, but to reconstruct the series of events in the history of Serbia on the basis of *The Annals*. Instead of discussing the possible influences and connections between Skylitzes and *The Annals*, they focused on affirming or denying the authenticity of the source in the process of reconstructing historical reality. Methodologically as well as theoretically, Solange Bujan offers a more valid approach, providing arguments for the similarities between the *Synopsis* and *The Annals*.

Even though the hagiographic aspects of the Chapter XXXVI had been recognized before, the authenticity of the text constituted the core of previous research. Even Banašević,

⁷⁴ Bujan, however, suggested that Orbini used a later life of St. Vladimir. See Vasilika Tupkova-Zaimova, "Un manuscrit inconnu de la Vie de Saint Jean Vladimir," in *Byzances et les Balkans à partir du VI^e siècle: les mouvements ethniques et les Etats*. (Londres, 1979): 170-188.

⁷⁵ Orbini used also the *Alexiade* by Anna Comnena and other Byzantine sources he could have found in, for example, *Corpus universae historiae Byzantinae*, published in Paris in 1566, see Bujan. "La chronique de prêtre de Dioclée," 19-22.

in his detailed analysis of the Chapter, where he also analyzed the hagiographic elements and recognized that the author of the Chapter shows knowledge of writing hagiographic texts in many places, did not pay more attention to that aspect of the text; it seems that he analyzed it in the context of the question of credibility of the Chapter as a historical source, that is, making a distinction between places in the text that are hagiographic places and those that can be taken as credible for the historical reconstruction of the events in that period.⁷⁷

For Norman W. Ingham and Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić,⁷⁸ the authenticity of the Chapter is not an issue; the focus of their research is on the significance of hagiographic aspects and elements of the Chapter for further research based on comparative analysis with other contemporary and similar hagiographic texts. The importance of their approaches in researching Chapter XXXVI of *The Annals* is not only in recognizing the significance of the internal connection of various hagiographic places in the text and the significance of paying attention to the whole structure of the Chapter, but also in positioning this text in a broader literary tradition of hagiographic texts about martyred ruler saints. This comparative approach reveals parallels with other tenth and eleventh century martyr rulers.

⁷⁶Ibid, 20-21.

⁷⁷ Banašević notices also more general literary parallels that seem to be too general and to bypass the more narrow and specific hagiographic context. [Nikola Banašević] [*The Annals* of a Priest of Dioclea and Folk Tales]. 168-201. Tibor Živković also tends to differentiate hagiographic from historically credible data, [Tibor Živković] [Portraits of Serbian Rulers (IX-XII century)], 67-74.

⁷⁸ See Norman W. Ingham, "The Martyrdom of St. John Vladimir of Dioclea," *International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics* 3 (1987): 199-216, and Marjanović-Dušanić, "Patterns of Martyrial Sanctity in the Royal Ideology of Medieval Serbia," 69-79, and [Smilja, Marjanović-Dušanić] [The Saint King. The Cult of Stefan od Dečani], 93-96.

CHAPTER IV THE HAGIOGRAPHIC ASPECTS OF THE CHAPTER XXXVI: A LIFE OF SAINT VLADIMIR?

The hagiographic hints in Chapter XXXVI constitute an important aspect of the text; they stress the ideas of the holy man, martyrdom and the imitation of Christ⁷⁹ These ideas are communicated through the use of various hagiographic patterns (*topoi*) that create and announce expected messages from the saint's life. The role of the *topoi* is, however, not only to construct the image of the saint but also to make his sainthood apparent to the reader of the text. These moments of recognition of the saint's true nature are usually connected to his relation to his body (both during his life and after his death), his role as a protector, his ability to influence natural phenomena, to perform miracles, to heal and do good deeds for other people, and also to experience mystical visions. Chapter XXXVI of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea* has all of the elements that make a network of common places in a hagiographic text, all together constructing an image of a saint, in this case, a martyr saint.⁸⁰

Vladimir's relation to his body is expressed through his ascetic practice of fasting and praying during his imprisonment in Prespa. He fasts all day and night, showing strong control over his body and the weaknesses of human nature. He demonstrates this again through a chaste life with his wife, Kosara. After he died miracles occurred at his grave and Vladimir's body continued to be a vessel of holiness:

Bishops took his body and buried him in the same church with hymns and praises. And the Lord, so he could declare the merits of the blessed martyr Vladimir, made that many, tormented by various illness, be cured after they go into the church and pray over his grave. And in the night, everybody saw a divine light there as if many candles were burning.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Banašević, for example, recognized those ideas in the text, but he didn't further elaborate on them. He did not recognize that the chapter is more than a account of Vladimir's life that intersected with commonplaces from saint's lives.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 93; Marjanović-Dušanić. "Patterns of Martyrial Sanctity in the Royal Ideology of Medieval Serbia," 73.

⁸¹ *Episcopi vere tollentes corpus eius in eadem ecclesia cum hymnis et laudibus sepelierunt. Ut autem Dominus declarerat merita beati martyris Vladimiri, multi diversis languoribus vexati intrantes ecclesiam orantesque ad*

As a patron Vladimir saves his people twice from Bulgarian attacks, first against Tsar Samuel by surrendering himself to the enemy, and second against Tsar Vladislav, by bringing him to death. However, Vladimir not only protects his people in war, but in other critical situations as well. He delivers his people from the danger of poisonous snakes on the Oblik Hill, thus showing his ability to influence natural phenomena, that is, to subordinate dangerous animals.

Vladimir experiences a mystical vision while in the dungeon, when the Angel of God appears to him and announces his martyr death to him. The martyrdom of this holy man is a key idea in the Chapter; it is modeled on the imitation of Christ's Passion. Vladimir's life is an imitation of Christ, characteristic patterns of the ideas that he preached and what he did. The holy man, Vladimir, does not want to oppose his enemy with force (even though he could do that). He is betrayed by a local *župan*, characterized in the text as Judas. However, the most important moment is when Vladimir chooses the path of martyrdom, willingly surrendering himself to Tsar Samuel. Before that, he is characterized in the text of the Chapter as a *vir sanctus*, and his holiness shines through the miracle of the snakes ceasing to bite his people. From the moment when Vladimir decides to become a *bonus pastor* who sacrifices himself for his flock (*pro ovibus suis*), the story of his martyrdom begins and it finally ends on the doorstep of the church in Prespa. Vladimir's story carefully follows the model of Christ's Passion and develops its own internal structure with regards to the model.⁸²

eius tumulum sanati sunt. Nocte vero videbatur ibi ab omnibus lumen divinum et quasi plurimas ardere candelas, [Tibor, Živković] *Gesta Regum Sclavorum I*, 136-137.

⁸² [Marjanović-Dušanić] [The Saint King. The Cult of Stefan od Dečani], 93-96.

Norman W. Ingham made a detailed literary analysis of this structure, arguing that the hagiographic aspect of the text extends beyond details. The narrative structure of the Chapter follows a hagiographic principle.⁸³ He divides the narrative of the Chapter into five episodes:

1. The siege on Oblik hill: Vladimir surrendering to his enemy, Tsar Samuel.
2. The imprisonment of Vladimir in Prespa and the romance between him and Tsar's daughter Kosara.
3. Enticement to Prespa by John Vladislav,
4. Assassination of Vladimir and removal of his remains,
5. Death of John Vladislav, Vladimir's murderer.⁸⁴

Vladimir's martyrdom is divided into two principle parts. Episodes 1 and 2 describe Vladimir's relations with Tsar Samuel. Episodes 3, 4 and 5 describe Vladimir's relations with Vladislav and Vladislav's death. Both sequences follow the model of Christ's Passion and they are also written as analogous segments. In the first segment, in episode 1, Vladimir is betrayed by a local *župan* while surrounded on Oblik Hill by Samuel's army. That is also the moment when Vladimir decides to sacrifice himself for the sake of his people; he addresses them with the following words:

I must see, my dearest brothers, to that verse from the Gospel to be fulfilled, where it is said that a good shepherd lays his soul for his sheep. It is better therefore, my brothers, that I lay down my life for all of you and to give my body to be mutilated and killed, than you to suffer from hunger or sword.⁸⁵

After this he surrenders himself to Samuel. Betrayed by Judas, as the treacherous *župan* is called (*Judae traditor similis effectus*), Vladimir sacrifices himself then for the first

⁸³ Ingham. "The Martyrdom of St. John Vladimir of Dioclea," 205. Ingham also notes that sentences in the chapter are written so they could allude to one another and therefore contribute to the structure of the chapter.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ *Oportet me, fratres carissimi, ut video adimplere illud Evangelii versiculum, ubi dicitur Bonus pastor animam suam ponit pro ovibus suis. Melius est ergo, fratres, ut ego ponam animam meam pro omnibus vobis et tradam*

time in the Chapter. However, this time he did not meet his death even though he expected to die. In the second segment, in episode 3, he is again betrayed, now by two bishops and a hermit who carried the false oath of John Vladislav. Again, his death is postponed because he is protected by angels on his way to Prespa, but the reader is informed that his death was again expected, this time not through the speech of the saint but through a comment by the author of the text: “Almighty God, who watched over his servant since he was a child, did not want him to be killed far away from people.”⁸⁶

Betrayed the second time, Vladimir again shows no resistance and is willing to sacrifice himself. The story of his martyrdom continues and this time, taking a wooden cross when going to Prespa, he completes his imitation of Christ’s Passion, meeting his end at the church door.

Episode 2 seems more problematic to interpret, especially with regards to its similarities with Skylitzes’ *Synopsis of Byzantine History*. Ingham does not enter into that discussion; for him, this episode reveals that the author of the Chapter considered the story valid biographical information; but he further elaborates on the episode in the context of the hagiographic structure of the narrative of the text. Vladimir’s imprisonment in the dungeon of Prespa seems like an interruption of the martyrdom of Vladimir, because he did not die there as was expected. However, Vladimir’s imprisonment is actually also an image of him as a saint:

In the meantime Vladimir was held in chains and he spent day and night in fasting and praying. An Angel of God appeared to him in a vision comforting him and telling him what is going to happen, how he will be delivered from the dungeon by the God and how he will reach the kingdom of heaven by

corpus meum sponte ad trucidandum seu occidendum, quam ut vos periclitemini fame sive glaudio. [Tibor, Živković] *Gesta Regum Sclavorum I*, 126-127.

