

had originated some two hundred years before. It may indeed have been written in response to the persistent critiques of the prevailing orthodoxy that were still blowing across Europe at the end of the fifteenth century—and would turn into a whirlwind at the beginning of the sixteenth. At the very time that this manuscript was being written, more than one hundred Lollards, who rejected this form of eucharistic piety in favour of biblical preaching, were convicted in London for rejecting the dogmatic *status quo*. In the northern Germanic territories, reports of miraculous appearances of bleeding hosts increased dramatically, especially in areas close to the Hussites, whose doctrine was similar to that of the Lollards. Another group of “heretics,” the Waldensians, who declared the Eucharist to be merely a memorial and only celebrated it once a year on Maundy Thursday, established thriving communities in the Piedmont region of northern France itself. Pope Innocent VIII declared a Crusade against them in 1487. It is within this context that we should probably understand the creation of this particular manuscript.

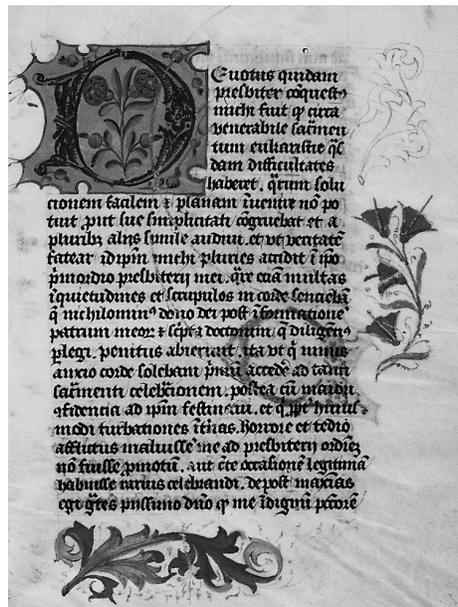
The text is written in a dark brown ink, with four larger initials painted in blue, orange, or green on liquid gold grounds, some with gold infill on blue or pink grounds. Each initial contains stylized violets or columbines, significant choices inasmuch as the violet stands for Christ’s incarnation and the columbine for the power of the Holy Spirit in Christian iconography. For many years the book was in the library of the Dukes of Arenberg whose castle was on the outskirts of the university city of Louvain in Belgium, one of the jewels of Catholic learning and the foremost centre

of opposition to the Protestant Reformation. Although the dukes dispersed the majority of their manuscript collection in the 1950s, this particular item remained with the family—probably because of its calligraphic and ornamental beauty—until the Duchess Matilda d’Arenberg gave it as a present to a jeweller in Monaco. The contemporary binding of brown calf stretched over wooden boards offers a teasing glimpse of the original owner’s identity. On the front cover, the sides are divided by multiple fillets into concentric frames. Heraldic devices, featuring a crowned shield with three ermine figure prominently, but to whom these arms belonged cannot be determined with any certainty. The back cover again displays examples of traditional Christian iconography, with multiple iterations of the lion and stag, both of which symbolize Christ himself.

The arguments contained within the pages of this manuscript helped to systematize orthodox Catholic thought on the Eucharist as it is still understood by the faithful; those same arguments, however, probably will not even fleetingly enter the minds of those who will gather on the Plains of Abraham for the upcoming Congress. That alone demonstrates the degree to which the teachings of Thomas Aquinas and Hugh de Saint-Cher triumphed over their opponents. But for serious scholars of medieval history, theology, and the Reformation, this new unpublished manuscript is yet another resource to be mined in the quest to understand the evolution of modern Catholic doctrine.

P.J. Carefoote

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library



First leaf of *De sacramento altaris*

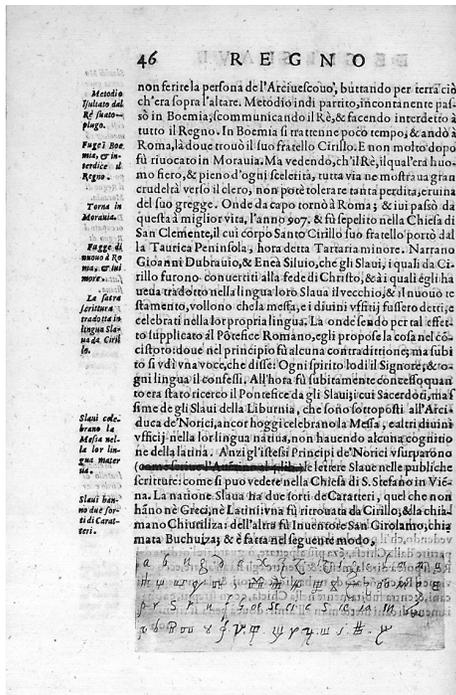
## ORBINI’S REGNO DEGLI SLAVI:

AN EARLY SOURCE FOR SLAVIC  
HISTORY

The Fisher Library has acquired an exceptional first edition of Mauro Orbini’s *Il regno degli Slavi* (Realm of the Slavs), the first comprehensive survey of South Slavic history and an early contribution to Pan-Slavism. The purchase was made possible through the generosity of John and Anne Zdunic who for years have been supporting the Croatian collection at the University of Toronto Library.

