

**ΤΟ ΣΛΑΒΙΚΟ ΣΧΕΔΙΟ ΤΟΥ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΟΥ  
ΣΤΟ ΠΛΑΙΣΙΟ  
ΤΗΣ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗΣ ΚΟΙΝΟΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑΣ**



**THE SLAVIC PLAN OF BYZANTIUM  
IN THE FRAMEWORK  
OF “THE BYZANTINE COMMONWEALTH”**

## CYRIL AND METHODIUS

### WAS THERE A BYZANTINE MISSIONARY PROGRAM FOR THE SLAVS?



*Vladimír Vavřínek (Prague)*

**T**he anniversary of the arrival of Constantine-Cyril and his brother Methodius in Great Moravia (863-2013) has once again attracted the attention of the scholarly public on the history of their mission. In respect to length, it was in fact only a short historical episode, which did not last even a quarter of a century. Its cultural significance, however, was epochal. Both brothers translated the Scriptures, for the first time in medieval Europe, into a local language and thus laid the foundations of Slavic literature. The heritage of their cultural work predetermined largely also the political fate of the southern and eastern Slavs. It is thus not surprising that the memory of these Saints preserved by their cult remained a living part of the spiritual history of these nations throughout the Middle Ages until this day. The Cyrilo-Methodian tradition however never disappeared even in the Czech Lands as well as in Slovakia; at different times it played an important, though sometimes contradictory, role despite the fact that after Archbishop Methodius's death these lands rejected the cultural heritage of the Thessalonian brothers and further developed only in the sphere of the western Latin civilization.<sup>1</sup>

While the activity and the cultural heritage of this Byzantine mission are justly described as one of the great milestones in the development of a great part of the European population, the contemporary Byzantine sources unexpectedly do not mention it at all. It is not surprising that none of the contemporary Byzantine chroniclers offers the least information. They devoted their attention mainly to the events at the imperial court, various scandals and extraordinary natural events and, in respect to the church, to the ecclesiastical controversies, donations to monasteries and of course various miraculous events. On the other hand, they

cared very little about what took place at the edge of the empire or even in the areas distant far from its borders. A good litmus test is their interest in an event as historically significant and as important for the imperial family as the baptism of the Russian Prince Vladimir.<sup>2</sup>

Patriarch Photios never mentions his excellent student and dedicated young friend Constantine the Philosopher, whom he, along with Emperor Michael III, sent to Moravia.<sup>3</sup> In the end of his encyclical letter to the eastern patriarchs from spring 867 Photios highlights the successes, which he achieved in the Christianization of the Bulgarians and mentions that he sent missionaries also to the wild Russians; about the Moravian mission however, this letter does not breathe a word.<sup>4</sup> By then, admittedly, he may have had no news about the fate of this mission, its success or failure. In the period of Photios's second patriarchate (876-886), Methodius, by then already a Moravian Archbishop visited Constantinople; and according to the hagiographer he received a magnificent welcome from both Emperor and patriarch along with numerous gifts.<sup>5</sup> But even this meeting does not come up in any of Photios's later writings.

By then, Byzantium was ruled by Basileios I. His grand-son, the learned Emperor Constantine VII Porfyrogennetos, wrote a long study about his life and rule, in which he highlights Basileios's merits concerning the church and the spreading of the Christian faith. He minutely describes his care for the reconstruction of the obsolete and the building of new churches and cathedrals. He also depicts his efforts to convert the Jews to the Christian faith and his desire to bring the Bulgarians, who according to his text initially received baptism but later fell away from the faith in Christ, back to the Christian fold. In his narrative also the godless Russians received baptism from the hands of the Archbishop sent by Patriarch Ignatios though only after they witnessed a miracle that the Gospel books thrown into flames did not burn.<sup>6</sup> Even in this text however there is no mention of Constantine-Cyril and his brother Methodius. It seems that the memory that missionaries had once been sent to distant Moravia fell, in the meantime, into oblivion. This explanation is further promoted by the fact that Constantine the Porfyrogennetos, who in his text *De administrando imperio* written sometime before the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, speaks in five chapters about Great Moravia (it was he himself who coined its name<sup>7</sup>), describes it in one passage as a land yet unbaptized (*abaptistos*).<sup>8</sup>

The first Greek work mentioning the work of Cyril and Methodius, though very biased by later tradition, is the *Life of Clement of Ochrid*, one of the first coworkers and pupils of the Thessalonian brothers, written around 1100 by Archbishop Theophylact who depicts the Saint as his first predecessor on the throne of the Archbishops of Ochrid.<sup>9</sup> His Greek text, which became the model of all later not very rich production on this topic,<sup>10</sup> is generally considered based on an older legend written in Church Slavonic. Without the hagiographic

and other works written in Old Church Slavonic by the pupils of both brothers<sup>11</sup> along with numerous documents and Latin texts such as the bulls of several Popes<sup>12</sup> we would thus know nothing about the existence and work of this so significant mission.

How should we understand this confusing fact? However different it seems from later historical perspective, the sending of missionaries to Moravia was in the eyes of the contemporary secular and ecclesiastic Byzantine authorities a matter of secondary importance. To them, Moravia was a distant land situated beyond the borders of the Roman Empire, of which they had no knowledge and which was of little importance to Byzantium at that time.<sup>13</sup> In the frontline of their church-political interests stood their effort to Christianize and gain control over the church of their powerful and dangerous neighbor, Bulgaria. Connected with the Bulgarian ecclesiastical jurisdiction was the conflict with the Holy See over the areas of former Illyricum closely linked with complicated debates on the acceptability of the interference of the Roman Pope with the internal affairs of the Constantinopolitan patriarchate, which ended in the so-called Photios Schism.<sup>14</sup> The Moravian mission was for Byzantium only of secondary significance.