⁸⁶ *Deus autem omnipotens, qui ab infantia custodivit famulum suum, noluit extra homines dormitationem accipere.* Ibid, 134-135.

martyrdom and how he will receive the incorruptible crown and the prize of eternal life.⁸⁷

Ingham argues that the scene of Vladimir's imprisonment is also part of the hagiographic structure of the Chapter. The prison alludes to Christ's custody between his arrest and crucifixion, since Vladimir was expected to be killed after he surrendered to Samuel; therefore, this scene is also a part of Vladimir's imitation of Christ. The appearance of the Angel of God in a vision alludes to the imprisonment of the Apostles Peter and Paul.⁸⁸

Kosara, daughter of Tsar Samuel, is not excluded from the hagiographic structure. It is no coincidence that she appears for the first time in the story right after the angel told Vladimir in a vision that God is about to liberate him from the dungeon. *Nomine conpuncta et inspirata a Spiritu*, Kosara asks her father to allow her to visit the dungeons so she can cleanse the heads and feet of the prisoners. She falls in love with Vladimir:

So she came down [to the dungeons] and performed a good deed. Then she saw Vladimir and seeing that he is full of wisdom and of humbleness, she started talking with him. His words appeared to her as sweeter than honey and therefore, not out of lust, but out of compassion over his youth and beauty and because she heard that he is a king and of royal origin, she fell in love with him and after she greeted him she went.⁸⁹

Kosara decides to set Vladimir free from the chains, so she addresses her father. It is interesting to see how Kosara imitates Vladimir from episode 1 of the Chapter. As Vladimir descended from Oblik Hill to save his people from death in battle, now Kosara descends to the dungeons of Prespa so she, too, can perform a *bonum opus*. After she meets Vladimir, she

⁸⁷ *Praeterea Vladimirus tenebatur in vinculis, ieiuniis et orationibus vanans die noctuque. Apparuit ei in visione angelus Domini confortans eum et nuncios ei ae quae ventura erant quomodo eum Deus liberaret de ipse carcere, et quomodo per martyrium perveniret ad regna caelorum et acciperet immarcescibilem coronam et praemia vitae aeternae.* Ibid, 128-129.

⁸⁸ Ingham. "The Martyrdom of St. John Vladimir of Dioclea," 207.

⁸⁹ *Descendit itaque et peregit bonum opus. Inter haec cernens Vladimirus et videns quod esset repletus sapientia et prudentia Domini, morata locuta est cum illo. Videbatur namque et loquela illius dulcis super mel et falum igitur non causa libidinis, sed quia condoluit iuventuti et pulchritudini illius et quoniam audiret eum*

is ready to give away her life for love and to save him from certain death. Not only is she God's tool for liberating him, as the angel in the vision promised, but she is also the way in which the author of the Chapter keeps the fundamental idea of sacrifice, willingly and without resistance, in the focus of the story.

The role of Kosara in episode 2 is significant because it again shows that the author of the Chapter XXXVI gave attention both to the model of imitation of Christ and to the whole structure of the narrative; parallels are also made to other parts of the Chapter. Therefore, for example, we find Vladimir goes to Prespa again after John Vladislav entices him to go there; he is betrayed again and another miracle is performed: Angels protected him from ambush made by Vladislav's soldiers. In the first segment Vladimir was besieged on Oblik Hill and imprisoned. In the second segment he is encircled in the church, where he again addresses the people who are present, as he did on Oblik Hill, also with words that allude to Christ's ideas and sacrifice,⁹⁰ and he prays before his expected death like he did when he was praying and fasting in the dungeon.

Kosara's role does not end in episode 2. As in the first segment, in episode 2, in the second one, in the episode 3, she is again willing to sacrifice herself so that Vladimir can stay alive, as she did when asking her father to set him free from the dungeon and give him to her as a husband. This time, when John Vladislav invites Vladimir to visit him, she realizes that his intentions are not good, since he killed her brother before that, and she tells her husband:

esse regem et ex regali prosapia ortum, dilexit eum et salutato eo recessit. [Tibor, Živković] *Gesta Regum Sclavorum I*, 128-129.

⁹⁰ At Oblik he talked about the Good Shepherd who should take care of his flock and now he addressed the people who (unwillingly) betrayed him with the following words: "Why have you deceived me like this? Why do I die without guilt believing your words and oaths?... Pray for me, my lords, and let this venerable cross together with you be a witness on the judgment day that I die without guilt." (*Quare me sic decepistis? Cur verbis et iuramentis vestris credens sine culpa morior? ... Orate pro me, domini mei, et haec venerabilis crux una vobiscum sit mihi testis in die Domini, quoniam absque culpa morior.*) Ibid, 134-137.

My Lord, do not go not to, God forbid, to you happened what happened to my brother, but let me go and see and hear the king's behavior. If he wishes to kill me, let him kill me, just so you would not die.⁹¹

After Vladimir's martyrdom culminated with him being beheaded by John Vladislav's soldiers, the Tsar again gives Kosara permission to take him with her, this time as martyred saint, not as a living husband.

Episode 5 is where John Vladislav dies; he sees Vladimir in a vision dressed as a soldier and gets killed by the hand of an angel. Here too one can see a parallel with another scene from the same chapter, where Vladimir repeats his role as a saint protector. Like Samuel at the beginning of the first segment, John Vladislav wishes also to occupy Vladimir's lands. Vladimir, however, again appears as a protector of his lands and people; he protected them against Samuel by sacrificing himself willingly. Now, against John Vladislav, he protects them by revenging his own death, after which Vladislav's army runs away, and the author of the Chapter comments that John Vladislav, who ordered Vladimir to be beheaded while having lunch, became Satan's angel.

The importance of Norman W. Ingham's and Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić's approaches in researching Chapter XXXVI of *The Annals* lies not only in recognizing the significance of the internal connections of various hagiographic places in the text and the significance of paying attention to the whole structure of the chapter, but also in positioning this text in a broader literary tradition of hagiographic texts about martyred rulers. Using a comparative approach they are able to show parallels with other tenth and eleventh century martyred rulers. Vladimir of Zeta complements the model of a ruler who becomes a saint because of his pious and just life and sacrifice for a greater cause, in imitating Christ

Enticed by a kinsman to whom he has done no harm, Vladimir is particularly close to the representatives of the Slavic group of martyr rulers, Saint Wenceslaus and Ss. Boris and

⁹¹ *Mi domine, noli ire ne, quod absit, tibi eveniat sicut fratri meo, sed dimitte me ut eam et videam et audiam*

Gleb.⁹² In spite of being warned about the dangers, Vladimir is lured by his kinsman to a faraway place and there he is killed at the doorstep of the church where he said his last prayers. He is buried in the church where he was killed. After miraculous signs appear on his grave, his murderer repents and allows his remains to be translated.

Similarities stop there and important dissimilarities appear. Unlike Boleslav, Wenceslaus's brother and murderer, Vladimir's murderer carries a different lesson of the text about the saint. On the one hand, Boleslav repented fully for his acts. Vladislav did repent for killing Vladimir, but he only permits Kosara to translate the remains of her husband after that. He becomes a carrier of a different lesson. He has no true repentance and he gets punished at the end of the Chapter for his evil deeds. The idea of divine punishment is another lesson of Chapter XXXVI besides Vladimir's martyrdom.

Vladislav differs from Boleslav and Svjatopulk in yet another aspect. He is Vladimir's kinsman, but he becomes one only when Vladimir marries his sister, Kosara, while Boleslav and Svjatopulk are the brothers of their victims. Also, Boleslav and Svjatopulk conspired against their brothers from within their countries, while both of Vladimir's enemies, Samuel and Vladislav, were external enemies.⁹³ Finally, Vladimir has no companions with him at the moment of his death and his wife Kosara has no counterpart in the stories about other martyred rulers.

Differences exist both on the level of details and on the structural level of the text. The division of the narrative of Chapter XXXVI into two segments has no parallel in the literature about martyr rulers, especially regarding the dialectical relation between the two segments. Therefore, Ingham concludes, there are not enough evidence to suggest that there is a direct connection between Saint Vladimir and other martyred rulers from the Slavic

quomodo se habet rex. Si me vult perdere, perdat. Tu tantum ne pereas. Ibid, 132-133.

⁹² Ingham. "The Martyrdom of St. John Vladimir of Dioclea," 210-214.

⁹³ Ibid, 213.

group, as one can only be attested in the case of Saint Wenceslaus and Ss. Boris and Gleb.⁹⁴
Vladimir deserves a special place within the broader context of martyred rulers.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Ingham. "The Martyred Prince and the Question of Slavic Cultural Continuity in the Early Middle Ages," 53.

⁹⁵ Ingham, "The Martyrdom of St. John Vladimir of Dioclea," 214.

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER XXXVI AND *THE ANNALS OF A PRIEST OF DIOCLEA*

Norman W. Ingham and Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić have showed that, in a comparative perspective, Chapter XXXVI of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea* belongs to the literary context of a new type of martyred ruler in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Another literary context in which one can consider the Chapter is the context of *The Annals* themselves, looking for motifs, plotlines and narrative strategies that are present not only in the Chapter but also in other parts of the chronicle. Conclusions drawn from that perspective could contribute to earlier research on the Chapter. There are two aspects of the Chapter XXXVI that I will use as a starting point for considering general characteristics of *The Annals* and of the Chapter XXXVI within it: the main lessons of the Chapter and the narrative strategies to make the readers believe in the credibility of the story.

