FROM THE BRITISH ISLES TO SOLOVETSKY MONASTERY: HOW AN IRISH PRAYER BECAME PART OF THE CHURCH SLAVONIC TRADITION[1]

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Abstract: VEPŘEK, Miroslav. *From the British Isles to Solovetsky Monastery: How an Irish Prayer Became Part of the Church Slavonic Tradition*. The Medieval *Prayer of Confession of Sins* (with the incipit *Domine deus meus omnipotens, ego humiliter te adoro*) exists in Latin and Church Slavonic versions. It was written on the British Isles under Irish influence. The oldest Latin manuscript versions come from the ninth century and the prayer was known in continental Europe, especially in places connected with activities of Irish missionaries. The Church Slavonic translation most probably originated in the tenth or eleventh centuries in Bohemia and then was transferred to the East Slavonic area. Textological and philological arguments for this hypothesis are presented in the article together with characterization of the newly discovered versions of the prayer (both Latin and Church Slavonic). Especially, the second known Church Slavonic version recorded in the manuscript of the Solovetsky Monastery from the late fifteen century brings new evidence on the textual character of the prayer and modifications based on copying of the text.

Keywords: Church Slavonic, Czech Church Slavonic, prayer, confession, Irish devotion, Medieval textology

The following article deals with a specific Medieval prayer with a remarkable tradition. I have already analysed the prayer in my previous monograph (Vepřek 2013) and also published an edition of the Church Slavonic text and Latin original. I would now like to draw attention to newly discovered versions (both Church Slavonic and Latin) and point out the cultural history of the so-called "Prayer of Confession of Sins" (further Conf) in more detail.

1. The Latin version of the prayer

1.1 The Latin prayer with the incipit *Deus, deus meus, ego humiliter te adoro* can be classified as a popular Medieval prayer, since it has been preserved at least in more than ten manuscript versions dated from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries from the broad area of Western and Central Europe. The oldest known versions mainly come from Britain or the adjacent continental territory or locations connected with insular missionary activities, and, as I would like to prove below, the prayer was most likely influenced by the Irish religious tradition.

1.2 The content of the prayer can be divided into three basic passages. The first consists of a series of invocations to God which was characterized as an "acclamation" (Hughes 1970, 56) or

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a composition following the "pattern of the litany" (Thomas 2020, 261), W. Godel called it "Christ Litany" ("Christuslitanei" - Godel 1963, 307), e.g.: *Tu es rex regum et dominus dominantium · Tu es arbiter omnis saeculi · Tu es redemptor animarum · Tu es liberator credentium · Tus es spes laborantium*, etc.[2] Subsequently, the enumeration of committed sins in the presence of God, his angels and in the presence of "the face of saints" (*coram te et coram angelius tuis et coram facie omnium sanctorum tuorum* - Kuypers 1902, 97) follows, e.g.: *Peccaui per neglegentiam mandatorum tuorum et factorum meorum · Peccaui per suberbiam et per inuidiam · peccaui per detractionem* (Kuypers 1902, 97)*,* etc. The praying person confesses having committed all the sins which would be practically impossible even if the person would be the greatest sinner, therefore the prayer could rather have served as an "examination of conscience"[3] in this passage. The confessional part of the prayer continues with the enumeration of sinful body parts, e.g. *peccaui in oculis meis et in auribus meis...peccaui in manibus et in pedibus · peccaui in lingua et guttore* (Kuypers 1902, 97), etc. The final part of the prayer can be described as a contrite appeal for mercy, remission, and remedy from sins. At the very end, God is invoked as a teacher: *Doce me uoluntatem tuam quia tu es doctor meus* (Kuypers 1902, 98).