The author of the book, Mauro Orbini (ca. 1550–1611/1614), was born in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The area at the time was part of Venetian Dalmatia and Dubrovnik (Ragusa) enjoyed the privileges of an autonomous city-republic. Straddled between Western and Eastern Europe—Rome and Byzantium—under the influence of humanist ideas, and populated by an ethnic mix of Illyrians, Greeks, Romans, and Slavs, Orbini’s Dalmatia in the sixteenth century was experiencing its cultural golden age. Orbini, after entering the Benedictine order, spent most of his life in various monasteries of the region. A short appointment as abbot of a monastery in Bács, Hungary, and occasional visits to archives in Italy were the only occasions on which he left Dalmatia and Dubrovnik. Following a dispute with fellow monks at the monastery on the island of Mljet, he was sequestered from 1604 to 1606 in the monastery on the island of Šipan. During his stay there, Orbini wrote his *Zarčalo duhovno* (Spiritual Mirror) an adapted translation of the Italian work by frate Angelo Elli da Milano, *Specchio spirituale del principio, e fine della vita humana* (Brescia, 1599). This work, translated into what Orbini called “Dubrovački” (the language of Dubrovnik) is an important milestone in the development of the Croatian literary language.

*Il regno degli Slavi* (Pesaro: Girolamo Concordia, 1601) however, remains Orbini’s principal achievement. He wrote it to bring to light the ancient and glorious history and territorial expansion of the Slavs, writing about their origins, the history of the kings of Dalmatia, and the medieval history of Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Bulgaria. According to Orbini, the Slavs were descended from Japheth, Noah’s son, whose descendants migrated to Scandinavia. From there they spread out and conquered many lands and peoples. Orbini, in the first part of his history, presents evidence of the indigenous Balkan origin of the Slavs and in so doing incorporates the Illyrians, the Thracians as well as all of



In *Il regno degli Slavi Orbini* provides descriptions and tables of the Croatian Glagolitic script (left) and of the Cyrillic (note the expurgated name of Aventinus on p.46). The book also includes two engraved plates of Slavic warriors: one from the North and the other from the Balkans (right: Slavo dell'Illyrico).

the Roman emperors born to the East of the Adriatic Sea into the same nation, including the sixth-century Byzantine emperor Justinian the Great. He writes consistently of the Slavs, the Slav nation, and the Slavic language, emphasizing that unity of speech proves the unity of a people. He was convinced that all the South Slavs were of one origin with the other Slavs in Bohemia, Poland, Russia, etc., and that these others were blood descendants of the Balkan Slavs. The second part of Orbini's history covers Dalmatian history, and has been identified as his Italian translation of the sixteenth-century Croatian version of the medieval "Chronicle of the Priest of Dioclea." In the third part Orbini focuses on the Serbs, Bulgarians, Bosnians, and Croats. Though much of the work is based on unreliable legends and chronicles, *Il regno degli Slavi* had a great impact on the subsequent historiography of the South Slavs.

The work gained greater importance among the Orthodox South Slavs when Tsar Peter the Great commissioned Sava Vladislavić (1668–1738) to translate it from Italian into Russian. Vladislavić, a Hercegovinian by birth and Ragusan by upbringing, was a diplomat in the service of imperial Russia. He sought to persuade the Tsar that the Slavs under Turkish rule would rise up should the Russians bring their forces into the Balkans, and emphasized the unity of their common Slavic nation and language. His abridged translated version *Kniga istoriografija, pochatiia imene, slavy, i razshireniiia naroda slavianskogo* was published in St. Petersburg in 1722, with the addition of a chapter on Saints Cyril and Methodius by the

theologian Teofilakt Lopatynskiy (1670–1741). The translation influenced Russian Balkan policies and national consciousness among Serbs in the eighteenth century. Orbini's book also served for a long time as the authoritative source for the study of late medieval South Slavic history, particularly the history of the Croats, Serbs, and Bulgars, and contributed to the formation of future historians from those nations and the ideological concept of a Pan-Slavic common national identity.

The copy purchased for the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library is from the book collection of the Earls of Macclesfield, once one of Britain's greatest privately-owned libraries. The library of some 12,000 books and manuscripts mostly written or published prior to 1750 was formerly housed in the earls' ancestral home of Shirburn Castle in Oxfordshire, and is being sold in a series of auctions by Sotheby's. The Orbini volume, previously the property of Thomas Augustus Wolstenholme Parker, sixth Earl of Macclesfield, includes a nineteenth-century bookplate with the Macclesfield coat of arms bearing the motto "Sapere Aude" above "North Library." The handsome 473-page folio is bound in eighteenth-century speckled calf gilt and includes two full-page engraved plates of warriors representing *Slavo del Mar Germanico* and *Slavo dell'Illyrico*. Further illustrations consist of two Slavic alphabets, numerous coats of arms, woodcut initials, head-pieces, and ornaments.

Of historical interest are a number of deleted names, and sometimes of longer passages, a result of the expurgation by the Sacred Congregation of the Inquisition of the Roman

Catholic Church. Though Orbini based his history on a variety of sources, thirteen names that he cited were on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (List of Prohibited Books), and these have been expurgated from the text of *Il regno degli Slavi*. They include Byzantine Greek scholar Laonicus Chalcondyles (ca. 1423–1490); and a number of German scholars: historian Johannes Thurmayr (Aventinus) (1477–1534); cartographer, cosmographer, and Hebraist Sebastian Münster (1488–1552); humanist and Protestant reformer Kaspar Hedio (1494–1552); poet and classical scholar George Fabricius (1516–1571); historian Hans Löwenklau (Leunclavius) (1533–1593); and theologian David Chytraeus (1531–1600). For the most part those censored from the text by the Inquisition were either Byzantinists sympathetic with the Humanists, or adherents to Lutheranism. Orbini's work itself was placed on the Vatican's index of prohibited books in 1603 by order of Pope Clement VIII for citations from Protestant and Orthodox sources. Though this prohibition probably made the book harder to find, it never ceased to be widely read among intellectuals.

The University of Toronto Library is grateful to John and Anne Zdunic for providing funds for the purchase of *Il regno degli Slavi*, and for their support of the Croatian Studies Program at the University.

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Collection Development, Robarts Library  
and Petro Jacyk Central  
& East European Resource Centre