Most of all, from the perspective of the Byzantine political interests it was clearly a complete failure.<sup>15</sup> In course of their stay in Moravia, Constantine and Methodius understood that this land both by its geopolitical situation and cultural tradition belonged to the sphere of the western patriarchate.<sup>16</sup> The possibility of materializing Rastislav's political goal of creating an independent Moravian Diocese subjected to the patriarch of Constantinople, which they apparently had to prepare, became completely impossible especially after the Bulgarian Khan Boris who in 864 or 865 received baptism from Byzantium but already in the fall of 866 chased all Greek missionaries out of his land and subjected it to Rome. If a strong political tension or even enmity existed between Moravia and Bulgaria already before then, this act created a strong ecclesiastical dam preventing the possible inclusion of Rastislav's principality into the framework of the Byzantine Church. The personal position of both Thessalonian brothers became even more insecure when in September 867 a coup d'état took place in Byzantium, in course of which Emperor Michael III, who had sent them to Moravia, was murdered and Patriarch Photios, Constantine's teacher and friend, was deposed and exiled by the new Emperor.<sup>17</sup> These events were apparently another reason, for which they decided to accept the invitation of Pope Nicholas I and leave for Rome.

Finally, it was two Roman Popes who decided to favorably respond to the requests of the Moravian and Pannonian princes promoted by the Byzantine missionaries, though both had political agendas of their own.<sup>18</sup> Hadrian II decided to renew the Pannonian Diocese destroyed at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century by nomadic tribes and consecrated Methodius as its missionary Archbishop. By taking sovereignty over this church province, which was to include also the

Slavic territories north of the Danube, he wanted to curb the expansionism of the Eastern Frankish episcopate on one side and the patriarch of Constantinople on the other. By creating an independent Moravian Metropolis, John VIII wanted to secure the support of a strong Slavonic ruler in the north when his political aims in southern Balkans missed its aim.

We thus witness one of the greatest paradoxes so typical of the Cyrilo-Methodian mission.<sup>19</sup> Methodius, the leading personality of the Byzantine mission, was later entrusted by the Roman Pope with the office of the apostolic legate for the Slavic lands. An independent Moravian ecclesiastical province requested by Rastislav from the Byzantines thus finally materialized but not within the framework of the Constantinopolitan but the western patriarchate. Due to Methodius's diplomatic abilities the Moravian prince, not Rastislav, who requested the missionaries from Byzantium, but Svatopluk, who favored Methodius's Latin opponents, was recognized as a sovereign ruler independent of other secular princes, though not under the aegis of the Byzantine Emperor but under the patronage of the Holy See.

The decision to submit to the Roman jurisdiction and with it the recognition of the Papal primate in the church<sup>20</sup> was from Methodius's perspective dictated by the geographical-political conditions and their recognition was a sign of pragmatic realism. It however did not mean taking an anti-Byzantine stand. The Old Church Slavonic *Lives* of both brothers and especially the *Life of Constantine*, apparently written with direct participation of Methodius, contain various elements of official Byzantine political philosophy, according to which the Byzantine Emperor was instituted by God in order to rule the Christian *oikumene* as his vicar, and the Byzantine Empire was Christ's kingdom on earth.<sup>21</sup> Constantine and Methodius aimed their efforts to prosper the people of the land, to which they had been sent, in order to fulfill their mission. Their work in Moravia took place in the time of a great schism between the eastern and western church, the so-called Photian schism. In these political conflicts both brothers however showed a rare impartiality, did not enter them as partisans of one or both competing parties, but rather thought, lived and acted in the spirit of early Christian universalism as members of one undivided Church of Christ.

As main aim towards a successful completion of their mission to the Moravian Slavs, Constantine and Methodius perceived the translation of the Holy Script and other texts into the Slavic language and its introduction into liturgy. According to the traditional interpretation, which may still be found in contemporary scholarly literature, it was merely a use of the common Byzantine practice in yet another ethnic environment.<sup>22</sup> According to some scholars, this idea emerged in the intellectual circle around Patriarch Photios, one of whose eminent pupils was Constantine the Philosopher.<sup>23</sup> He pronounced a hypothesis that it was a well thought-through project prepared in advance of the Byzantine government authorities aimed to serve as means of converting the Slavic nations to Christianity under the aegis of

the Constantinopolitan patriarchate.<sup>24</sup>

Such hypotheses however lack sufficient support of the primary sources. It is true that the members of Christian nations in the Near East such as the Syrians, the Copts in Egypt or the Armenians and Iberians (Georgians) on the Caucasus and many others, since the early Christian period developed literature in their own languages and celebrated liturgy in them. It was however not due to official Roman or Byzantine policy but only a continuation of older Christian cultural traditions of these nations. The Byzantine Church was however since its beginning purely Greek and the loss of the eastern provinces due to the Arab expansion in the 7<sup>th</sup> century only more clearly added to the complete Hellenization of the Byzantine society.<sup>25</sup>

