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NATALIA FEDOROVSKAYA  
Department of Architecture and Art  
Far Eastern Technical State University  
Vladivostok, Russian Federation

## PROMINENT CROATIAN WRITER MATIJA DIVKOVIĆ AND HIS VERSE "SUDAC GNJEVAN"<sup>1</sup> (ON THE 445<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH)

This paper explores a spiritual verse, *Sudac gnjevan*, by the prominent Slavic enlightener Matija Divković, which had been written on the motif of a famous Latin hymn, *Dies Irae* (Day of Wrath). Despite the evident similarity of the subject and texture, there are marked differences between the verses. As a whole, the Latin verse conveys a Biblical story, omitting emotional aspects. The presence of generalizations and complex metaphors orientates the text for a well-educated audience. In the Slavic verse, a semantic accent falls onto man's emotional experience. High emotionality is created by a great number of personal requests and direct speeches, which are stressed by rhetorical figures more applicable to a wide audience.

KEY WORDS: *spiritual verse, Croatian literature, Slavic culture, comparative analysis.*

Matija Divković, a prominent Slavic enlightener of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and one of the founders of the Croatian literature movement in Bosnia, was born in Jelaške near Vareš (Bosnia) in 1563. He studied with the Franciscans at the monastery school in Olovo, and it was probably at the same monastery where he joined the Franciscans. He continued his studies in Italy. After returning to Bosnia in 1609, he served as a chaplain in Sarajevo. Alongside his Christian duties, he was actively engaged in efforts of spiritual writing. Many of his works were generally recognized in Bosnia and Herzegovina and neighbouring countries. He died in Olovo on August 21, 1631 (Đorđević, 1896, 1898; Gavran, 1988).

During his lifetime, there existed complex situation in the Balkans (Jurisic, 1972; Jelenić, 1990; Mazuran, 1998). Divković's creativity was entirely directed to the preservation of Christian traditions in the southern Slavic lands (Georgijević, 1969;

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<sup>1</sup> For example, I. Kosić (2006) uses the transliteration of the title of the verse as *Sudac gñjevan*. Here, the title is transcribed and follows the recommendation of editorial board.

Zbornik radova o Matiji Divkoviću, 1982; Milićević, 2005). One of his first works, *Nauk karstjanski za narod slovinski* (Christian Doctrine for the Slavic People), had been written during his stay in Venice in 1611 and was intended for clergymen teaching in their native language (Đorđević, 1898). This work is also known as "The Big Christian Doctrine." In his work, the author used pieces of religious Latin literature from the sermon collections of John Herolt, Bernardino Bastio, and other authors.

In the same year, he published *Sto čudesa aliti znamenja blažene i slavne Bogorodice i Divice Marije* (One Hundred Miracles or Signs of the Blessed and Glorious Virgin Mary), which is a loose translation of the medieval legends of John Herolt. Both works are among the first printed books in Bosnia and were written in Croatian Cyrillic script, an alphabet later named Bosančica (Moguš, 1995), the language which became a literary language of the southern Slavs. It should be noted that most of his books were printed in Venice, one of the major centers for typography in seventeenth-century Europe.

In 1612, Divković visited the Kreševo Monastery, where he began to write his book *Beside Divkovića vrhu evanđelja nedjeljnih priko svega godišta* (Divković's Words on Sunday Gospel All Year Round). This book was also printed in Croatian Cyrillic script in Venice in 1616, and contains modified and reworked sermons taken partly from the collection of John Herolt (Gavran, 1988). Divković published his famous *Nauk karstjanski s mnoziemi stvari duhovniemi* (Christian Doctrine with Many Gospel Truth) in 1616 as well, which is usually abbreviated as "The Small Christian Doctrine." It had become a textbook for a wide audience in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in neighbouring countries. The latter book had been written in a form of dialogue between a teacher and a student known from ancient times. It is comprised of verses and prose, saturated with religious subjects, realizing a didactic-educational function. Some parts of the work are based on the Croatian translation of the Catechism of James Ledezmo, the Italian original of Roberto Bellarmino, and the Croatian translation of the book by A. Komulović. There are many spiritual verses in the book. Among them are *Plač blažene Divice Marije* (The Tears of the Blessed Virgin Mary), written on the old, tearfully penitential theme (a Croatian weeping) verses on Abraham and Isaac. Besides the verses on the life of Saint Catherine, a retelling of an older Croatian legend is placed here (Divković, 1698; Đorđević, 1898; Štefanić, 1938; Mušija, 2006).