1.3 The character, the codicological, and cultural-historical context of the Latin version of Conf have been already analysed in several scholarly works. One of the most discussed topics has been the question of the function of the prayer, especially if it could have been used as an official prayer of confession. Although some connections with penitentials and orders of confessions can be found, prayers like Conf rather served as a private - i.e. non-sacramental - confession (cf. Frantzen 1983, 86-88). Similarly, this opinion was also advocated by K. Thomas who pointed out that Conf was not intended for the official ("sacerdotal") confession because of some subject characteristics, e.g. no mention of a priest was included in the text, so the speaker addresses his words directly to God. Furthermore, private prayers were not usually joined together with liturgical items such as psalms, antiphons, etc., and Conf is related to other prayers with similar attributes (Thomas 2020, 249–275). F. E. Waren surmised that Conf could have been intended as a private devotion for priests since he compared the texts to prayers entitled as "Apologia Sacerdotis" (Warren 2010, 187). His hypothesis was based, however, on one specific manuscript preservation in the so-called Basel Psalter (see no. 5 in the overview below) where the prayer has the title *De conscientiae reatum ante altare* ("Of searching conscience before the altar"). This title does not occur in other versions and one can assume that the purpose of the prayer could have been adapted in concrete or local conditions.

1.4 Practically all scholars dealing with Conf agree that the origin of the prayer was tightly connected with the Irish Christian literary tradition. There are three basic arguments for this hypothesis - the dating and provenance of the preserved manuscript versions of the prayer (1.4.1); the titles of the prayer, its rubrics, and the manuscript collections in which it occurs (1.4.2); the language of the prayer, especially the composition, style and theological features (1.4.3).

1.4.1 First, I present the basic overview of the known manuscript versions in the following table:

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2   I quote the Latin text according to the edition published by Kuypers (1902, 95-96).
3   See the characterization of this kind of prayer by Driscoll (2019, 138).

No.	Title	Library, signature	fol./pag.	Origin	Edition
(1)	The Book of Nunnaminster	London, British Library, Harley MS 2965,	34r-34v	Late eighth or early ninth century, England (Southumbria)	Birch 1899
(2)	The Fleury Prayerbook	La médiathèque municipale d'Orléans, MS 0184	p. 241–244	Beginning of the ninth century, Mondsee (Austria)	-
(3)	The Book of Cerne	Cambridge University Library, MS Ll. 1. 10	fol. 48r-50r	818-830 Mercia	Kuypers 1902
(4)	Psalter	La bibliothèque municipale d'Angers, ms. 18 (14)	80v-183r	First half of the ninth century, Tours	Berger 1894; Bernard - Atkinson 1898
(5)	The Basel Psalter	Basel, niversitätsbibliothek, MS A. VII. 3	fol. 2v-3r	Second half of the ninth century, St. Gallen or Bobbio	Warren 1881; Forbes 1864; Bieler 1960
(6)	The Göttweig Psalter	Göttweig, Benediktinerstift, cod. 30 (rot)/2 (schwarz)	fol. 8rb-9ra	Second half of the ninth century, St. Gallen or Regensburg	-
(7)	St. Gallen Psalter	St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 27	p. 714-716	Ninth century	-
(8)	The Bury Psalter	Vatican Library, Reg. Lat. 12	69r-170v	Middle of the eleventh century, Bury (England)	
(9)	Galba Prayerbook	London, British Library, Cotton MS Galba A XIV	fol. 75r-75v; 66r-70r	Second quarter of the eleventh century, Worcester (England)	Muir 1983.
(10)	St Wulfstan's Portiforium	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 391	p. 588-590	cca. 1060 - 1069, Worcester (England)	Hughes 1958; 1960
(11)	Darmstadt Manuscript Hs 544	Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt, Hs. 544	fol. 113r-114v	around 1040, Rhineland	-
(12)	Egbert's Psalter (Codex Gertrudianus)	Cividale del Friuli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Archivi e Biblioteca, codex CXXXVI.	187v; 194r	997-993 Reichenau; Second half of the eleventh century, Kyiv	-

(13)		British Library, Harley. 3016[4]	73v-74r	Second half of the twelfth century, France	-
(14)	Weimar Psalter Oct 54	Weimar, Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Oct 54	fol. 09v-111r	Erfurt, 1443	-