The goal of the Chapter XXXVI is to emphasize the martyrdom of Saint Vladimir of Zeta. However, Vladimir is not the only ruler described as a holy ruler. Chapter IX of the chronicle describes the reign of King Svetoplek who is at one point characterized as a “very holy king” (*rex sanctissimus*). Converted by Constantine of Thessaloniki, he became the first Christian king of the Slavic dynasty in the chronicle. As the first Christian king in the dynasty, he introduced “many good laws and customs.”⁹⁶ However, he did not die in a violent way and did not become a martyr. That was also the case with Dragimir, cousin of Saint Vladimir. While having lunch on an island, the citizens of Kotor who had invited him

⁹⁶ *Multas reges et bonos mores instituit*. Svetoplek is the only ruler in the chronicle, aside from Vladimir, who is explicitly characterized as “holy”. However, King Gradichna from chapter XLVII of the chronicle is attributed characteristics of a holy king: “After that the people assembled and proclaimed Gradichna a king, who, after he ascended the throne, started ruling with all fairness. He truly was a man who feared God and loved him, pious and merciful, protector and defender of widows and orphans, and exceptional in his act and goodness... King Gradichna endured during his reign many ambushes and persecutions by evil men, but God delivered him from them all.” (*Post haec populi congregantes se constituerunt regem Gradichnam, qui accepto regno coepit regere populum cum omni iustitia. Erat sane vit timens ac diligens Deum, pius et misericors, viduarum et orphanorum protector atque defensor et in omnibus actibus suis omni bonitate praecipuus... Sustinuit quoque rex Gradichna diebus regni sui multas insidias et persecutiones iniuste a malis hominibus, sed ex omnibus eripuit eum Deus.*) [Tibor Živković] *Gesta Regum Sclavorum I*, 60, 178-181.

conspired against him and decided to kill him because of the bad deeds of his ancestors. Realizing that they wish to end his life, Dragimir ran to the church and defended himself from there with a sword. His attackers then removed the roof of the church and killed him by throwing stones at him.⁹⁷ Even though his death resembles a martyr's death in some respects, he has no attributes of a holy man. The motif of retreating in front of the enemy that is found in Vladimir's life is also repeated, in Chapter XLI. There one finds Bodin rebelling against King Radoslav. The king, "a pious and peaceful man," escaped the war and "humbly" retreated with his army and died as an old man.⁹⁸ In the next chapter, in the story about Bodin and Branislav, one also finds some of the motifs from Chapter XXXVI. Bodin betrayed Branislav, broke an oath that he had given, and, while having lunch, ordered him to be imprisoned. Later, he added a murder to his betrayal and ordered Branislav to be beheaded. Then he repented for his deeds and organized a proper burial for his victim. However, the author of the chronicle does not treat Branislav as a martyr.⁹⁹

Only Chapter XXXVI develops the notion of a holy martyr ruler. In other chapters of *The Annals* one finds some motifs similar to those from the story about Saint Vladimir. Other lesson of the Chapter, however, is the lesson about punishment of a sinner. The idea of divine punishment, expressed in the destiny of Vladimir's murderer, John Vladislav, is the idea that is expressed in a couple of other places in the chronicle. Already in the second chapter of the chronicle one finds a suggestion that God punishes sinners. When the pagan Slavs came to the Balkans they met the army of the Christian kings of Istria and Dalmatia. After many quarrels, on the eighth day, they started a battle, and

⁹⁷ Ibid, 140, Ingham, "The Martyrdom of St. John Vladimir of Dioclea," 199, 209.

⁹⁸ [Tibor Živković] *Gesta Regum Sclavorum I*, 162-163.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 163-167; Ingham, "The Martyrdom of St. John Vladimir of Dioclea," 199.

...by the will of God, whom nobody should ask why he does what he does, because maybe there was some great sin hiding among the Christians, the cruel Goths won the battle.¹⁰⁰

Another example of God's punishment is found in a short Chapter XI, where one reads about King Vladislav, who forgot about God and deviated from the ways of his fathers and committed many sins. Therefore, one day, when hunting, by God's will he fell in a pit and died.¹⁰¹ However, the most explicit statement about God's attitude towards sinners is found in Chapter XXXI of *The Annals*. Legec and his seven sons were invited by the people of the Slavic kingdom to help get rid of the sons of the previous king, Prelimir. They came and killed them, but, in spite of the fact that Prelimir's sons were cruel and unjust rulers,

...almighty God, who likes all the good deeds and hates all the evils and sins, struck with illness and in a short time this father [Legec]... and his sons ... And they all died and none of them stayed alive.¹⁰²

The idea of divine intervention against sinners, mostly murderers, runs throughout *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*, as if it were one of the main themes of the chronicle.¹⁰³ Another consistency in the elements of Chapter XXXVI with the rest of the chronicle can be seen in various narrative strategies employed in the text. These strategies have the purpose of making the reader of the chronicle believe in its fictional narrative. Narratives are the way in which people shape their knowledge about the world that surrounds them, at the same time, constructing the knowledge that is inseparable from the practice of creating the narrative; in that sense, *The Annals* is an attempt to arrange the knowledge of history through constructing

¹⁰⁰ ... *et Dei iudicio, cui nemo audet dicere cur ita faciat, quia forte aliquod magnum peccatum latebat in christianis, victoriam Gothi crudeles habuerunt.* [Tibor Živković] *Gesta Regum Sclavorum I*, 8-9.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 64-67.

¹⁰² *Sed Deus omnipotens, cui cuncta bona placent et displacent omnia mala atque peccata, brevi in tempore percussit patrem... et filios eius pestilentia et clade... et mortui sunt et non remansit ex eis nec unus.* *Ibid*, 120-123.

¹⁰³ In the chronicle, almost all the sinners are punished, and there are numerous other examples of murderers being punished for their evil deeds. God is not always the one who punishes, that role can be played by foreign invaders (for example, in the case of King Ciaslav) or other members of the Slavic dynasty.

a narrative. *The Annals* revolve around the history of an invented early medieval Slavic state and a Slavic dynasty that governed it for generations and centuries. Nevertheless, the text of *The Annals* tries to convince the reader of its credibility from the very beginning.

A remark at the end of the Chapter advises the reader who wishes to read more about the miracles of Saint Vladimir to read another text. This remark has been taken as the main argument for the existence of an earlier text about Saint Vladimir. However, the sentence can be also considered as one of the narrative strategies employed so the reader would believe in the credibility of the story. At the beginning of the chronicle, there is a short preface that announces the story that follows, which is a commonplace in creating narratives about past events. In the short introductory chapter of *The Annals* the alleged author of the chronicle addresses his audience. By doing so, at the same time he reveals the nature of the work; it is, namely, a translation of a book from Slavic into the Latin language. Asked by the priests and other citizens of his town, and in spite of his advanced age, he agreed to translate “from the Slavic language into Latin the book about the Gothic or, as it is said in Latin, Slavic kings, in which all their deeds and wars are recorded.”¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, in the following sentence, the alleged author also addresses the problem of the credibility of his work by stating that no one should think that he wrote anything but the things that he “heard told by our fathers and the elders of old in a truthful story.”¹⁰⁵

From the very beginning of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*, the reader is told that he should believe in the story that follows. Source material outside of the narrative are mentioned that were allegedly used in writing the chronicle. The author speaks about the

¹⁰⁴ ... ut libellum Gothorum quod Latine Sclavorum dicitur regum quo omnia gesta ac bella eorum scripta sunt ex Sclavonica littera verterem in Latinam... Ibid, 2-3.

¹⁰⁵ Verum tamen nullus legentium credat alia me scripsisse praeter es quae a patribus nostris et antiquis senioribus veridica narratione referre audivi. Ibid, 2-5.

original text written in Slavic language that he translated, “compelled by brotherly affection.”¹⁰⁶

In one more place in the text of *The Annals* there is the same case of referring to writings that can witness the stories that are told in the chronicle. The Slavic book called “Methodius” is the book where one can allegedly read about the laws and customs that King Svetoplek established during his reign, as described in Chapter IX of the chronicle.¹⁰⁷ However, unlike the book about the Gothic or Slavic kings that is allegedly the original text of the chronicle, the book named “Methodius”, as well as the book of the deeds of Saint Vladimir, are presented as “further readings” for those who are interested to learn more about Svetoplek and Saint Vladimir. Nevertheless, they play the role of source material that can witness the credibility of the narrative of the chronicle from outside the narrative.

The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea is not about an isolated past; it is part of broader historical knowledge. Apart from the members of the ruling Slavic dynasty, other historical characters play a significant role in the narrative. Already the first chapter of the chronicle begins with the naming of some of them:

In the time when Anastasius ruled in Constantinople... and when Gelasius was pope in Rome, at that time in Italy flourished Germanus the bishop and Sabinus the bishop of Canosa and the holy man Benedict at Montecasino, from the north came a people who were called the Goths...¹⁰⁸

The historical figures mentioned in *The Annals* act as chronological guidelines. Other characters in the later text, however, interact with the rulers of the Slavic dynasty in various

¹⁰⁶ Nikola Banašević argues that the part of the sentence at the end of the introductory chapter (*quae a patribus nostris et antiquis senioribus veridica narratione referre audivi*) also refers to written sources. [Nikola Banašević] [*The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea and Folk Tales*], 9-13.

¹⁰⁷ “He introduced many laws and good customs. Whoever wishes to know more he should read the book called Methodius...” (*Multas leges et bonos mores instituit. Quas qui velit agnoscere librum Sclavorum qui dicitur Methodius legat...*) [Tibor Živković] *Gesta Regum Sclavorum I*, 60-61.

¹⁰⁸ *Regnante in urbe Constantinopolitana imperatore Anastassio... Romae vero praesidente Gelasio papa [secundo] eo tempore praeclaruerunt in Italia Germanus episcopus et Sabinus Canusinae sedis episcopus atque*

ways, but they can also be part of side stories that interfere with the main story about the Slavic state and dynasty. One of the figures that plays a noticeable role in the narrative is Totila, king of Ostrogoths; after referring to the above mentioned chronological context, the author of *The Annals* continues the text with the story about the migration of the Goths, who were actually Slavs. One of the leaders of the migration is Ostroyl; the place of the other leader is reserved for Totila, who is at the same time a brother of Ostroyl. After winning a battle against the kings of Istria and Dalmatia, the brothers decided to split their army and people. Totila went to Italy where he fought many battles and destroyed many towns, and then he went to Sicily, where he died, as Benedict, also mentioned in the chronicle, had foretold of him.¹⁰⁹ Ostroyl, however, stayed in the Balkans and became a founder of the Slavic state and dynasty that became the focus of rest of *The Annals*.