In the iconoclast period, the missionary activity of the Byzantine Church beyond its borders ceased and it was only renewed and invigorated in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, mainly under Photios's patriarchate. Official Byzantine missions were simultaneously closely connected with the Byzantine imperial policy<sup>26</sup> for none of them, with the exception of the Cyrilo-Methodian mission, sought to celebrate liturgy in local languages. Since the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century and especially in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the Byzantine Emperors attempted to renew their rule over the Greek provinces earlier occupied by the Slavic tribes and except for various administrative directives they also renewed the decentralized ecclesiastical organization.<sup>27</sup> There is nevertheless no sign that they would try to use the local languages to facilitate this process. Quite the contrary. Emperor Leo VI in his famous passage of his work *Taktika* explicitly states that his father Basileios I seeking to subdue the Slavs in Greece used both Christianization and Hellenization to achieve his purpose.<sup>28</sup> These two processes were evidently closely intertwined. When the Bulgarians received Christianity, Patriarch Photios sent to their land Greek missionaries as did Patriarch Ignatios, when after the Roman intermezzo Boris returned to the Constantinopolitan fold. The sources contain no information that these priests would have used Bulgarian in their missionary practice. The sizeable correspondence exchanged by the Roman Popes, Byzantine Emperors and patriarchs, Bulgarian Khan Boris, and perhaps also the Dalmatian clergy regarding the ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Illyricum does not contain any reference to the possibility of using the local vernacular in liturgy.<sup>29</sup> The same applies to the acts of the councils of 869/870 and 879/880, in which the question of Bulgaria was an important point.<sup>30</sup>

The idea of translating the Gospels for the use of the mission in Moravia creating a basis for literary production in the Slavic language (and the intention to sing there liturgy in this 'barbarian' language) was thus the original thought of Constantine the Philosopher.<sup>31</sup> In his time such an idea had no equal, it was something new and until then unheard of, an act which surpassed the thinking of his contemporaries not only in the West but also in his

home country where his compatriots considered themselves culturally superior to everything non-Hellenic.<sup>32</sup> The views of Patriarch Photios well describe it as he claimed that the divine Providence purposefully selected Greek as the means of spreading the Christian faith because only this language, cultivated into greatest precision already by ancient philosophers, possessed sufficient means for expression and precise formulation of all its subtilities.<sup>33</sup>

With the support of Prince Rastislav, Constantine and Methodius could successfully begin teaching in the Slavic language and it seems that the liturgy celebrated in this tongue brought them much favor also in wider echelons of the Moravian society. This practice clearly ignited the resistance of the Frankish and other Latin priests working at that time in Moravia who considered the introduction of a new liturgical language a heresy, claiming that liturgy may be performed only in those three languages, in which the sign on Christ's cross was allegedly written, that is Greek, Latin and Hebrew.<sup>34</sup> Without success, Constantine attempted to defend the Slavic literature in his enthusiastic defense in front of the gathered Latin clergy in Venice.

It was only Pope Hadrian II who finally approved and blessed Constantine's translations. Rather than Constantine's eloquence and argumentation, Hadrian may have been impressed by the translation of the alleged relics of St. Clement, the fourth Bishop of Rome, which Constantine discovered in Kherson in Crimea in course of his journey to the Khazars and later brought through Moravia to Rome. For some time, however, nothing else happened. Only after Constantine's death, Methodius managed to secure the approval of two Popes to celebrate liturgy in the Slavic language in the lands of the rulers, who requested his service. For both of them it was however rather a concession, by which they sought Methodius's collaboration in promoting their own agendas. Hadrian II consecrated Methodius as a missionary bishop in Pannonia with the right to celebrate liturgy there in the Slavic language so that by instituting this Diocese he would gain a basis to assert the papal sovereign power in this area both against Byzantium on one hand and the East-Frankish bishops on the other.

Another Pope, John VIII enforced the release of Methodius from the Bavarian prison instigated by local bishops in 873. Simultaneously, he however forbade the Slavic liturgy. Only when he confirmed Methodius in the office of the Moravian (not the Pannonian) Archdiocese in 880, he allowed him and his clergy to celebrate liturgy in the Slavic language but limited this privilege only to the territory under Svatopluk's rule. The Pope probably yielded to Methodius's pleading mainly to ensure the loyalty of this Byzantine, who governed the church in an important Slavic state in the north, in the time when he intensely though mostly vainly sought to promote the interests of the Papal Curia in the Balkans. But even this privilege did not remain valid for long. Mere five years later, immediately after Methodius's death, another Pope, Stephen V, forbade Slavic liturgy and Prince Svatopluk allowed the

representative of the Latin party of the Moravian church, Wiching, to chase out the eminent Slavic clergy from Moravia and even sell others to slavery.

I however do not believe that the ideas and intentions of Constantine and Methodius would have found much understanding or support even in Byzantium. Constantine's biographer claims that Michael III when he charged him with the Moravian mission espoused his decision to create for the Slavs books in their language. It is however uncertain whether already by then Constantine aimed to translate the liturgical books, an act, which the *Life of Constantine* chapter 15 places only into the period of his work in Moravia, or only to complete the translation of the Gospels, as would follow from the text of the legend. Why the Emperor and apparently also the patriarch would have agreed with this intention, which was in contrast with the contemporary common Byzantine missionary practice, remains unclear. If it did happen, it was apparently because such an experiment, unthinkable in the territory of the Byzantine Empire, was to be tested in a distant Slavic land outside its sphere of immediate political interest.

After his return from the second journey to Rome, probably in the fall of 881 (or perhaps a year later), Methodius travelled to Constantinople where he apparently spent several months. Why he went there or what he did there the sources do not tell. His biographer only tells us that "the Emperor received him with great honors and joy, praised his teaching and kept from his pupils a priest and a deacon along with the books." These books were apparently Slavic books but that they would have contained liturgy and that these two Methodius's pupils would then have founded in Constantinople a center of Slavic literature and liturgy (as some scholars have claimed<sup>35</sup>) is only a hypothetical speculation, which is not in the least supported by even indirect suggestions of the sources.