Two of the oldest manuscript versions - Nos. (1) and (3) above - come from Britain, i.e. The Book of Nunnamninster[5] and The Book of Cerne. They both contain evident traces of Irish influence as was determined by various scholars (e. g. Birch 1889, 20–34; Hughes 1970; Brown 1996, 137-138). The Psalter from Angers – No. (2) – was apparently written in west France, in the region which was under the influence of the Irish mission. Although the other manuscript versions from the ninth century originated in continental Europe, they are associated with centres of Irish missionaries - St. Gallen and Bobbio. Especially, version No. (2) is preserved in the manuscript which originated in Austria (probably Mondsee in Salzburg - see Pellegrin - Bouhot 2010, 220). This manuscript, called usually The Fleury Prayerbook (according to its preservation in the Abbey of Fleury, France), is tightly connected with the Irish mission in the Salzburg diocese by St. Virgil (see more in Grosjean 1960).

1.4.2 The most interesting title is given to Conf in the manuscript of Angers (2), eg. *Confessio sancti Patricii*. The direct authorship of St. Patrick is practically impossible, but the title apparently indicates the prayer's relation to Irish culture. The prayer in Harley. 3016 is called *Confessio Sancti Augustini* which leads to thoughts about the second possible motivation for such an attribution, based on identifying texts with other authors' works of the same name (in this case with the famous Confessions of St. Augustin of Hippo). It should be added that it is not certain if the prayer from Harley. 3016 really contains Conf (see note no. 4). Other manuscript versions of Conf do not include titles with a specific proper name, they are mostly titled as the "prayer of confession", e.g. *Oratio confessionum* (2), *Alma Confessio* (3), *Oratio confitens* (6, 7), and *Oratio et confessio* (9).

The codicological context of the manuscripts in which Conf was preserved also supports the hypothesis of the Irish origin of the prayer. The oldest version in the Book of Nunnaminster was written together with other Irish prayers, likewise the version from the Book of Cerne. The Lorica of Laidcenn is an especially well-known Irish literary work and occurs in both manuscripts (Brown 1997: 254). In the case of the Book of Cerne, this fact is pointed out by Kuypers (1902, xxiv) who also mentioned the subject relation of Conf and Lorica of Laidcenn (see more below in 1.4.3). An interesting context can also be seen in the Psalter from Angers (4), where Conf was written in a sequence of other prayers in which a litany containing Irish saints (St. Columbanus, St. Gall) is recorded (Berger 1894, 155). The Basel Psalter (5) is traditionally counted among continental Irish manuscripts (Warren 2010, 185). The Book of Nunnaminster, the Book of Cerne, the Fleury Prayerbook, and the Basel Psalter are classified together as of Irish origin or at least with Irish affinities in Kenney 1966 (713-714; 720-722).

1.4.3 Finally, practically all scholars dealing with the Latin text of Conf came to the conclusion that the content and character of the prayer also correspond with its Irish origin. K. Hughes examined, for example, this topic in general and mentioned specifically Conf (Hughes 1970, 56).

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[4] This manuscript version is included in the list according to Wilmart 1930, 204, although this manuscript is not available to me currently. Nevertheless, according to information in the online catalogue of the British Library, the prayer has a different incipit (title: *Confessio Sancti Augustini*, beginning: *Omnipotens deus pater eterne tu es domine deus meus*), thus it is not certain that the prayer is really Conf.

[5] In this manuscript, only part of the prayer is attested to, approximately the last third of the text.

Above all, the relationship with Irish Loricas and especially the Breastplate of St. Patrick has to be pointed out and perhaps also with selected acclamations from St. Patrick's Confession. Passages containing the "sinful parts of a body" are typical for Loricas as it stems from the "affective exuberance, so characteristic of Irish devotion" (Driscoll 2019, 138).[6] The stylistic features – the repetitive phrases, rather short sentences - mirror the Irish tradition as well (Thomas 2020, 260-262) and may result from an older oral tradition (Frantzen 1983, 90). The Irish sources of Conf were also accepted by Kuypers who even suggested a hypothesis that the prayer might have been based on "more primitive Irish forms" (Kuypers 1902, xxv), and although it is not necessary to assume that Conf was composed directly in Ireland, it was written under Irish influence. The prayer seems to be a piece of work "of the same spirit that found expression also in the extraordinary austerities and penitential exercises of the Irish monks" (Kuypers 1902, xxv).