Even more noticeable is the character of Constantine of Thessaloniki who appears as an important figure in the chapter dedicated to the rule of King Svetoplek. His first appearance is in the previous chapter, during the reign of Svetoplek's father Saramir. Encouraged by the Holy Spirit, he left Thessaloniki and started debating with many philosophers, preaching and converting peoples and provinces. Hearing about him, Pope Stephen asked him to come to visit Rome. Constantine accepted the invitation, and heading to Rome, he was passing through the lands of the Slavic state when Svetoplek succeeded his father on the throne. Then,

...the man of God Constantine, who was later given the name Cyril by Pope Stephen when he made him a monk, started preaching to the king the Gospel of Christ and the faith of the Holy Trinity. And the king Svetoplek believed in Christ inspired by his preaching and was baptized with all of his realm and became a believer and a faithful follower of the Holy Trinity.¹¹⁰

venerabilis vir Benedictus apud Cassinum montem, exiit quoque gens a septentrionali plaga quae Gothi nominabantur... Ibid, 4-5.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 12-15.

¹¹⁰ *Tunc vir Dei Constantinus, cui nomen postea Cyrillus a papa Stephano impositum est quando consercravit eum monacum, coepit praedicare regi Evangelium Christi et fidem sanctae Trinitatis ad cuius praedicationem*

After staying for couple more days in Svetoplek's state, and after he "strengthened" the faith of the newly converted Christians, Constantine left for Rome. Svetoplek, however, started organizing his kingdom, in which all the people rejoiced in the name of God. He introduced many laws and customs, and he organized the territories of the kingdom; in order to do that, he had sent the messengers to Pope Stephen and to Emperor Michael, in Constantinople, asking them for old charters in which the borders between the lands were written down. In the figure of King Svetoplek is a second founder of the Slavic state (Ostroyl was the first), the first Christian king of the Slavic state and a figure that greatly influenced the narrative of *The Annals*. Therefore, the author of *The Annals* made an effort to connect his name with the names of a famous Slavic saint, a pope and a Byzantine emperor.

Attila is one of the historical figures mentioned in *The Annals*, but his role is not as important as Totila's or Constantine's. It is interesting that the most elaborate links between the members of the Slavic dynasty and other historical figures are placed in the most important moments in the narrative – moments of the foundation and initial organization of the Slavic state and, at the same time, of the rest of the narrative itself. The reign of Saint Vladimir is also an important moment in the chronicle, if one considers the length of the Chapter dedicated to him, as well as the unique hagiographic structure and character of his story. The characters of two Bulgarian Tsars, Samuel and John Vladislav, can be seen in the same way as Totila or Constantine of Thessaloniki, as historical characters whose role is to give historical credibility to the story of Saint Vladimir and the Slavic dynasty to which he belongs in the chronicle. Their links with Saint Vladimir are elaborated within the story of the saint's martyrdom, making those characters inseparable from the life of the saint, just as Constantine's visit to the Slavic kingdom was crucial for the reign of King Svetoplek.

rex Svetoplek credidit Christo et baptizatus est cum omni regno suo et effectus est orthodoxus et verus sanctae Trinitatis cultor. Ibid, 38-41.

Finding a place in the broader knowledge about history by creating links with historical figures that associated with that knowledge makes *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea* look more credible. These links give the reader the opportunity not only to connect the stories from the chronicle with other historical knowledge, but also to build the chronological framework for those stories and to situate them in the histories of other nations and peoples. However, as the story of the chronicle goes on, fewer and fewer figures of that kind interfere in the main story that revolves around the Slavic dynasty. Gradually, another strategy of convincing the reader appears, which is related to geographical aspects of *The Annals*.

Therefore, another starting point for considering Chapter XXXVI in *The Annals* is the story about the miracle of Saint Vladimir on Oblik Hill. After Vladimir prayed to God and saved his men from the poisonous snakes, the author of the chapter comments that “to this day” the snakes never bit anyone. Then he adds: “...if a snake would bite a man or an animal on that hill, it would remain alive and well and with no injury. It seems as the snakes on that hill left with no poison, since the day when saint Vladimir prayed until today.”¹¹¹

With this short story and comment, Oblik Hill becomes a place of memory for the acts of Saint Vladimir, and even the proof of the historical reality of the event is offered, that is, “to this day” snakes on that hill represent no danger to humans. In the broadest sense all the geographical information in the chronicle can be seen as way of presenting the narrative as credible because it pretends to create connections between the narrative of the chronicle and geographical reality of the potential reader.¹¹² However, as in the case of Oblik Hill, there are also short stories and legends that stand out from the multitude of geographical data. These are short stories that from time to time intersect the main story, usually explaining the origin

¹¹¹ ...si homo aut aliqua bestia in monte illo a serpente percussus fuerit, sanus et absque ulla laesione perseverat. Fueruntque in illo monte ab illo die quo oravit beatus Vladimirus quasi sine veneno serpentes usque in hodiernum diem. Ibid, 124-127.

of a particular place or building to the reader, as well as the origin of the name or phenomena related to that place. I will now give selected examples from those stories to show how they are positioned in the narrative of the chronicle.

Chapter XXII of the chronicle describes the rule of King Radoslav and tells about his son, Ciaslav. Ciaslav decided to drive his father out of the kingdom and to take the power into his own hands. Fleeing from his son, King Radoslav swam to a rock near the coast. A boat from Italy was passing by, and the sailors agreed to take the king to Italy, away from his rebellious son. As for the rock, “from that day that rock was named the Camich of Radoslav, that is, the Rock of Radoslav.”¹¹³

King Radoslav went to Rome where he married a noble Roman woman. When his descendant, Pavlomir Bello, decided to go back to the Slavic state, he was invited by the Slavs from the kingdom to take the throne of his grandfather, Radoslav. After Pavlomir decided to return and take the throne of his grandfather, one can read several stories that are connected to Pavlomir’s actions which explain the origins of several localities and places. First, when he went ashore he built a fortress with his cousins. When the population of the recently depopulated city of Epidaurus heard about this they joined them and together they built a new town on the sea coast:

... on the language of the Epidaurians the coast is called *laus*. Therefore, the town was named Lausium and later, when the *l* was omitted, it was named Ragusium. And the Slavs called it Dubrovnik, that is, “woodland” or “woody”, because they came from the forest when they had built it.¹¹⁴

¹¹² For example, Svetoplek’s organization of the Slavic kingdom is colored with numerous names of cities and other geographical units.

¹¹³ *Ab illa autem die petra illa vocata est Radoslavi camich, sive petra.* Ibid, 86-87.

¹¹⁴ ... *in ripis marinis quas Epidaurii lingua sua Laus dicunt. Unde ae civitas Lausium vocata est, quae postea L posita Ragusium appellata est. Sclavi vero Dubrovnich apellaverunt, id est Sylvester, sive Sylvestris, quoniam, quando eam aedificaverunt, de silva venerunt.* Ibid, 110-111.

After that, he was welcomed by the people and lords of the Slavic state and was crowned king. Only one of the lords did not accept his rule, and Pavlomisir raised an army against him and after he won a battle, the Romans that had accompanied him and he himself decided to build new buildings to celebrate the victory:

... Romans ... have built the church in honor of Saint Peter the apostle in the nearby place Caldane, and not far away from the church, on a small hill, king has built a fortress that he named by his own name Belo.¹¹⁵

Then, as an established king, Pavlomisir started traveling in his kingdom:

... when the king was in the area of Srem, people from Srem and the Hungarians started a fight with the king. On that place both people of Srem and Hungarians suffered a defeat and big disaster. From that day until today the place, where the battle took place, is called Field of Belo by the name of the king and because the victory he gained there.¹¹⁶

Another example of this sort of story appears later in the text of *The Annals*, in Chapter XXXVIII, where king Dobroslav is waging war against the Greeks. In the midst of the battle, after crossing a stream that runs through a region called Prapatna and reaching a forest, king was attacked by Goyslav, his son, who did not recognize his father, who was covered in blood and mud. He threw the king from the horse to the ground; Dobroslav, however, shouted: “God have mercy! God have mercy!”¹¹⁷ and Goyslav recognized him. After that

¹¹⁵ ... Romani... aedificaverunt ecclesiam in Rassia ad honorem beati Petri apostoli in loco propinquo Caldanae et non multum longe ab eadem ecclesia in uno monticulo construxit rex castellum vocavitque illud suo nomine Bello. Ibid, 112-113.

¹¹⁶ Quod itaque tempore dum esset rex in patribus Sremi, Sremani congregantes se cum Hungaris commiserunt proelium cum rege, in quo loco ceciderunt Sremani cum Hungaris et facta est eis contritio magna. Ab illo ergo die dicta est planities illa, in qua factum est proelium. Bellina nomine regis ob victoriam quam habuit ibi rex usque hodie. Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Boxe pomiluy! Boxe pomiluy! Ibid, 150-151.

... the king stood up and named that place God's Mercy which is on Latin *Dei misericordia*, and that place is called like that until today, because God had mercy on the king not to be killed by son and because God gave victory to a few over a huge army.¹¹⁸

Cursilius, the leader of the defeated Greek army, was not so lucky. Seriously wounded, he died when he reached a valley in front of the city of Scodrin. On the place where he died a cross was placed that bears the name the Cross of Cursilius.¹¹⁹

What is common for all these stories and mentions of localities (and others in *The Annals*) is that they are all inseparable from the activity of a ruler from the Slavic dynasty. A network of localities connected to the Slavic dynasty is created that not only links the areas of the Slavic state in a common historical experience of a Slavic dynasty, but also puts these stories in a real geographical context, trying to give the reader references to material evidence of the events described in the chronicle. To further support the credibility of the stories, a rhetorical phrase is used many times in *The Annals*: "to this today," which emphasizes the presence of the localities from *The Annals* in the real world of the reader.¹²⁰ With the story about the miracle of Saint Vladimir on Oblik Hill, Chapter XXXVI shares this narrative strategy with the rest of the chronicle. Oblik Hill becomes a locality connected to a holy ruler from the imagined Slavic dynasty.