These two Slavic clergymen left behind in Constantinople were in several years accompanied by others. Methodius's pupils whom Wiching sold to Jewish traders were brought to the slave market in Venice. The legate of the Byzantine Emperor Basileios I was present and bought them out. Some of them he brought with him to Constantinople where the Emperor himself allegedly welcomed them, and re-introduced them into their original offices as priests and deacons.<sup>36</sup> This must have taken place in the summer months of 886 because already by the end of August of that year Emperor Basileios I died after a hunting accident. Some of these clerics remained in Byzantium but those were most probably hellenized. Nothing indicated that a center of Slavic liturgy would have developed in Constantinople under the rule of Basileios's son Leon IV the Wise. The majority of them went to Bulgaria, either immediately after the death of Basileios or some time later along with the son of the Bulgarian Khan Boris-Michael, Symeon, whom Boris called to return back to Bulgaria in 993 in order to take over the rule.



The cultural work of the Cyrilo-Methodian mission, almost eliminated by the drastic expulsion of Methodius's pupils from Moravia, was finally preserved and that especially due to the Bulgarians. Already Khan Boris kindly received Methodius's eminent pupils who sought refuge by him (apparently these were the colleagues of the two brothers who came with them from Byzantium to Moravia), and sent them to the western part of his territory, Macedonia, where under Clement's direction they built a center of Slavic literature in the region by the Ochrid Lake, for which they used the Glagolitic letters created by their great teacher Constantine-Cyril.

The Church Slavonic literature flourished in Bulgaria under Tsar Symeon (893-927) fomented apparently by Methodius's pupils ransomed in Venice, who then came to his new residence in Preslav, where they brought up a number of local disciples. Symeon spent his youth at the imperial court in Constantinople where he received an excellent education. He recognized the potential of literary education for the Bulgarian society but at the same time on the case of the Slavs in Greece he also realized the danger of the pressure of the advanced Byzantine civilization. In receiving the Church Slavonic language as the official language of the Bulgarian Church and the state, he found a solution to this problem. He variously supported the translation of the Greek theological but also other literary works and he himself actively participated in this practice.<sup>37</sup> These translations became an effective instrument of massive reception of the Greek literature and learning and facilitated the Bulgarian access to the Byzantine civilization without running a danger of being hellenized and losing ethnic identity.

The southern and eastern Slavs took over the Church Slavonic literature and liturgy through the service of the Bulgarian clergy, in whose environment this in Byzantium originally 'unwanted' child proved a most effective means of reception of the Byzantine civilization. The cultural heritage of the Cyrilo-Methodian mission thus allowed for the emergence of a belt of countries on the borders of Byzantium, politically independent but culturally and spiritually interconnected with the Empire, which the late Sir Dimitri Obolensky aptly described as the "The Byzantine Commonwealth."

1 G. Podskalsky, «Die Erinnerungen an die hll. Kyrill und Method bei späteren südslavischen Autoren», in: A.-E. N. Tachiaos (ed.), *Thessaloniki – Magna Moravia*, Thessaloniki 1999, 25-35; T. Subotin-Golubović, «Reflection of the Cult of Saint Konstantine and Methodios in Medieval Serbian Literature», *ibidem*, 37-46; B. N. Florja – A. A. Turilov – S. A. Ivanov, *Судьбы кирилло-мефодиевской традиции после Кирилла и Мефодия*, Sankt Peterburk 2000; T. Sabev, «The Legacy of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in the Russian Orthodox Church», in: A.-E. N. Tachiaos (ed.), *The Legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodius to Kiev and*

Moscow, Thessaloniki 1992, 25-32. On the tradition of the so-called ‘Seven’ (*sedmipočetníci*) (of the two Thessalonian brothers and their five foremost pupils) in Bulgaria see recently A. Škoviera, *Svatí slovanskí sedmipočetníci*, Bratislava 2010; M. Skowronek – G. Minczew, *Uczniowie apostołów Słowian. Siedmiu świętych mężów*, Kraków 2010.

2 On the Cyrilo-Methodian tradition in the Czech and Moravian history see V. Konečný, «Cyrilometodějské tradice v starší české literatuře», [The Cyrilo-Methodian traditions in older Czech literature] in: J. Macůrek – R. Večerka (eds.), *Magna Moravia. Sborník k 1100. výročí příchodu byzantské misie na Moravu*, Praha 1965, 567-586; B. Zlámal, «Die Entwicklung der kyrillo-methodianischen Tradition in der Tschechoslowakischen Geschichte», in: A. Salajka (Hrsg.), *Konstantin-Kyryll aus Thessalonike* (Das östliche Christentum, Neue Folge, Heft 22) 77-157. Cf. also S. Albrecht, *Geschichte der Grossmährenforschung in den Tschechischen Ländern und in der Slowakei*, Prague 2003. Anastasius Bibliothecarius in his Prologue to the Acts of the Constantinopolitan council of 869/870 describes Constantine as the most loyal of Photios’s friends (*fortissimo eius amico*) (Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, XVI, 186/6. The sources related to the Cyrilo-Methodian mission will be further quoted according to the edition prepared by L. E. Havlík et col., *Magnae Moraviae Fontes Historici (MMFH)* I-IV, Praha-Brno 1965-1971. Second, revised and enlarged edition was prepared by Z. Měřínský, D. Bartoňková and R. Večerka, Praha 2009-2013. For this passage see: *MMFH* IV, p. 109.