2. The Church Slavonic translation

2.1 The Church Slavonic text of the prayer was first edited by A. I. Sobolevsky according to the version from the Jaroslavl Prayerbook from the thirteenth century. Although he did not know the Latin original yet, he put forward the hypothesis that Conf (in the Church Slavonic version *Molitva ispovědaniju grěchovъ - The Prayer of Confession of Sins*) was a translation from Latin, and even suggested the supposed wording of the hypothetical original in some words or phrases (Sobolevsky 1905). The text was later printed by F. V. Mareš (1979, 76-78), but the prayer still remained practically outside the interest of scholars, excluding some partial references in summarizing studies (for example, Mareš 2000, 277; Bláhová 1993, 439).

The connection between the Church Slavonic and the Latin texts was proposed by the author of this study at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Vepřek 2009) and then I prepared a new edition based on the manuscript of the Jaroslavl Prayerbook (further abbreviated as ConfJar) parallel with its Latin original (Vepřek 2013). Conf was analysed together with another prayer, the so-called Prayer of St. Gregory from the same Church Slavonic manuscript which was also translated from Latin and the original quite frequently occurs in the same Latin codices.

The results of the recent analysis led to the conclusion that the prayer was most probably translated into Church Slavonic in the Central European area (Bohemia) in the tenth or rather eleventh century. It has to be noted that previously only one Church Slavonic version was available, and this fact did not allow any comparative study of the later Church Slavonic textual tradition, i.e. especially hypothetical text modifications before the prayer was recorded in the thirteenth century. Nevertheless, T. Mikulka brought some important arguments confirming the assumption that Conf was at least known in Bohemia in the eleventh century because some excerpts of the prayer (including noteworthy passages with the enumeration of sins and body parts) were incorporated into another Church Slavonic text of Czech origin – the so-called Prayer to the Holy Trinity (Mikulka 2015).

2.2 In this study, I can point out the newly discovered version of the Church Slavonic translation of Conf written into the Psalter from the end of the fifteenth century which belonged to the Solovetsky monastery (further ConfSol). The manuscript is today preserved in the Russian National Library in Saint Petersburg under the signature Sol. 754/864, fol. 95r-97v.

Although some notable differences between ConfJar and ConfSol are evident, the variants are not so distinct that the common archetype of both versions would be doubted. Conversely, both texts contain the same mistakes, especially three symptomatic instances that can be mentioned.

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[6] The connection between Conf and Loricas was also admitted by W. Godel (1963, 308).

The first consists of an incorrect genitive singular/nominative plural of the noun *slava* – ты еси слав̇ы б‹ог›а ѿ‹ть›ца вышнихъ[7] (ConfJar 148r 8-9, the same wording in ConfSol 95r 13-14), Latin *Tu es gloria dei patris in excelso*. Then in the enumeration of sins, where the noun *prěsęgъ/prěsęganije* instead of expected *prisęga/prisęganije* is included, see: ConfJar съгрѣшихъ въ пресагахъ (149r 9-11) – ConfSol съгрѣшиⷨ [...] въ пресаганїи (96r 7-8),[8] while in the Latin text, the noun *iuramentum* occurs (Vepřek 2013: 93). Finally, in the last passages of the text, both Church Slavonic versions use a noun *grěchъ* instead of the expected *vragъ* – защити ма г‹оспод›и б‹ож›е мои ѿ всехъ грѣхъ видимыхъ и невидимыхъ (ConfJar 151v 12-16, ConfSol 97r 5-6 ѿ всѣ мои грѣховъ) vs. Latin *Defende me domine deus meus contra omnes inimicis meis uisibiles et inuisibiles*.