The Annals took care to give its readers various data that would enable them to situate the fictional memory in chronological and geographical frameworks, that is, to find its place in broader knowledge about history and in geographical reality. Famous historical characters that interact with rulers from the Slavic dynasty, further readings and various localities – they all tend to establish a communication with the reader to direct his interpretation and to

¹¹⁸ *Tunc rex stetit in eodem loco vocavitque nomen loci illius Bosya milost quod Latine dicitur Dei misericordia, qui locus sic vocatur usque in praesentem diem, eo quod fecisset Deus misericordiam regi ut non interficeretur e filio suo et quod tantam multitudinem concessit Deus in manibus paucorum.* Ibid, 150-151.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 150 -153.

persuade him of the historical existence of the Slavic dynasty and state. *The Annals* call upon the reader so they can attest together the credibility and validity of the memory it has constructed. Chapter XXXVI participates in all these aspects of the chronicle.

Ingham argues that there is no reason to suggest that Chapter XXXVI is an independent source incorporated in the chronicle;¹²¹ this Chapter is different from the rest of the chronicle because of its elaborated hagiographical structure and motifs, but one cannot say that it belongs to a genre of hagiography because it does not have all the characteristics of the genre, especially when one has in mind the flexibility of genres in the Middle Ages.¹²² Chapter XXXVI represents a hagiographic feature inside a chronicle. In that respect, it seems that the author of Chapter XXXVI had the text of the rest of the chronicle in mind when writing it and that, therefore, Chapter XXXVI fits stylistically with the rest of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*.

¹²⁰ Bujan, "La Chronique du prêtre de Dioclée," 26-28.

¹²¹ Ingham, "The Martyrdom of St. John Vladimir of Dioclea," 211.

¹²² One can argue that genre of "hagiography" did not exist in the Middle Ages but is an invention of modern historiography. Therefore, genre of hagiography had no function in medieval times and using it as argument in a research can only obscure the understanding of the period. Ingham does not entirely abandon the existence of genres in medieval times, but he agrees that they were less pervasive and developed that in modern times. See Felice Lifshitz, "Beyond Positivism and Genre: 'Hagiographical' Texts as Historical Narrative," *Viator. Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 25 (1994): 97-113, and Norman W. Ingham, "Genre-Theory and Old Russian Literature," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 31, no. 2 (1987): 234-245, and Norman W. Ingham, "Genre Characteristics of the Kievan Lives of Princes in Slavic and European Perspective," *American Contributions to the Ninth International Congress of Slavists* 2 (Columbus, Ohio) 1983: 223-237, and Gail Lenhoff, "Medieval Russian Saint's Lives in Socio-Cultural Perspective," *Russian Literature* 39 (1996): 205-222, and Gail Lenhoff, "Categories of Early Russian Writing," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 31, no. 2 (1987): 259-271, and

CONCLUSION

Chapter XXXVI of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea* has been interpreted as an independent text incorporated into the chronicle on the basis of its last sentence: the author directs the reader to the book existing outside of the Chapter. This book deals with the miracles and good deeds of Saint Vladimir of Zeta. The relevance of this sentence was supported by the hagiographic details in Chapter XXXVI. It was therefore assumed that the author of *The Annals* used an earlier hagiography, or at least a hagiographic text about Saint Vladimir, and incorporated it in his work, either fully or as a short version of the original. The author did not try to blend the narrative of the earlier source with the rest of the story and that explains why Chapter XXXVI is different from the other chapters of the chronicle.¹²³

The question of the creation of this Chapter has been regarded as a separate issue from the complex question of the creation of *The Annals*. Regardless of the dating of the chronicle, Chapter XXXVI, as an earlier hagiographic text, was considered to have been written probably in the eleventh century, shortly after the death of Saint Vladimir of Zeta in 1016. Even Solange Bujan, with her different interpretation and approach to the chronicle, agrees that the Chapter is, to some extent, an earlier text. It is impossible to give the final word on this problem and, therefore, I do not wish to give it or to take a position regarding that. Instead, I wish to discuss results and arguments of previous research and to try to contribute them.

Two key issues elaborated in this thesis are important for discussing previous research and results: First, the comparative analyses made by Norman W. Ingham and Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić show that Chapter XXXVI can be put in the literary context of martyr rulers of the tenth and eleventh centuries, based on the analysis and comparison of

Gail Lenhoff, "Towards a Theory of Protogenres in Medieval Russian Letters," *Russian Review* 43, no. 1 (1984): 31-54.

hagiographic details found in the Chapter as well as the hagiographic structure of the Chapter. Saint Vladimir of Zeta, therefore, belongs to a broader phenomenon of martyr rulers who died by sacrificing themselves without resistance for the greater good and for their people after living a pious and just life and imitating Christ. However, there is not enough evidence to consider Saint Vladimir as part of the Slavic group of martyred rulers developed by Norman W. Ingham in spite of seemingly obvious similarities.

Second, an analysis of the Chapter XXXVI in the context of the chronicle shows that the Chapter shares some basic ideas and narrative strategies with the rest of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*. It participates fully in the broader narrative construction of the chronicle, both by carrying the idea of divine punishment that strikes all sinners and by sharing narrative strategies to convince the reader of the credibility of the chronicle's fictional narrative. These strategies take part in the construction of the fictional memory about the history of the Balkans; it is a memory of the common historical experience of various areas and peoples based on the rule of a Slavic dynasty and on the existence of a Slavic state that covered and united all those areas; it is also a story about the continuity and relevance of the Slavic dynasty and state.¹²⁴ Therefore, one can say that the Chapter was written with a full awareness of the rest of the content of the chronicle, but whether it was based on an earlier text cannot be given from this analysis.

Norman W. Ingham is the only scholar so far who has argued that there is no reason to suggest that Chapter XXXVI was once a separate text or that it was based on a separate text. He argues that the Chapter has the same historical character of the chronicle and that it was given a religious interpretation rather than being a saint's life incorporated in the

¹²³ [Nikola Banašević] [*The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea and Folk Tales*], 134-142.

¹²⁴ This Slavic aspect gains a more complete meaning when it is put in context of *The Realm of the Slavs* and it participates in the discourse of pan-Slavism. In that context, *The Annals* gains relevance as one of the introductory chapters of a long history of Slavic peoples and becomes a point of reference itself – Orbin refers back to *The Annals* a couple of times later in the text of *The Realm of the Slavs*. Thus the memory of a fictional

chronicle.¹²⁵ There is no reason to argue that it was a separate hagiography because it does not have all the characteristics of a hagiography. Rather, Chapter XXXVI should be considered as a hagiographic text within the chronicle, which would not be an exceptional case.¹²⁶ Ingham, furthermore, accepts the early dating of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea* to the twelfth century. In this case, the analysis that shows the compatibility of Chapter XXXVI with the rest of the chronicle would support this opinion: Chapter XXXVI was written at the same time as the chronicle, with no basis in an earlier hagiography about Saint Vladimir of Zeta and as an inseparable part of the chronicle. *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea* then appears as part of a broader practice of writing histories among newly converted peoples of Christendom and, regarding Saint Vladimir, of situating those peoples within the imaginary of the medieval Christian world by introducing saintly characters in these histories. This claim opens space for further research into *The Annals* and its comparison with other similar chronicles and for comparative research into other details and characters found in the chronicle, such as the legendary King Svetoplek.

However, two problems arise regarding this opinion. First is the question of why Saint Vladimir of Zeta is absent from later Serbian medieval history if the original text about him was written as part of *The Annals* in the twelfth century. The same question refers to the widespread opinion about the existence of an earlier text about Saint Vladimir from the eleventh century. One of the possible answers to this question would be in the shift of the center of political power in medieval Serbian lands that occurred in the twelfth century. Zeta lost its influence and Raska became a dominant center of power as well as the center of the future Nemanjid dynasty. From the late twelfth century onwards, the Nemanjid dynasty

Slavic state and dynasty became a valid historical memory, see Bujan, “La Chronique du prêtre de Dioclée,” 24-30.

¹²⁵ Nevertheless, he does not dismiss that possibility. He says that, if that is the case, the original text was then radically altered. Ingham. “The Martyrdom of St. John Vladimir of Dioclea,” 211.

¹²⁶ See János Bak, “Hagiography and Chronicles,” *Promoting the Saints. Cults and Their Contexts from Late Antiquity until the Early Modern Period* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2011): 51-58.

started creating its own rulers' ideology that later evolved into a developed ideology of saint kings from that dynasty. The absence of Saint Vladimir, then, would be explained by the Nemanjid dynasty to supersede other competitive and already existing ideological traditions and thus to establish itself as the only legitimate dynasty to rule the medieval Serbian lands. There have even been suggestions that the story of Saint Vladimir was not completely forgotten and that it influenced Serbian medieval literature created under the Nemanjid dynasty to some extent¹²⁷ even though the next martyr ruler of medieval Serbia was Prince Lazar, who died in 1389 at the Battle of Kosovo, fighting against the Ottoman sultan.¹²⁸

The second problem is the problem of dating *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*. In spite of the debates and research on this topic so far, no one has been able to provide an argument that would give a definite answer. The alternative dating by Solange Bujan deserves attention. The real value of her research is that she argued for a possible way in which *The Annals* were constructed, that is, that Mauro Orbini invented the chronicle with the help of different source material. As for Chapter XXXVI, I would suggest that her argument about the construction of the Chapter is more valid than that proposed by Banašević and Živković. Their explanations of the connections between Chapter XXXVI of the *Annales* and Skylitzes' *Synopsis of Byzantine History* are based on an attempt to prove that the story about Saint Vladimir can be regarded as a credible source material for reconstructing the historical reality of his reign. Bujan, however, provides a possible explanation for the similarities between *The Annals* and the *Synopsis*. This approach is more relevant for this thesis than denying any connections between the sources so as to use them as credible for historical reconstruction.

¹²⁷ Together with the influence of Saint Stephen of Hungary and Saint Boris and Gleb on early Nemanjid hagiographic writings, it was suggested that Saint Vladimir of Zeta could have influence, too. Henrik Birnbaum, *On Medieval and Renaissance Slavic Writing: Selected Essays* (The Hague: Mouton 1974): 327. See also Stanislaus Hafner, *Studien zur altserbischen dynastischen Historiographie* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1964).

¹²⁸ See Marjanović-Dušanić, "Patterns of Martyrial Sanctity in the Royal Ideology of Medieval Serbia," 69-79.