Like many other medieval writers, Divković used outstanding Latin texts in his works and works of the prominent figures of the Church. This principle was a characteristic feature of medieval culture when a compilation, making works as "per sample" were an obligatory and essential part of new writings.

His retelling of the Biblical stories and Christian legends had a style and a spirit of medieval religious writings. Divković's didactic prose is saturated with fiery images of hell and purgatory for sinners, which is contrasted with paradisiacal bliss for the just. These images were congenial to the soul of Slavic people who cultivated the traditions of spiritual songs, tales, and legends, in which heathenism and Christianity were tightly interlaced.

The aspiration to bring together classical and folk Slavic cultural traditions could explain the publication of Divković works in Croatian Cyrillic script and the active use of South Slavic dialects in it, which attracted the attention of various audiences. Linguistic accessibility and simplicity, along with a rich vividness, contributed to the popularity of his books, which were subjected to many editions<sup>2</sup>. As a result, his books, or parts of them, emerged throughout the Balkans and surrounding countries, including Russia. An example of this is a verse *Sudac gnjevan*.

This verse was included in the collection of Slavic spiritual verses *Kaliki perekhozhie. Sbornik stikhov i izsledovanie* (Itinerant cripples. A collection of verses and study by P. Bezsonov, 1828–1899).<sup>3</sup> It is found in the fifth edition under the number of 468, and is included in the thematic group "Day of Judgment," printed in Cyrillic script with a title above the letters "d" and "t," and translated into Russian. There is a numeration in every five lines (Bezsonov, 1970). The image of the pages of the Bezsonov's book is given at the end of this paper.

Bezsonov points out that the verse was spread in Bosnia and Dalmatia and reprinted from the fourth edition of verses, issued in Venice in 1691. He also noted that it is an ancient alteration of the Latin *Dies Irae*. In Eastern Slavic folklore, there is a similar verse, *Plačusja i užasaju* (Weeping and Terrifying Myself) (Bezsonov, 1970: part 2, no. 441–455). These verses have strongly pronounced penitential features (Fedorovskaya, 2009).

There exists an opinion that M. Divković is not the author of *Sudac gnjevan*.<sup>4</sup> It is quite possible that M. Divković used the translation of the verse by another author. Ivan Kosić, in his paper that covers the Croatian Cyrillic Manuscripts in the Collecton Fund at the National and University Library in Zagreb, marked the verse as a Croatian adaptation of *Dies Irae* (Kosić, 2006:264). He also noted that this verse was included in Divković's book *Nauk karstianski* (Divković, 1698; Đorđević, 1898). Ultimately, for the textual analysis, the authorship of the verse doesn't matter at all. As far as we know, the verse was published by M. Divković and, in any case, the spiritual verse must be chanted an appropriate motif.

The *Dies Irae* pertains to a medieval musical genre of sequence (from the Latin *sequentia*, and *sequor* – to follow), consisting of a Latin poem in accentual (non-quantative), rhymed, trochaic meter and a melody preserving the traditions of Gregorian Choral (Gregory, 1953; Julian, 1957; Vellekoop, 1978). The sequence

<sup>2</sup> Gavran (1998) notes that "The Small Christian Doctrine" was reprinted about 25 times.

<sup>3</sup> Piotr A. Bezsonov (1828–1898) – Slavist, folklorist and ethnographer, collector of folk verses and songs, author, active editor, and publisher. He dedicated his life to the publishing and popularization of works of Slavic folk culture. He was a full member of the Society of Admirers of Russian Letters and the Russian Geographic Society, and a correspondent member of the Serbian Scientific Society. For many years, Bezsonov collected, investigated and published numerous materials on Slavic history, folk culture, and ethnography. However, what brought him worldwide fame was his two-volume edition of folk verses and songs, *Kaleki perekhozhie* (Itinerant cripples), which came out between 1861 and 1864 in Moscow and was reprinted in 1970 in England (Bezsonov, 1970). This collection was a first-rate collection of Slavic spiritual verses of the second half of the nineteenth century and was awarded, in due time, the Russian Demidov Prize (Fedorovskaya, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> For example, in the book (Kapetanović, Malić and Štrkalj Despot, 2010) there are several variants of the verse *Sudac gnjevan* written in the Old Croatian language.

comes into the world probably in the thirteenth century. The name of the sequence comes from the first line of the verse: *Dies irae, dies illa* (Day of Wrath, Day that).