3 Photios’s encyclical letter *ad thronos orientales* from the spring of 867 – Migne, *Patrologia graeca* 102, col. 722-741.

4 *Life of Methodius*, 13 – *MMFH* II, Praha 2010, 136-137.

5 *Theophanes continuatus* V –, ed. I. Bekker, *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae* Bonn 1838, 211-353, zejm. 341-344; also see the excellent translation of L. Bryer, *Vom Bauernhof auf den Kaiserthron*, Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber 14, Graz-Wien-Köln 1981, 144-146.

6 R. Dostálová, «ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΜΟΡΑΒΙΑ», *Byzantinoslavica* 17 (1966) 344-349, showed that this expression, first coined by Constantine the Porphyrogenetos, was used by this learned Emperor not in order to express the alleged size of Svatopluk’s principality but to indicate a land far beyond the empire’s boundaries and not in its territory in the spirit of the classic Antique geography. *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio*, ch. 40/33 – ed. by Gy. Moravcsik, transl. by R. Jenkins, (Dumbarton Oaks Texts, 1), Washington, D.C. 1967, 176: ἡ μεγάλη Μοραβία, ἡ ἀβάντιστος.

7 Βίος Κλήμεντος – edition: A. Milev, *Гръцките життя на Климент Охридски*, Sofia 1966; *MMFH*, II, Prague 2010, 176 ff. Cf. D. Obolensky, «Clement of Ochrid», in: idem, *Six Byzantine Portraits*, Oxford 1988, 8-33; «Theophylact of Ochrid», *ibidem*, 34-82. A. Delikari, *Der Hl. Klemens und die Frage des Bistums von Velitza*, Thessaloniki 1997, 31-45 (with rich bibliography).

8 A.-E. N. Tachiaos, «The Cult of Saint Methodius in the Byzantino-Slavonic World», in: E. G. Farrugia et al. (ed.), *Christianity among the Slavs. The Heritage of Saints Cyril and Methodius*, Roma 1988, 131-142.

9 Their collection, which contains the reprints from reliable editions with parallel Czech translation, appeared in the work *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici* II: *Textus biographici, hagiographici, liturgici*, Brno 1967; the second, revised and enlarged edition Praha 2010. See also J. Vašica, *Literární památky epochy velkomoravské 863-885*, [Literary monuments of the Great Moravian period, 863-885] Praha 1966, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1996. For an English translation of the Old Church Slavonic Lives of Constantine and Methodius see M. Kantor, *Medieval Slavic Lives of Saints and Princes*, (Michigan Slavic Translations 5), Ann Arbor 1983, 23-96, 97-138.

10 The bull of Hadrian II *Gloria in excelsis Deo* is preserved only in an Old Church Slavonic translation in the *Life of Methodius*, chpt. 8, *MMFH* II, 2010, 127-130, and in the *Eulogy on Cyril and Methodius*, *ibidem*, 149-150; the letters of Pope John VIII to the Bavarian bishops, the East-Frankish King Louis the German and his son Karlomann and the instruction to the Papal legate Paul of Ancona from 873, *MMFH* III, n. 46-51, 159-170; his letters addressed to Prince Svatopluk and Archbishop Methodius from June of 879, *ibidem*, n. 80-81, 189-193; his bull *Industriae tuae* from June 880, *ibidem*, n. 90, 197-208; and his letter to Methodius from March 881, *ibidem*, n. 95, 210-212; the letter of Stephen V to Svatopluk, *ibidem*, n. 101, 215-225, and instruction to his legates, *ibidem*, n. 102, 226-229; the protest letter of the Bavarian bishops against the renewal of the Moravian Diocese from 900, *ibidem*, n. 109, 232-244; the letters of Anastasius Bibliothecarius, Bishop Gauderich and Emperor Charles from 875, *ibidem*, n. 59 a 60, 175-181; and finally the famous *Conversio*

*Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*, ibidem, 292-322, especially 318 ad.

11 The first finds of the magnificent jewelry from the Great Moravian period discovered in Staré Město u Uherského Hradiště already in the 1920's led to the conclusion that these were imported from Byzantium; L. Niederle therefore called them 'the Byzantine-oriental jewel' and deduced that lively trade must have existed between Great Moravia and Byzantium already since the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. See: L. Niederle, «Byzantské šperky v Čechách a na Moravě», [The Byzantine jewels in Bohemia and Moravia] *Památky archeologické* XXX (1927) 339 ff.; idem, «Byzantský obchod a země české v IX. a X. století», [Byzantine trade and the Czech Lands] in: Pekař collection vol. I, Praha 1930; see also F. Dvorník, *Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance*, Praha 1933, 224 ff. This idea was maintained for a long time but after the systematic archeological research of the Great Moravian locations in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought hundreds of these decorative objects from precious metals of various kinds, it was possible to prove that the majority of them was made by local masters and their original models must be sought not in central Byzantium but rather in the Latin towns in the Adria. Nowadays these objects are called the 'Veligrad jewel.' Their chronology remains subject to debate but it is clear that at least two eras of their development may be recognized, the earlier of which must be placed already into the first half if not into the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Most recently see the recent detailed analysis of F. Galuška, *Hledání původu. Od avarských bronzů ke zlatu Velké Moravy*, [The searching for the origins. From the Avar bronze items to the Great Moravian gold.] Brno 2013, especially 99 ff. The imports from Byzantium itself (the Constantinopolitan circle) were rather unique in Moravia and even those probably came there indirectly but perhaps through the mediation of Venice. See O. Tůma, «Great Moravia's Trade Contacts with the Eastern Mediterranean and the Mediating Role of Venice», *Byzantinoslavica* XLVI (1985) 67-77.