Bujan agrees that Chapter XXXVI is based on an earlier hagiographic text. She does not enter into the analysis of the hagiographic content of the Chapter, but, starting from the assumption that Mauro Orbini composed the chronicle, she argues that he used Skylitzes's *Synopsis* and enriched the hagiographic text with historical details and characters so to provide that chapter of his work with a historical context. With regards to that, the compatibility of the Chapter XXXVI with the rest of the chronicle shows it to be the work of Mauro Orbini himself.¹²⁹ As Bujan argues, Orbini wanted his work to look like a medieval chronicle from the twelfth century.¹³⁰ He therefore used various narrative strategies throughout his work to construct a consistent and seemingly credible story of an imagined Slavic dynasty.

Orbini's interference may explain the differences between Chapter XXXVI and other stories of martyred rulers from tenth and eleventh centuries, especially between the Chapter and representatives of the Slavic group of martyred rulers. It is possible that one can distinguish two layers of text in Chapter XXXVI. The first layer would be the remains of the original text that comes from an earlier hagiographic text about martyrs from the tenth and eleventh centuries, which is seen in the details that are similar to other martyred rulers' stories: being betrayed and lured to a place far from home, killed at the doorstep of the church after prayer, being buried in the place where he was killed, miracles happening on his grave and, finally, the most important, the lesson of his martyrdom, which is the same as in the cases of other tenth- and eleventh-centuries martyrs. The second layer of text, added by Mauro Orbini, adapted the hagiographic text into the chronicle. This layer can be seen in the narrative strategies that the Chapter shares with other parts of the chronicle and in details

¹²⁹ It would be interesting to analyze the rest of the Orbini's book *The Realm of the Slavs* and to see if the same narrative strategies are used in the rest of the book as in *The Annals*, which could point out with more certainty the impact of Orbini's hand on the text of the chronicle.

¹³⁰ Bujan. "La chronique de prêtre de Dioclée," 36.

such as, for example, the love story between Vladimir and Kosara that is taken from the *Synopsis*.

It is difficult to distinguish the layers further that that, however. The appearance of the Bulgarian tsars, Samuel and John Vladislav, is more difficult to explain in terms of layers of the text and the same is the case with the division of the narrative of the Chapter into two segments.¹³¹ It is possible that tsars were present in the original earlier text about Saint Vladimir, but that Mauro Orbini altered and adjusted their roles so that their connection with Saint Vladimir could be more elaborate and fit the dialectic division into two segments. This would, therefore, suggest that Mauro Orbini invented the dialectic hagiographic structure of the Chapter because none of the characters in the story is excluded from it. They each have a role and together built that structure. This would contribute to Bujan's opinion of Orbini as an excellent compiler and inventor.

Solange Bujan, however, gives further notes about the existence of an earlier text about Saint Vladimir. She points out that Orbini calls the saint only by the name Vladimir, while one finds the name of John Vladimir in the cult of the saint from the fourteenth century.¹³² She points out the possibility that Mauro Orbini used a much later hagiographic text about Saint Vladimir and then tried to present it in *The Annals* as a text created shortly after the saint died.¹³³ However, similarities with the tenth- and eleventh- century phenomenon of martyred rulers remain. It is probable that the story of Saint Vladimir of Zeta originated in that literary tradition.

With more than one layer of interpretation, Chapter XXXVI of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea* will continue to confuse and interest scholars because of its uniqueness, together with the rest of the chronicle. Whatever the case is, it seems that one thing is certain: apart

¹³¹ Ingham, "The Martyrdom of St. John Vladimir of Dioclea," 205.

¹³² The cult of St. John Vladimir is related to a monastery and church near Elbasan in central Albania. Ibid.25-26.

¹³³ Ibid, 25-26; Tupkova-Zaimova. "Un manuscrit inconnu de la Vie de Saint Jean Vladimir," 170-188.

from being interpreted as a narrative strategy of making the reader believe in the story, last sentence of the Chapter XXXVI refers to an existing, probably lost, earlier text that dealt with the martyrdom of Saint Vladimir of Zeta.

APPENDIX

Chapter XXXVI of *The Annals of a Priest of Dioclea*

[Živković, Tibor] Живковић, Тибор. *Gesta Regum Sclavorum I*. Belgrade: Institute of History - Ostrog Monastery, 2009: 124-139.

Puer autem Vladimirus accepto regno crescebat decoratus omni sapientia et sanctitate. Tempore itaque eodem, dum Vladimirus esset adolescens et regnaret in loco patris sui, supradictus Samuel Bulgarinorum imperator congregato magno exercitu advenit in partes Dalmatiae supra terram regis Vladimiri. Rex vero, qui vir sanctus erat et nolebat aliquem de suis perire in bello, secessit humiliter et ascendit in montem qui Obliquus dicitur cum omni gente sua. Veniens post haec imperator cum exercitu et cernens quod regi praevalere non posset partem sui exercitus ad montis pedem reliquit partemque secum ducens ad expugnandam civitatem Dulcinium perrexit. Erant praeterea per montem Obliquum igniti serpentes, qui statim, ut aliquos percutiebant, absque ulla tarditate moriebantur coeperuntque magnum damnum facere tam de hominibus, quam de animalibus. Tunc rex Vladimirus orationem fudit ad Dominum cum lacrimis ut Deus omnipotens liberaret populum suum ab illa pestifera morte. Exaudivit Deus orationem famuli sui et ab illo die nullus ex eis percussus est, sed, et usque hodie, si homo aut aliqua bestia in monte illo a serpente percussus fuerit, sanus et absque ulla laesione perseverat. Fueruntque in illo monte ab illo die quo oravit beatus Vladimirus quasi sine veneno serpentes usque in hodiernum diem. Interea misit imperator nuncios Vladimiro regi ut cum omnibus qui cum eo erant de monte descenderet, sed rex non acquievit. Iupanus autem eiusdem loci, Iudae traditori similis effectus, misit ad imperatorem dicens: “Domine, si tuae placet magnitudini, ego tibi tradam regem.” Cui remisit imperator: “Si hoc agere praevaldes, ditatum te scies a

me et magnificum valde”. * * * Tunc rex congregatis omnibus qui cum eo erant, taliter eis locutus est: “Oportet me, fratres carissimi, ut video adimplere illud Evangelii versiculum, ubi dicitur *Bonus pastor animam suam ponit pro ovibus suis*. Melius est ergo, fratres, ut ego ponam animam meam pro omnibus vobis et tradam corpus meum sponte ad trucidandum seu occidendum, quam ut vos periclitemini fame sive gladio”. Tunc, postquam haec et alia plurima eis locutus fuisset, resalutatis omnibus perrexit ad imperatorem. Quem imperator statim relegavit in exilium in partibus Achridae in loco qui Prespa dicitur, ubi et curia eiusdem imperatoris erat. Post haec congregato exercitu debellavit Dulcinium longo tempore, sed eum capere nullatenus valuit. Inde ascendit iratus, coepit destruere, incendere ac depraedare totam Dalmatiam, Decatarum atque Lausium civitates incendit nec non et vicos et totam provinciam devastavit ita ut terra videretur esse sine habitatore. Pertransivit imperator sic devastans tam maritimas, quam et montanas regiones, usque Iadram. Postea per Bosnam et Rassam reversus est in locum suum. Praeterea Vladimirus tenebatur in vinculis, ieiuniis et orationibus vacans die noctuque. Apparuit ei in visione angelus Domini confortans eum et nuncians ei ea quae ventura erant quomodo eum Deus liberaret de ipso carcere, et quomodo per martyrium perveniret ad regna caelorum et acciperet immarcescibilem coronam et praemia vitae aeternae. Tunc beatus Vladimirus de visione angelica roboratus magis ac magis vacabat orationibus atque ieiuniis. Quadam itaque die imperatoris Samuelis filia Cossara nomine conpuncta et inspirata a Spiritu Sancto accessit ad patrem et petivit ab eo ut descenderet cum suis ancillis et lavaret caput et pedes vinculatorum et captivorum, quod ei a patre concessum est. Descendit itaque et peregit bonum opus. Inter haec cernens Vladimirus et videns quod esset pulcher in aspectu, humilis, mansuetus atque modestus et quod esset repletus sapientia et prudentia Domini, morata locuta est cum illo. Videbatur namque ei loquela illius dulcis super mel et favum. Igitur non causa libidinis, sed quia condoluit iuventuti et pulchritudini

illius et quoniam audiret eum esse regem et ex regali prosapia ortum, dilexit eum et salutato eo recessit. Volens post haec a vinculis liberare eum accessit ad imperatorem et prostrata pedibus illius taliter locuta est: “Mi pater et domine, scio quia daturus es mihi virum sicuti moris est. Nunc ergo, si tuae placet magnitudini, aut des mihi virum Vladimirus regem quem tenes in vinculis, aut scias me prius morituram, quam alium accipiam virum”. Imperator haec audiens, quia valde diligebat filiam suam et quia sciebat Vladimirus ex regali progenie ortum, laetus effectus est, annuit fieri petitionem illius. Statimque mittens ad Vladimirus et balneo... * * * vestibusque indutum regiis iussit sibi praesentari et benigne intuens atque osculans coram magnatibus regni sui tradidit ei filiam suam in uxorem. Celebratis itaque nuptiis filiae suae more regali constituit imperatori Vladimirus in regem et dedit ei terram et regnum patrum suorum totamque terram Duracenorum. Deinde misit imperator ad Dragimirus, patrum regis Vladimirus, ut descenderet et acciperet terram suam Tribuniam et congregaret populum et inhabitaret terram, quod et factum est. Vladimirus itaque rex vivebat cum uxore sua Cossara in omni sanctitate et castitate diligens Deum et serviens illi nocte ac die regebatque populum sibi commissum cum timore Dei et iustitia. Post non multum vero temporis defunctus est imperator Samuel et filius eius Radomirus accepit imperium. Qui fortis extitit viribus commisitque proelia multa cum Graecis tempore Basilii imperatoris Graecorum obtinuitque totam terram usque Constantinopolim. Timens autem Basilius imperator ne forte imperium ammitteret, misit occulte legatos ad Vladislavum, consobrinum Radomirus, dicens: “Quare non vindicas sanguinem patris tui? Accipe aurum et argentum a me, quantum tibi visum fuerit, estoque nobiscum pacificus et accipe regnum Samuelis, qui patrem tuum et fratrem suum interfecit. Et si praevalēs, occide filium eius Radomirus qui nunc tenet regnum.” Quo audito Vladislavus concessit et quadam die, dum Radomirus iret venatum, ipse cum eo equitans percussit eum atque interfecit. Et sic mortuus est Radomirus et regnavit in loco eius Vladislavus, qui occidit