In addition, specific translation features are recorded in both versions, e.g. the hendiadys - translating of the Latin *misericordia* with the two Church Slavonic nouns *štědrostь* and *milostь* (cf. Vepřek 2013, 104), and the use of the word *sъpasъ* as a parallel for the Latin *Iesus* – вкоже мои съпкасе х‹рист›е (ConfJar 148r 17 and ConfSol 95r 18).[9] Both manuscript versions also contain some rare words that can probably be classified as "bohemisms" or lexemes corresponding with other Church Slavonic literary texts of Czech origin (often translating the same word of the Latin original), e.g. *lajanije, štědrostь, ljubitelь* (Latin *amator*) and *izlitije* (Latin *effusio*) (cf. Vepřek 2013, 85-88).

2.3 The differences between ConfJar and ConfSol stem of course from the time distance between the origin of both manuscripts (the thirteenth vs. the fifteenth centuries), thus they can be naturally interpreted as results of repetitive copying and expected modifications. The textual line is not simple, however, in the sense that the younger manuscript version always represents the later and modified text. An example can be already seen in the first part, where ConfSol preserved the short invocation ты еси разрѣшитель д‹оу›шамъ (95r 3-4) which fully corresponds with the Latin *Tu es redemptor animarum,* although ConfJar omitted this clause. In contrast, the invocation ты еси радость въ истиноу (ConfJar 148r 3-4) – Latin *Tu es laetitia in ueritate* is omitted in ConfSol a few rows below. These detailed differences apparently indicate that ConfJar and ConfSol surely had the same archetype, but then the textual line split, and although ConfSol represents the younger tradition, it could have occasionally preserved archaic wording.

An important difference is registered at the beginning of the prayer, incipit всемог̇ыи б‹ож›е азъ оукоренъ та молю (ConfJar 147v 3-5) – Latin *Deus deus meus omnipotens · Ego humiliter te adoro* was modified to Всебла‹а›гыи б‹ож›е азъ та молю in ConfSol (95r 2). The most serious distinction is found in the catalogue of sins because in ConfSol this passage was significantly enlarged with 45 more sins. Some of them are synonyms to those included in ConfJar and ConfSol, e.g. опальство (ConfSol 95v 10) – гнѣвъ (ConfJar 149v 11 and ConfSol 95v 9) or раждьжение плътьскоие (ConfSol 95v 23-24) – похоти тѣлесныꙗ (ConfJar 149v 2-3 and ConfSol 95v 26), some of them seem to be logical additions to previously included items, e.g. обыꙗдение (ConfSol 95v 7) to пиꙗньство (ConfJar 149v 4-5 and ConfSol 95v7) or ненависть (ConfSol 95v 17) to зависть (ConfJar 149r 11 and ConfSol 95v 17).

Some differences may result from later corrections making the text more comprehensible in the East Slavonic milieu; for instance, the substitution of the prefix in the noun *izdrěšenije* (perhaps a Bohemism, see Vepřek 2013, 83) which was replaced with the more common Church Slavonic

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7   Here and below I quote the text of ConfJar according to the edition (Vepřek 2013, 144-165).

8   Here and below the text of ConfSol is quoted directly from the images of the manuscript. First, the number of a folio is cited and then the number of the row.

9   This feature can be understood as a "peculiarity of Czech CS literary monuments" (Vepřek 2022, 81) since F. Čajka also found the same example in the Legend of St. Anastasia and the Forty Gospel Homilies of St. Gregory the Great (Čajka 2011, 176-177).

word *razdrěšenije* in ConfSol 96v 16. Finally, several instances reveal a later erroneous reading of the text which led to variant wording differing from the original Latin text, e.g. в҃ста въ мнѣ г҃(оспод)и каіазнь и плачъ грѣховъ моихъ (ConfJar 151r 13-16) – Latin *Suscita in me* paenitentiam peccatorum meorum et fletum, while ConfSol combined the verb and the preposition into one verb form and subsequently this modification necessitated a new preposition before the nouns *kajaznь* and *plačь*: в҃стави мнѣ г҃(оспод)и на каіазнь и плачъ грѣховъ моихъ (ConfSol 96v 24-25).