12 F. Dvorník, *The Photian Schism. History and Legend*, Cambridge 1948, 91 ff.; H. Chadwick, *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church*, Oxford 2003, 106 ff.

13 From the numerous earlier works devoted to the history of Cyril and Methodius let us mention: F. Dvorník, *Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance*, Praha 1933; F. Grivec, *Konstantin und Method, Lehrer der Slaven*, Wiesbaden 1960; L. Boyle, *Cirillo et Metodjo, I santi apostoli degli Slavi*, Roma 1963; P. Duthilleul, *L'Évangélisation des Slaves. Cyrille et Méthode*, Tournai 1963. A.-E. N. Tachiaos, *Cyril and Methodius of Thessalonica. The Acculturation of the Slavs*, Thessaloniki 1989. For my own views see V. Vavřínek, *Cyril a Metoděj mezi Konstantinopolí a Římem*, [Cyril and Methodius between Constantinople and Rome] Praha 2013.

14 From literature on Christianization of Great Moravia before the arrival of the Byzantine mission see V. Vavřínek, *Die Christianisierung und Kirchenorganisation Grossmährens*, *Historica* VII (1963) 5-56; idem, *Předcyrilometodějské misie na Velké Moravě*, [Pre-Cyriilo-Methodian missions in Great Moravia] *Slavia* 32 (1963) 461-480; Z. R. Dittrich, *Christianity in Great Moravia*, Groningen 1962; F. Dvorník, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs*, New Brunswick, N. J. 1970; A. P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom*, Cambridge 1970; D. Třeštík, *Vznik Velké Moravy*, [The birth of Great Moravia] Praha 2001. For the newest synthesizing monograph with a rich bibliography on the history and Christianization of Great Moravia see Z. Měřínský, *Morava na úsvitě dějin* [Moravia at the dawn of history] (*Vlastivěda moravská*, vol. 4), Brno 2011 (2013).

15 F. Dvorník, *Byzantine Missions*, 136 ff., and especially *The Photian Schism*, 138 ff., pointing out that the Byzantines usually did not want to navigate in the winter months, claimed that Constantine and Methodius learned about the political changes in Byzantium only in the beginning of summer 868 in Rome when the legate of Basileios I., the *spatharios* Euthymios, brought there his official message (dated December of the previous year). Since the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century, a busy trade existed among the Byzantine ports and Venice and it is thus very probable that a message as shocking as the coup d'état in Constantinople would have reached Venice by this road already by the end of October or in the beginning of November of 867, that is at the time when both brothers received the invitation of Nicholas I in the same city. That sailing in winter was not an exception proves the fact that another legacy of Emperor Basileios I, which left Constantinople sometime after December 11, 868, and that in two ships. One with Photios's partisans was wrecked in course of the voyage while the partisans of Patriarch Ignatios sailing in the other reached their destination and landed in south Italy and sometime in 869 entered Rome.

16 V. Vavřínek, *Cyril a Metoděj*, 173 ff., 241 ff.

17 Other paradoxes of the history of the Cyrilo-Methodian mission were indicated by I. Ševčenko, «Three Paradoxes of the Cyrilo-Methodian Mission», *Slavic Review* 23 (1964) 220-236.

18 The recognition of the Papal primacy in the church appears in the Old Church Slavonic *Life of Methodius* expressed in several ways: in the overview of the ecumenical councils in VM 1 (of which there are in accordance with the views of the Holy See and in contrast to similar contemporary Byzantine overviews mentioned only six) where the Pope is always mentioned in the first place as the initiator of the council; in identifying the Roman Pope with Saint Peter as the vicar of Christ; and finally in the title used by the author for the contemporary Pope (*apostolik*). Cf. V. Vavřínek, *Staroslověnské životy Konstantina a Metoděje*, [The Old Church Slavonic Lives of Constantine and Methodius] Praha 1933, 108 ff.

19 V. Vavřínek, *Cyril a Metoděj*, 298 ff.

20 E.g. I. Dujčev, «La problema delle lingue nazionale nel medio evo e gli Slavi», *Ricerche slavistiche* 8 (1960) 59; D. Zakythinis, «Les peuples de l'Europe du Sud-Est et leur rôle dans l'histoire. La synthèse byzantine», in: *1<sup>er</sup> Congrès international des études balkaniques et sud-est européennes*, Sofia 1966, 21 ad.

21 This thesis was recently pronounced by Chr. Trendafilov in the lecture called «Dopis patriarchy Fotia katolikou Zachariášii, Konstantin Filosof a vznik prototypu misionářského jazyka v období let 860-863» [The letter of Patriarch Photios to the *Catholikos* Zecharias, Constantine the Philosopher and the birth of the prototype of the missionary language in 860-863] at the international conference *Cyril and Methodius: Their Mission and Europe. 1150 Years since the Arrival of the Thessalonian Brothers in Great Moravia*, Velehrad, May 13-17, 2013 (the study will be published in the proceedings of this conference). Cf. also J. HERRIN, *Byzantium. A surprising life of a medieval empire*, London 2008, 131 ff.