illum. Accepto itaque imperio misit nuncios ad regem Vladimirus ut ad eum veniret. Quo audito Cossara regina tenuit eum dicens: "Mi domine, noli ire ne, quod absit, tibi eveniat sicut fratri meo, sed dimitte me ut eam et videam et audiam quomodo se habet rex. Si me vult perdere, perdat. Tu tantum ne pereas." Igitur voluntate viri sui perrexit regina ad consobrinum suum, quae honorifice ab eo suscepta est, tamen fraudulenter. Post haec misit legatos secundo regi, dans ei crucem auream et fidem, dicens: "Quare venire dubitas? Ecce, uxor tua apud me est et nil mali passa, sed a me et a meis honorifice habetur. Accipe fidem crucis et veni ut videam te quatenus honorifice cum donis revertaris in locum tuum cum uxore tua." Cui remisit rex: "Scimus, quod dominus noster Iesus Christus, quum pro nobis passus est, non in aurea vel argentea cruce suspensus est, sed in lignea. Ergo, si vera est fides tua et verba tua vera sunt, per manus religiosorum hominum crucem ligneam mitte mihi et fide et virtute Domini nostri Iesu Christi spem habendo in vivificam crucem ac pretiosum lignum veniam." Tunc accersitis duobus episcopis et uno heremita mentiando illis maligne fidem suam dedit illis crucem ligneam, misit eos ad regem. Qui venientes salutaverunt regem et fidem atque crucem dederunt. Rex vero accipiens crucem pronus adoravit in terra et deosculatam recondidit in sinu suo. Assumptisque paucis secum perrexit ad imperatorem. Praeterea iusserat imperator per viam ponere ei insidias ut transeunte eo insurgerent ex adverso et interficerent eum. Deus autem omnipotens, qui ab infantia custodivit famulum suum, noluit extra homines dormitationem accipere. Nam misit angelos suos, qui eum custodirent. Cumque transiret per loca, quo insidiae erant, videbant insidiatores comitari milites regem quasi alas habentes manumque trophaea gestantes. Et cum cognovissent quod angeli Dei essent, timore perterriti aufugerunt quisque in locum suum. Rex vero venit ad imperatoris curiam in loco, qui Prespa dicitur, moxque ingressus est, ut ei mos erat, orare coepit Deum caeli. Ut autem cognovit imperator advenisse regem, ira magna iratus. Proposuerat nempe in corde suo ut in via occideretur,

antequam ad eum veniret, ne videretur consors vel consentiens neci eius eo quod iurasset et in episcoporum et in heremitaie manibus crucem dedisset et hac de causa per viam insidias illi imposuerat. Sed cum iam videret denudatum opus suum nequissimum, sedens ad prandium * * * misit gladiatores, qui eum decollarent. Orante praeterea rege milites circumdederunt eum. Ut autem cognovit rex vocatis episcopis et heremita, qui ibidem aderant, dixit: “Quid est domini mei? Quid egistis? Quare me sic decepistis? Cur verbis et iuramentis vestris credens sine culpa morior?” At ipsi prae verecundia vultus eius non audebant aspicere. Tunc rex facta oratione et confessione accepto corpore et sanguine Domini crucem illam, quam ab imperatore acceperat, manibus tenens dixit: “Orate pro me, domini mei, et haec venerabilis crux una vobiscum sit mihi testis in die Domini, quoniam absque culpa morior.” Deinde osculata cruce dans pacem episcopis et flentibus omnibus egressus est ecclesia moxque a militibus ante ianuam ecclesiae percussus decollatus est XXII die intrante Maio. Episcopi vero tollentes corpus eius in eadem ecclesia cum hymnis et laudibus sepelierunt. Ut autem Dominus declararet merita beati martyris Vladimiri, multi diversis languoribus vexati intrantes ecclesiam orantesque ad eius tumulum sanati sunt. Nocte vero videbatur ibi ab omnibus lumen divinum et quasi plurimas ardere candelas. Uxor vero beati Vladimiri fleuit cum fletu magno ultra quam dici potest diebus multis. Videns autem imperator mirabilia, quae ibi Deus operaretur, paenitentia ductus satis timuit concessitque consobrinae suae tollere corpus eius et sepelire honorifice quocumque vellet. Tulitque denique corpus eius et asportavit in loco, qui Craini dicitur, ubi curia eius fuit, et in ecclesia sanctae Mariae recondidit. Iacet corpus eius integrum et redolet quasi pluribus conditum aromatibus et crucem illam, quam ab imperatore accepit, manu tenet. Congregaturque multitudo populi in eadem ecclesia omni anno in festivitate eius et meritis et intercessione eius prestantur ibi multa beneficia recto corde petentibus usque in hodiernum diem. Uxor vero beati Vladimiri Cossara sanctimonialis effecta pie et

sancte vivendo in eadem ecclesia vitam finivit ibique sepulta est ad pedes viri sui. Eodem itaque tempore quo translatum est corpus beati Vladimiri de Prespa in Craini imperator Vladislavus congregato exercitu venit possidere terram beati Vladimiri et civitatem Dyrrachium, ut promissum ei fuerat ab imperatore Basilio, propter homicidia quae perpetraverat. Manens itaque ante Dyrrachium, quadam die dum cenaret et epularetur, subito apparuit ei miles armatus et in effigie sancti Vladimiri. Et terrore percussus magnis vocibus clamare coepit: “Currite mei milites, currite et defendite me quia Vladimirus occidere me vult”. Et haec dicens surrexit de solio suo ut fugeret. Statimque percussus ab angelo corruit in terram et mortuus est corpore et anima. Tunc principes et milites eius et omnes populi magno terrore percussi et metu succenso igne per castra eadem nocte fugerunt omnes per loca sua. Sicque factum est ut nequissimus homicida, qui sedens ad prandium beatum Vladimirus decollari iusserat et martyrem fecerat, ipse hora cenae percuteretur ut angelus Satanae efficeretur. Quantas et quales virtutes et prodigia Deus operare dignatus est per beatum Vladimirus, famulum suum, qui scire desiderat, librum gestorum eius relegat quo acta eius per ordinem scripta sunt et agnoscet profecto quod ipse vir sanctus unus spiritus cum Domino fuit et Deus habitavit cum eo, cui honor etc.

Dečak Vladimir, nakon što je primio kraljevstvo, rastao je ukrašen svakom mudročću i svetošću. Tako, u to vreme, dok je Vladimir bio mlad i vladao na očevom prestolu, gore pomenuti Samuilo, bugarski car, sakupivši veliku vojsku došao je u Dalmaciju i napao je zemlju kralja Vladimira. A kralj pak, koji je bio sveti čovek i nije želeo da niko od njegovih strada u ratu, ponizno se povukao i popeo se na planinu koja se naziva Oblik sa svim svojim narodom. Potom je car sa vojskom došao i videvši da ne može da nadvlada kralja jedan deo svoje vojske je ostavio u podnožju planine, a drugi deo je poveo sa sobom da bi napao Ulcinj. Međutim, na ovoj planini su se nalazile otrovne zmijske koje, čim bi nekoga ujele, on bi na licu mesta umirao, i one su počele da nanose velike gubitke kako ljudima, tako i stoci. Tada se kralj u suzama pomolio Gospodu da svemogući Bog oslobodi njegov narod od te smrtonosne pošasti. Bog je čuo i uslišio molitvu svoga sluge i od tog dana tamo nisu nikoga ujedale zmijske i tako je do današnjeg dana: ako bi nekog čoveka ili životinju na toj planini ujela zmija, ostajao bi živ i zdrav i bez ikakve povrede. Zmije na toj planini, od onog dana kada se sveti Vladimir pomolio pa sve do dana današnjeg, kao da su bez otrova. U međuvremenu je car poslao glasnike kralju Vladimiru moleći ga da sa svima koji su bili sa njim siđe sa planine, ali kralj nije pristao. A župan tog mesta, poput izdajnika Jude, poslao je glasnika kod cara govoreći: „Gospodaru, ako se tvoje veličanstvo slaže, ja ću ti predati kralja.“ A njemu je car ovako odgovorio: „Ako ovo uspeš da uradiš, znaj da ću te učiniti bogatim i veoma uglednim.“ * * * Tada je kralj sakupio sve koji su bili sa njim i ovako im je rekao: „Moram da vidim da se ispunio onaj stih iz Jevanđelja gde se kaže *Pastir dobri dušu svoju polaže za ovce*. Bolje je dakle, braćo, da svoj život položim za sve vas i dobrovoljno predam svoje telo da ga unakaze i ubiju, nego da vi stradate od gladi ili mača.“ Potom je govorio još mnogo toga, pa je sve pozdravio i otišao kod cara. A car ga je odmah poslao u izgnanstvo u ohridsku oblast u mesto koje se zove Prespa, gde se i nalazio dvor tog cara. Potom je sakupio vojsku i dugo vremena opsedao Ulcinj, ali ga nikako nije mogao