3. The Relationship between the Latin and Church Slavonic versions

3.1 I will now proceed to a textological examination of all the available versions of the prayer, especially to a comparison of the Latin and Church Slavonic text in order to determine the most probable place and time of the translation of the prayer. In my previous work, I came to the conclusion that the Church Slavonic translation preserved in the Jaroslavl Prayerbook appears to be closest to the Latin version written in the Darmstadt manuscript, although not even this version could have been the direct pattern for the Slavic translation (Vepřek 2013, 59-60). It has to be mentioned that I previously worked only with Latin versions (3), (4), (5), (10), and (11) and only ConfJar, thus including more material in analyses may lead to a review of the previous results.

3.2 I have already noted that Conf often occurs together with another popular Medieval prayer called the Prayer of St. Gregory (further Greg) in the Latin manuscripts. This second prayer was also translated into Church Slavonic and is also preserved in the Jaroslavl Prayerbook. Furthermore, the Slavonic tradition of both prayers was even closer, since Greg was also a source for compiling the Czech Church Slavonic Prayer to the Holy Trinity (Mikulka 2015). Studying both prayers together appears to be important. Thus, the fact that ten Latin manuscripts out of fourteen in which Conf is evidenced also contain Greg should not necessarily be regarded as merely coincidental.

3.3 I would especially like to turn attention to the Latin manuscript called Egbert's Psalter/ Codex Gertrudianus (no. 12 in the overview above). This codex has a noteworthy history, the oldest part (Egbert's Psalter) was written in the second half of the tenth century in Reichenau for Archbishop Egbert in Trier. At the turn of the eleventh century, the manuscript was passed on to Ezzo of Lotharingia and his daughter Richeza,[10] who married the Polish King Mieszko II, and the codex was given to their daughter Gertrude of Poland. She was the wife of Iziaslav of Kyiv and thus the manuscript was transferred via Poland to Kyiv. Gertrude also initiated additions to the codex (this is the reason for the variant name of the manuscript - Codex Gertrudianus) which consisted of text passages and four illuminations (miniatures) as well. These illuminations are of the Byzantine character (Lesniewska 1995, 142), but the text additions are more important for our interest, since they consist, above all, of part of Conf (the whole version of Greg takes place in the older part - in Egbert's Psalter). It is a precious testimony that both prayers were known and obviously popular in the eleventh century in the area of Central Europe. The codex came back to Poland around 1103 and was later passed on to Aquilea and subsequently to Cividale del Friuli where it has been held up until the present day (Lesniewska 1995, 142-143).

3.4 Earlier arguments for the closeness of the Church Slavonic Conf and the Latin Darmstadt manuscript version were based especially on two variant wordings - specific modification in the passage *Suscita in me paenitentiam peccatorum meorum et fletum pro nomine tuo* which was changed

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10   Special attention has to be paid to the fact that the Darmstadt manuscript with Conf and Greg was also written for the same Richeza (Staub – Knaus 1979, 42), which indicates a very close connection between these two codices containing both prayers.

to *Suscita in me paenitenciam et fletum peccatorum meorum pro nomine tuo* in the Darmstadt manuscript corresponding with the Church Slavonic въста въ мнѣ гꙠсподꙠи кѧꙗзнь и плачь грѣховъ моихъ имени твоюго ради (Vepřek 2013, 59) and then, in the passage of the enumeration of the sinful body parts, the shift of the pair *peccaui in manibus et in pedibus* to another place, i.e. after *peccaui in corde et in cogitationibus* (Vepřek 2013, 59). Now that the manuscript material is more numerous, it is necessary to adjust these findings.