22 A.-E. N. Tachiaos, *Cyril and Methodius of Thessalonica*, 58 ff., pronounced the hypothesis that the Byzantine government circles already before the arrival of the Moravian legates in Constantinople prepared the project of mission to the Slavs. He saw the support for this idea in the information in the VC 8, according to which Constantine in course of a winter break on the way to the Khazars found in Kherson in Crimea a Gospel and a Psalter written “in Russian letters” and met there a “person speaking this language.” Tachiaos then developed this thesis in greater detail in the study «Cyril and Methodius in the Perspective of the Byzantine “Slavic Project”», in: *Obraz i slovo – Εικόνα και λόγος. Recueil à l'occasion du 60<sup>e</sup> anniversaire du Prof. Axinia Džurova*, Sofia 2004, 407-415. For a polemic with this idea see the study by V. Vavřínek, «“Russische Buchstaben” im byzantinischen Cherson», in: Kl. BELKE et al. (eds.), *Byzantina Mediterranea. Festschrift für Johannes Koder zum 65. Geburtstag*, Wien-Köln-Weimar 2007, 693-703.

23 G. Dagron, «Les origines de la culture et langue de l'État», *Revue historique* 93, t. 241 (1969) 23-53.

24 For the Byzantine missions in general, see H.-G. Beck, «Christliche Mission und politische Propaganda im byzantinischen Reich», in: *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo XIV*, Spoleto 1967, 649-674; P. Christou, «The Missionary Task of the Byzantine Emperor», *Byzantina* 3 (1971) 277-286; Chr. Hannick, «Die byzantinischen Missionen», in: K. Schäferdiek (ed.), *Die Kirche des frühen Mittelalters (Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte II/1)*, München 1978, 279-359; I. Ševčenko, «Religious Missions Seen from Byzantium», *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 12-13 (1988/89) 7-27; P. Schreiner, «Die byzantinische Missionierung als politische Aufgabe: Das Beispiel der Slaven», *Byzantinoslavica* LVI (1995) 525-533; S. A. Ivanov, *Византийское миссионерство. Можно ли сделать из «варварва» христианина ?*, Moskva 2003.

25 F. Dvorník, *Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1926, a reprint with the introduction by P. Charanis, Hattiesburg, Miss. 1970, 71 ad.

26 *Leon VI, Taktika XVIII/101* – Migne, *Patrologia graeca* 107, col. 969. Cf. D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe 500-1453*, London 1971, 81.

27 For a detailed analysis with references to the editions of individual letters see F. Dvorník, *The Photian Schism*, 91 ff. Cf. L. Simeonova, *Diplomacy of the Letter and the Cross. Photios, Bulgaria and the Papacy, 860s – 880s*, Amsterdam 1998.

28 *Acta Concilii Constantinopolitani IV (869-870)* – ed. Mansi, XVI, 1-208 (versio latina), XVI, 300-408 (versio graeca). *Acta Concilii Constantinopolitani V (879-880)* – ed. Mansi, XVII, 365-525.

29 I included the arguments for this interpretation in V. Vavřínek, «The Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy and the Byzantine Missionary Policy», in: V. Vavřínek (ed.), *Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte im 9.-11. Jahrhundert*, Praha 1978, 255-279 (abbreviated Russian translation: «Культурные и церковно-политические

предпосылки возникновения славянской литургии», in: P. Dinekov et al. (ed.), *Kirilo-Methodievski studii IV*, Sofia 1987, 130-137); V. Vavřínek – B. Zástěrová, «Byzantium's Role in the Formation of the Great Moravian Culture», *Byzantinoslavica* 43 (1982) 161 -188.

30 I. Ševčenko, «Three Paradoxes», 227 ff.; D. Obolensky, «Cyrile et Méthode et la christianisation des Slaves», in: *La conversione al Cristianesimo nell'Europa dell'alto medioevo* (Settimane di studio del Centro italiano sull'alto medioevo XIV), Spoleto 1967, 587-609, especially 594 ff.

31 Photios formulated these ideas in his letter to the *catholicos* of the Armenian Church Zecharias recently analyzed by Chr. Trendafilov (see fn. 23). While F. Dvorník, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew*, Cambridge, Mass. 1958, 239 ff., like other scholars admitted the possibility of their authenticity, V. A. Arutjunova-Fidanjan, «К вопросу об авторстве Послания к Захарии», in: *Vizantijskije očerki*, Moskva 1996, 56-75, attempted to prove that Photios could not have been the author of these letters but that they were written later. Whether Photios did formulate these letters or whether they are the work of a ghost writer (perhaps of some Armenians of the Chalcedon confession living in Constantinople as Trendafilov admits), it is clear that they contain his ideas. In his letter addressed to the patriarch of Aquileia Photios writes that Pope Leo III had the Confession of faith grafted into a silver plate in Greek in order to prevent its precise meaning from being corrupted by formulation 'in the Barbarian' language, by which he clearly meant Latin (*Photii epistulae et amphilochia*, II, ed. B. Laourdas – L. G. Westerink, Leipzig 1984, ep. 291, pp. 141-142); in reality the Pope had two plates made one with the Credo in Greek and the other in Latin.

32 F. Thomson, «SS. Cyril and Methodius and a Mythical Western Heresy: Trilinguism. A Contribution to the Study of Patristic and Mediaeval Theories of Sacred Languages», *Analecta Bollandiana* CX (1992) 67-122 (with an exhaustive bibliography on this topic).

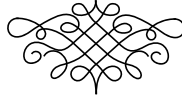
33 F. Dvorník, *Byzantine Missions*, 184; J. Vašica, *Literární památky*, 251, with references to earlier authors.

34 *Život Naumův*, [The Life of Naum], MMFH II, 2010, p. 154.