The authorship of the poem is chiefly ascribed to the Franciscan monk Tomas Chelenski, who was a friend, stalwart, and the author of the first and second biography of Saint Francis. The authorship of the melody is still unknown; it relates sometimes to Tomas Chelenski and his contemporaries.

The history of *Dies Irae* is closely related with the Latin funeral service *Requiem*. In the early part of fourteenth century, *Dies Irae* became known as an organic part of the Italian Requiem; from the early fifteenth century, it was spread in France, and then throughout Europe and America. In the beginning, the *Dies Irae* used a Latin text and medieval melody based on Gregorian Choral. Later on, when composers started to create music especially for the funeral service, the text served as a background of new variants of the sequence. The most important embodiments of the *Dies Irae* are the Requiems of J. Bach, F. Haydn, and W. Mozart. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the sequence was of great importance in non-liturgical music, for example, in "Fantastic symphony" by H. Berlioz, "The Dance of Death" by F. Liszt, and in the compositions of A. Shnitke, S. Rakhmaninov, and P. Chaikovsky.

It is obvious that M. Divković, as a prominent religious figure, knew the sequence very well and not only as a part of Church service, but as a famous Franciscan poem, which initially was intended for a non-church performance. Therefore, it is reasonable that he borrowed a motif of *Dies Irae* for his Slavic verse designed, as many of his verses, to meet the needs of the Christian folk.

The *Dies Irae* and the *Sudac gnjevan*, named here and throughout the paper as Latin and Slavic verses, used a Biblical story, vividly expounded, for example, in "The Revelation" of John the Baptist. The worshipper, in the name of whom the story is told, narrates that when Judgment Day begins, a wrathful judge come to judge humanity and nobody will be able to escape that judgment. The entire world will be burned, the dead will leave their graves, death and birth will cease, and all will be judged for their sins. In fear, the narrator seeks help from God, begs to have his prayers heard, be excused for sins, and not be sent with sinners to Hell, but to paradise with the just.

One notices the similarity of texture of the poems. M. Divković strictly follows a Latin source and forms in his verse two sections. In the first section is a description of Judgment Day and God's coming; the second one is devoted to prayers and requests.

There is also a similarity in stanza form. All stanzas consist of three rhymed lines with the same word endings at their ends. If we examine the first nine lines from the beginning of the poems, it becomes evident that at the end of the first three lines of Slavic verse, the words "прићи" *prići*, "попалити" *popaliti*, and "скрити" *skriti* have the same ending: "ти" *ti*. The words at the end of the next three lines are "буде" *bude*, "збуде" *sbude*, and "пробуде" *probude*, ending with "уде" *ude*. In the Latin verse, the words have the endings *la* (*illa, favilla, Sibylla*) and *us* (*futurus*,

*venturus, discussurus*). Schematically, the structure of the stanzas may be marked as aaa-bbb.

Despite the evident similarity of the subject and texture, there are marked differences between the verses. First of all, it should be noted that the Slavic verse is slightly longer than the Latin one. The *Dies Irae* is comprised of 58 lines and about 240 words (depending on the version); the *Sudac gnjevan* is 61 lines and about 280 words. It tells us that Divković had required more space to set out the same subject in his writing.

There are also distinctions in the explanation of a Biblical story. Thus, the concept of the Judgment Day is somewhat differently stated in the verses. The Latin verse notes that in this day (*Dies irae*), the world will be dissolved into burning coals (i.e., practically annihilated). Divković's verse describes God's intention scorch the world (*Svet*) with fire. Thus, the case in point is not an accomplished punishment, but the prophecy in which the destruction of the world by fire will be applied. The world will only be scorched, not burnt (i.e., annihilated). Such is indeed the case in the concept of the Judgment Day by John the Baptist in the Bible.