The wording *paenitentiam et fletum peccatorum meorum* is also included in versions from the Fleury Prayerbook (2), Göttweig Psalter (6), St. Gallen Psalter (7) and Egbert's Psalter/Codex Gertrudianus (12) where this passage is attested, despite the fact that this version contains only short excerpts from the prayer. The change of the pair *manibus et in pedibus* can also be found in no. (2), (6), (7) and moreover in the Bury Psalter.[11]

The version from the Fleury Prayerbook in particular appears to contain lexical and textual variants that are mirrored in the Church Slavonic translation of the prayer. One more variant is significant, namely the substitution of the word *renis* in the passage of the body parts for the lexeme *nervus* (*peccaui in medullis et in neruis*), because it corresponds better with the Church Slavonic жилꙑ.[12] Other variants, rather minor, which were found in Darmstadt manuscript version corresponding with the Church Slavonic translation, are also included in the Fleury Prayerbook, e.g. the participle *regnans* instead of the finite verb form *regnas* (cf. Vepřek 2013, 58-59). The version from the Fleury Prayerbook could not have been, however, the direct pattern for the Church Slavonic translation since some partial features do not fully correspond with ConfJar and ConfSol. It is of course practically impossible to give such a definitive statement when the original version of the Church Slavonic archetype is not available, only later copies.

3.5 There is a question whether the conclusion that the most corresponding Latin text to the Church Slavonic translation is the version from the Fleury Prayerbook, the codex originated in the ninth century in South-Eastern Germany, could significantly modify the previous hypothesis of the origin of the Church Slavonic Conf in the eleventh century (Vepřek 2013). The possibility of the Great Moravian translation of the prayer could be suggested, especially when contacts of Christian missionaries from Bavaria with the Great Moravian area are attested to and also apparently influenced by Irish culture (Cibulka 1958; Isačenko 1963; Mareš 1964; Kožiak 2004). The implementation of West Christian elements and some non-liturgical texts into Old Church Slavonic literature in the Cyrillomethodian period is also naturally assumed (Bláha 2013, 36; Čermák 2013, 55-56).

3.6 Although the earlier origin of the translation of Conf into Church Slavonic cannot be excluded, I still hold the opinion about its origin rather in the tenth or eleventh centuries in Bohemia. The specific branch of manuscript versions which is represented in the oldest form in the Fleury Prayerbook continues until the eleventh century (the Darmstadt manuscript version of Conf still remains very close to the Church Slavonic translation, also Egbert's Psalter/Codex Gertrudianus version, although it is incomplete) in the area of Central Europe. Furthermore, lexical and textual correspondences between Conf and other Church Slavonic texts of Czech origin remain noticeable and there is still the very precious testimony about the knowledge and use of Conf in Bohemia represented by incorporating passages of the prayer into the Prayer to the Holy Trinity.

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[11]   Unfortunately, this passage is not included in the excerpts written into Egbert's Psalter/Codex Gertrudianus.

[12]   In my previous analysis, this variant was detected in the version from the Portiforium of St. Wulfstan, however, this British manuscript also contains differences that are not reflected in the Church Slavonic translation (Vepřek 2013, 58).

4. Conclusion

As the title of this study implies, the Prayer of Confession of Sins represents a remarkable text with an outstanding history. Originating on the Islands, composed by Irish author(s) or at least under the influence of the specific Irish spirituality, it spread to continental Europe, became a part of popular Medieval devotional literature, and was then translated into Church Slavonic. Since Church Slavonic played among Slavs a similar role as Latin in the ecclesiastical West, the prayer was transferred into the East Slavic area and even reached the North-eastern edge of this territory in the late Middle Ages.

The point where this transfer was mediated most probably occurred in Central Europe, in Moravia or more likely Bohemia. The Czech recension of Church Slavonic, which continuously lasted from the Great Moravian period until the very end of the eleventh century (cf. Vepřek 2022) and from which not all that many groups of literary works have been preserved, demonstrates its importance within the whole context of the oldest Slavonic culture.

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