zauzeti. Odatle je otišao ljutit i počeo je da pustoši, pali i pleni celu Dalmaciju, gradove Kotor i Lauzij, kao i sela. Razorio je celu provinciju tako da je izgledalo da je zemlja otala skoro bez stanovnika. I car je tako prošao pustošeći kako primorske, tako i zagorske krajeve, sve do Zadra. Posle se preko Bosne i Raške vratio u svoj kraj. U međuvremenu je Vladimir držan u okovima provodio noć i dan u postu i molitvi. Prikazao mu se anđeo gospodnji koji ga je tešio i javio mu šta će se zbiti, kako će njega Bog osloboditi iz tamnice i kako će stradalnički dospeti do nebeskog kraljevstva i da će primiti nepropadljivi venac i nagradu večnog života. Tada je sveti Vladimir, ohrabren anđeoskom vizijom, još više provodio vremena u molitvama i postu. I tako je jednog dana careva kćer po imenu Kosara, potaknuta od Svetog Duha, prišala ocu i zatražila da joj dopusti da siđe sa svojim sluškinjama i opere glavu i noge okovanim zatvorenicima, što joj je otac dozvolio. Tako je sišla i počela je da obavlja bogougodno delo. Tada je ugledala Vladimira i videvši da je lepog izgleda, smeran i skroman, i da je pun mudrosti i bogopoštovanja, zastala je da porazgovara sa njim, a njegove reči su joj se učinile slađe od meda i saća. I zato, ne iz požude, već zato što se sažalila nad njegovom mladošću i lepotom, i pošto je čula da je on kralj i da je rodom iz kraljevske loze, zaljubila se u njega i, nakon što ga je pozdravila, otišla je. Želeći potom da ga oslobodi zatvoreništva došla je do cara i bacivši mu se pred noge ovako mu je govorila: „Oče moj i gospodaru, znam da ćeš mi dati muža koji mi dolikuje. Sada pak molim tvoje veličanstvo, ili ćeš meni dati za muža kralja Vladimira koga držiš u okovima, ili znaj da ću pre umreti nego što ću prihvatiti drugog muža. Car, čuvši ovo, budući da je veoma voleo svoju kćer i znajući da je Vladimir kraljevskog roda, obradovao se i pristao je na njenu molbu. Odmah je poslao po Vladimira i naredio je da ga okupa... * * * obučenog u kraljevsko odelo dovedu pred njega i blago ga posmatrajući i poljubivši ga pred svim velikašima svoga kraljevstva predao mu je svoju kćerku za ženu. I pošto je proslavio kćerkinu svadbu po kraljevskom obredu, car je Vladimira proglasio za kralja i dao mu je

zemlju i kraljevstvo njegovih otaca i celu Ulcinjsku zemlju. Potom je car poslao glasnike kod Dragimira, strica kralja Vladimira, da siđe i preuzme svoju zemlju Travuniju i sakupi narod i naseli zemlju, što je i učinio. Vladimir je tako živeo sa svojom ženom Kosarom u potpunoj svetosti i čednosti, ljubeći Boga i služeći mu i noću i danju, i vladao je svojim narodom koji mu je poveren pravedno i u strahu od Boga. Ubrzo potom umro je car Samuilo i njegov sin Radomir je preuzeo carstvo. On je po prirodi bio snažan i vodio je mnoge bitke sa Grcima u vreme grčkog cara Vasilija i zauzeo je celu zemlju sve do Carigrada. A car Vasilije se uplašio da slučajno ne izgubi carstvo, pa je poslao poslanike Vladislavu, Radomirovom bratu od strica, govoreći: „Zašto ne osvetiš krv svoga oca? Uzmi zlata i srebra od mene, koliko god ti treba, i budi u miru sa nama i uzmi Samuilovo kraljevstvo, koji ti je ubio oca i brata. Ako u tome uspeš, ubij njegovog sina Radomira koji sada vlada kraljevstvom.“ Kada je Vladislav čuo ovo, složi se i jednog dana, dok je Radomir bio u lovu, jahao je uz njega, mučki ga je napao i ubio. I tako je poginuo Radomir i umesto njega je zavladao Vladislav, koji ga je ubio. Nakon što je preuzeo carstvo, poslao je glasnike kralju Vladimiru pozivajući ga da dođe kod njega. Kada je kraljica Kosara ovo čula zadržavala ga je govoreći: „Moj gospodaru, nemoj da ideš da se tebi, daleko bilo, ne dogodi ono što se dogodilo mom bratu, nego pusti mene da idem i vidim i čujem kako se ponaša kralj. Ako želi da me ubije, neka me ubije, samo da ti ne stradaš.“ Onda je uz pristanak svog muža kraljica otišla svom bratu od strica, koji ju je primio sa najvećim počastima, ali pritvorno. Potom je po drugi put poslao kralju glasnike, sa zlatnim krstom i obećanjem da mu neće nauditi poručivši mu: „Zašto oklevaš da dođeš? Evo, tvoja žena je kod mene i ništa loše joj se nije dogodilo. Naprotiv, i ja i moji ljudi smo je primili sa najvećim počastima. Uzmi ovaj krst kao jemstvo moje iskrenosti i dođi da te vidim, da se sa počastima i darovima vratiš u svoju zemlju sa svojom ženom.“ Na ovo je kralj odgovorio: „Znamo da Gospod naš Isus Hrist, koji je za nas stradao, nije na zlatnom ili srebrnom krstu raspet, nego na drvenom.

Dakle, ako je tvoje obećanje iskreno i tvoje reči istinite, pošalji mi po monasima drveni krst i uzdajući se u pomoć Gospoda našeg Isusa Hrista i polažući nadu u živi krst i vredno drvo, doći ću. Tada, pozvavši k sebi dva episkopa i jednog pustinjaka lažno im se zakleo da mu neće nauditi i predao im je drveni krst i poslao ih je kod kralja. Oni su došli kod kralja i pozdravili su ga i preneli su mu obećanje i predali krst. A kralj, uzevši krst, pao je ničice na zemlju i poljubivši ga sakrio u nedra i zajedno sa još nekoliko njih krenuo je kod cara. U međuvremenu, car je naredio da mu se na putu postavi zaseda i da ga, kada bude prolazio putem, napadnu i ubiju. Svemogući Bog, koji je od ranog detinjstva bdeo nad svojim slugom, nije želeo da on bude usmrćen daleko od ljudi. Kada je prolazio onde gde je bila postavljena zaseda, atentatori su videli da kralja prate vojnici koji kao da imaju krila i kao da u ruci nose zastave. I kada su shvatili da su to božji anđeli, prestrašili su se i pobjegli su tamo odakle su došli. A kralj je pak došao do carevog dvora u mesto koje se naziva Prespa i čim je ušao, on je, kao što je običaj, počeo da se moli Bogu nebeskom. Kada je car saznao da je kralj došao, veoma se razbesneo. Naime, bio je zamislio da ga ubiju na putu da se ne učini da je on saučesnik u njegovom ubistvu zato što se zakleo da mu neće nauditi i zato što je u ruke episkopa i pustinjaka predao krst, i zato mu je na putu postavio zasedu. Ali, kada je video da je njegovo opako delo već razotkriveno, dok je sedeo za ručkom * * * poslao je krvnike da mu odrube glavu. U međuvremenu, dok se kralj molio, vojnici su ga opkolili. Kada je kralj to video, pozvao je episkope i pustinjaka koji su bili tu prisutni i rekao im je: „Šta je ovo, gospodo moja? Šta ste učinili? Zašto ste me ovako obmanuli? Zašto ja verujući vašim rečima i obećanjima nedužan umirem?“ A oni od stida nisu se usuđivali da ga pogledaju u lice. Tada se kralj pomolio i ispovedio i primio telo i krv gospodnju i držeći u rukama onaj krst koji je dobio od cara rekao je: „Molite se za mene, gospodo moja, a ovaj sveti krst zajedno sa vama neka mi sudnjeg dana bude svedok da nedužan umirem.“ Zatim, poljubivši krst, oprostivši se sa episkopima i svima uplakanima, izašao je iz crkve i ubrzo potom su ga

vojnici pred vratima crkve napali i odrubili mu glavu dana dvadeset drugog maja. A episkopi uzevši njegovo telo sahranili su ga u toj istoj crkvi uz himne i slavopeve. A Gospod, da bi objavio zasluge blaženog mučenika Vladimira, učinio je da mnogi, mučeni raznim bolima, nakon što uđu u crkvu i pomole se nad njegovim grobom, budu izlečeni. A noću su tamo svi videli božansku svetlost i kao da gore mnoge sveće. A žena blaženog Vladimira oplakivala ga je gorko, toliko da to ne može rečima da se opiše, mnogo dana. A car, videvši čuda koja je Bog tamo činio, mučen grižom savesti, veoma se uplašio i dozvolio je svojoj sestri od strica da uzme njegovo telo i sahrani ga s počastima gde god želi. Ona je uzela njegovo telo i odnela ga na mesto koje se naziva Krajina, gde je bio njegov dvor i položila ga je u crkvi svete Marije. Njegovo telo leži celo i miriše kao da je namirisano raznim mirisima i krst, koji je primio od cara, drži u ruci. Svake godine se u toj crkvi na njegov praznik i zbog njegovih zasluga i njegovim zalaganjem sve ono, što traže oni koji čistog srca onamo dolaze, daje im se, i tako je sve do dana današnjeg. A Kosara, žena blaženog Vladimira, zamonášila se i živela je svetačkim životom i u toj crkvi okončala je svoj život i sahranjena je pokraj svoga muža. U to vreme, kada je preneto telo blaženog Vladimira iz Prespe u Krajinu, car Vladislav je sakupio vojsku i došao je da zauzme zemlju blaženog Vladimira i grad Drač kao što mu je bio obećao car Vasilije zbog ubistava koje je počinio. Dok se tako nalazio pred Dračem, jednog dana dok je večerao i sedeo za trpezom, iznenada mu se prikazao naoružani vojnik u liku svetog Vladimira. I veoma prestrašen glasno je počeo da viče: „Dođite brzo, vojnici! Brzo dođite i spasite me jer Vladimir hoće da me ubije!“ i rekavši ovo ustao je sa svog prestola u želji da pobegne. Iznenada ga je anđeo udario i on se srušio na zemlju i umro je i telom i dušom. Tada su se prinčevi i njegovi vojnici i sav narod prestrašili i pretrnuli i zapalivši vatru po logoru iste noći pobjegli tamo odakle su došli. I tako se zbilo da je opaki ubica, koji je sedeći za ručkom naredio da se odrubi glava blaženom Vladimiru i koji je od njega načinio mučenika, da je on sam za vreme

večere bio ubijen da postane Satanin anđeo. Kolika i kakva čuda i dobra se Bog udostojio da pruži posredstvom blaženog Vladimira, svog sluge, onaj ko želi da sazna neka pročita njegovu istoriju i uvideće da je ovaj sveti čovek bio jedan duh sa Gospodom i da je Bog boravio u njemu, kome neka je slava itd.

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