The verses describe differently the time when Judgment Day happens. In the fourth line, the Latin word *futures*, "will be," specifies a future time. The lines of the second stanza end with three Slavic words "буде" *bude*, "збуде" *sbude*, and "пробуде" *probude*, which are the forms of the verb "буде" *bude*, "will be." It should be noted that both texts use rhetorical models that are a feature of religious literature as a whole, but especially spiritual verses (Fedorovskaya, 2008). Here, the rhetorical figure *epiphora*, using the same words at the end of the lines, gives the Slavic verse a particular expressiveness. Divković, in this way, focuses the attention of the audience on the event to strengthen the fear for their future.

In the next fragment of the verses the story tells us about a trumpet sound resurrecting the dead and collecting them before the throne of God. The Latin text applies the style of plain narrative. A rhetorical technique introducing a direct speech in the Slavic verse contrasts the style in the Latin one. Direct speech that could be denoted as the "trumpet summons" makes the text more expressive and emotional.

The second section of the poem is saturated with addresses to God concerning forgiveness for sins and convincing him of the need to send a worshiper to paradise with the just. In the Latin verse, the section opens with a rhetorical question about what a sinner must do to escape a penalty. The question is absolutely concrete and devoid of any emotional tint. Then follows a simple address to God concerning redemption. The question is realized in the two last lines of the fragment by means of the rhetorical figure metaphor, in which a transfer of meaning from the one notion to another occurs. The just are identified as *salvandos*, "recoverable." God is the one who *salvandos salvas* (saves the recoverable) and who is also the *fons pietatis* (source of divine mercy). The utilization of metaphors with such a complex association, in fact, complicates an understanding and perception of the text by the audience.

In the Divković's verse, this section begins with an emotional appeal of a worshiper who says that his soul freezes from fear and who asks God to forgive him and not let him disappear. Then follows a rhetorical question: "Що ту грешник тада рети./ Коиу л милост-у сам стећи./ Гди те добри иедва утећи?" "What's a sinner then to say,/ What mercy will he get,/ Where the kind has a narrow escape?" In this context, the question supplements and intensifies previously made requests and confirms a worshiper's fear for his future. A characteristic feature of the verse is the emotionality of narration and the author's focus on the problem of a man begging. This section demonstrates the worshiper's emotional requests, underlining his terror: "услиши ме" *usliši me* (listen to me), "не згуби ме" *ne zgubi me* (do not ruin me), "помилуй ме" *pomiluj me* (for goodness' sake), "ме уместити" *me umjesti* (place me), and others, which are absent in the Latin verse. He is literally "bombarding" God with supplications.

In the second section of the verses a worshiper gives a characterization of sinners and the just and tries to find his place among them. Owing to metaphors in the Latin text, the just are denoted as *oves* (sheep) but sinners as *haedis* (goats). Then sinners are called as *maledictis* (outcasts) and the just as *benedictis* (blessed). These metaphors bring to the verse a high figurativeness that makes it difficult for understanding by "uninitiated" peoples.

In the Slavic verse, metaphors are also applied. The just are here "добрие" *dobrie* (the kindly). A worshiper tells that he will come with the kindly ones and asks to be given a place among them. Sinners are identified as "злиеми врази" *zliemi vrazi* (malicious enemies) and "проклети" *prokleti* (the cursed). He asks not to be ruined with the wicked and to be kept from evil in order to avoid going with the cursed to face their torments. Sinners are dishonest (i.e., sinful), therefore, they don't escape the fire, and a worshiper is proud not to reckon himself among them.

The emotionality of the text is stressed by use of simple metaphors and a folk-like designation of the just and sinners. It underscores a negative evaluation of sinners: malicious enemies, cursed, dishonest, don't escape the fire.

In both verses, the rhetorical figure antithesis is in the interrelation of a worshiper with sinners, the just, and God. The antithesis appears mainly in rhetorical questions. In the first two lines of the Latin verse, the word *miser* (miserable), which implies a praying sinner, is opposed to *patronum* (patron, protector), whom could be Jesus, the Virgin Mary, or the Saints.

The next antithesis, which may be called God – Me, appears in the fourth and sixth lines: *Rex* (the Lord) – *salva me* (save me) and then in the first two lines: *preces meae* (entreaty of mine) – *sed tu* (but You). A treble opposition, Sinners – The Just – Me, can be found in the fourth and sixth lines: *inter oves* (amongst sheep) – *ab haedis* (from goats) – *statuens* (placed me), and in the seventh and ninth lines: *confutatis maledictis* (expose outcast) – *me* (me) – *cum benedictis* (with blessed).

In his verse, Divković forms the main semantic opposition, focusing the attention of audience on the interrelationship of God and praying man. In the first two lines, shows the *antithesis* "God – Me (my soul)": "Господине" *Gospodine* (the Lord) – "ми душа" *mi duša* (my soul) and then in the fourth and fifth lines, a worshiper

asks to hear his entreaties and to draw God's attention to him: "моиои молби" *moioi molbi* (my entreaties) – "обрати твое очи" *obрати tvoe oči* (turn your eyes). The opposition of sinners and the just are actively introduced in the tenth and eleventh lines of the text: "с праведними" *s pravednimi*... "умиести" *umiesti* (with the just... place) – "гришници" *grišnici*... "нечисти" *nečisti* (sinners... foul), as well as *antithesis* in the fourth and sixth lines: "грешник" *grešnik*... "рети" *reti* (sinner... asks) – "добри" *dobri*... *uteti* (the kind... will escape), in which the matter concerns a praying man who perceives himself as a sinner that makes this *antithesis* allied with the previous one.

Treble *antithesis* is of particular interest. Here, a worshiper defines his place: "God – Sinner – Me" or "The just – Sinner – Me". These are in the seventh and ninth lines: "Боже крепки" *Bože krepki* (God hard) – "злиеми врази" *zliemi vrazi* (by malicious enemies) – "помилуй ме" *pomiluj me* (bless me), and in the first three lines: "гди проклети" *gdi prokleti* (where accursed) – "да з добрие" *da z dobrie* (with the kind) – "у рай доду" *u rai dodu* (come into paradise), and also in the lines from seven to nine: "међ добрием" *međ dobriem* (amongst the kind) – "ода зла" *oda zla*... "обрани" *obrani* (from evil... defend) – "постави ме" *postavi me* (to place me).

Thus, in the Latin text, all the parties are equal in rights: a worshiper, sinners, the just, and God. There is not any semantic accent on a concrete person; therefore, the expressiveness of the text is planned. It is absent any emotional splashes. *Antithesis* in Divković's verse is almost always related to a praying man who opposes sinners and the just, and communicates directly with God. A brightly expressed semantic accent attracts the attention of the audience to the emotional experience of man.

As a whole, the Latin verse imparts the Biblical story with a rational means, omitting emotional aspects. The presence of generalizations, ascertained facts, and complex metaphors orientates the text for a well-educated audience. In the Slavic verse, a semantic accent falls onto men's emotional experience. High emotionality is created by a personification, a great number of personal requests and direct speeches, which are stressed by rhetorical figures, as well as expressions, images, and associations generally applicable for a wide audience.

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ВЫДАЮЩИЙСЯ ХОРВАТСКИЙ ПИСАТЕЛЬ МАТИЯ ДИВКОВИЧ  
И ЕГО СТИХ "СУДАЦ ГНЕВАН"  
(К 445-Й ГОДОВЩИНЕ СО ДНЯ РОЖДЕНИЯ)

В статье исследуется духовный стих "Судац гневан" выдающегося славянского просветителя Матия Дивковича, написанный на мотив известного латинского стиха "Dies Irae". При общем сходстве строения стихов в них имеются существенные различия. В целом латинский стих передает содержание библейской истории без эмоциональной детализации. В нем активно используются обобщения и метафоры, которые направлены на восприятие текста образованными слушателями. В славянском стихе смысловый акцент падает на человеческие переживания. Повышенная эмоциональность создается с помощью большого числа личных просьб и прямой речи, а также выражений, образов и ассоциаций, подчеркнутых простыми риторическими фигурами, которые более понятны широкой аудитории.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: *духовный стих, хорватская литература, культура славян, сравнительный анализ стихов.*