35 G. Podskalsky, *Theologische Literatur des Mittelalters in Bulgarien und Serbien, 865-1459*, München 2000.



## Η ΕΠΙΛΟΓΗ ΤΩΝ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΕΩΝ ΑΔΕΛΦΩΝ ΚΥΡΙΛΛΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΘΟΔΙΟΥ ΓΙΑ ΜΙΑ ΑΣΥΝΗΘΙΣΤΗ ΙΕΡΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΗ ΣΤΗ ΣΛΑΒΙΚΗ ΚΑΙ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗ ΜΟΡΑΒΙΑ



*Ιωάννης Χρ. Ταρνανίδης, Ομ. Καθηγητής Α.Π.Θ.*

**Μ**ε βάση τις πληροφορίες που μας δίνουν οι Βίοι των δύο αγίων, αλλά και οι λοιπές γύρω από το θέμα πηγές<sup>1</sup>, οι αδελφοί Κωνσταντίνος-Κύριλλος και Μεθόδιος στάλθηκαν από τον αυτοκράτορα Μιχαήλ Γ' κατά το έτος 863 στη σλαβική χώρα της κεντρικής Ευρώπης Μοραβία, προκειμένου να εξηγήσουν στη δική τους (τη σλαβική) γλώσσα την ορθή πίστη<sup>2</sup>.

Όπως βέβαια μας πληροφορούν οι παραπάνω πηγές, η ενέργεια αυτή απετέλεσε την απάντηση του βυζαντινού αυτοκράτορα σε ανάλογο αίτημα του Μοραβού ηγεμόνα Ροστισλάβου. Όμως το εγχείρημα είχε κάποιες ιδιαιτερότητες που καθιστούσαν την αυτοκρατορική απόφαση ασυνήθιστη ακόμα και για τα βυζαντινά δεδομένα, αφού για πρώτη φορά οι ιεραπόστολοι θα έπρεπε να εμπλουτίσουν και να διαπλάσουν σε μεγάλο βαθμό μια ξένη, φτωχή και ακατέργαστη γλώσσα – εν προκειμένω τη σλαβική – ώστε να είναι σε θέση να συμπεριλάβει στο λεξιλόγιό της έννοιες άγνωστες,

<sup>1</sup> Σχετικά με την ιστορικότητα των εν λόγω βασικών πηγών (του Βίου του Κωνσταντίνου-Κυρίλλου και του Βίου Μεθοδίου), οι οποίες διασώθηκαν στην αρχική τους μορφή στην παλαιοσλαβική γλώσσα και σε κυριλλική γραφή, μαζί με εκτενή σχόλια και τη σχετική πλούσια βιβλιογραφία, μπορεί ο ενδιαφερόμενος να βρει στην ελληνική απόδοσή τους, την οποία εκπόνησε πρόσφατα ο καθηγητής Αντ.-Αιμίλιος Ταχιάος εκ του πρωτοτύπου. Βλ. Αντ.-Αιμ. Ν. Ταχιάου, *ΚΥΡΙΛΛΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΘΟΔΙΟΣ. Οι αρχαιότερες Βιογραφίες των Θεσσαλονικέων εκπολιτιστών των Σλάβων*, [University Studio Press] Θεσσαλονίκη 2008. Είχε προηγηθεί η ελληνική τους απόδοση από τον Ι. Αναστασίου, υπό τον τίτλο “Βίος Κωνσταντίνου-Κυρίλλου, Βίος Μεθοδίου (μετάφρασις), Βίος Κλήμεντος Αχρίδος” *Επιστ. Έπετ. Θεολογικής Σχολής του ΑΠΘ*, τ. ΙΒ', Θεσσαλονίκη 1968, 118-161 με βάση τη γερμανική μετάφραση του J. Bujnoch, *Slavische Geschichtsschreiber. Band I. Zwischen Rom und Byzanz*, Verlag Styria 1958 και του Α. Πρωτοπαπά, *Κύριλλος και Μεθόδιος ανάμεσα στους Σλάβους*, Λευκωσία 2006, 183-238.

αφηρημένες και δυσνόητες, όπως αυτές της χριστιανικής αποκάλυψης και λατρείας, επινοώντας παράλληλα και ειδικό αλφάβητο που θα αποτύπωνε αυτές τις έννοιες για να μπορούν να έχουν συνέχεια και να εξυπηρετούν τις λατρευτικές ανάγκες των νέων πιστών.

Η αποσαφήνιση των επιμέρους πτυχών του θέματος αυτού απασχόλησε επί μακρόν την επιστημονική έρευνα αποφέροντας τη συγγραφή και δημοσίευση πολυάριθμων μελετών σε διάφορες γλώσσες<sup>2</sup>. Παρόλα όμως αυτά, έχουν παραμείνει μερικά ασαφή σημεία μεταξύ της περιγραφής των βιογράφων, όπως αυτή είναι αποτυπωμένη στις διασωθείσες πηγές και της εικόνας που εμφανίζουν κατά τη μελέτη και επεξεργασία τους από τη νεότερη έρευνα και τη νεότερη ανάγνωσή τους. Κάποια από τα ασαφή αυτά σημεία θα επιχειρήσουμε να επανεξετάσουμε και στη σημερινή μας αναφορά, περιοριζόμενοι, φυσικά, στα προβλεπόμενα στενά πλαίσια της σημερινής μας εκδήλωσης.

#### ΠΟΙΑ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΤΑ ΣΗΜΕΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΣΗΜΕΡΙΝΗΣ ΜΑΣ ΑΝΑΦΟΡΑΣ:

1. Ένα ερώτημα, που ανακύπτει από την ανάγνωση του σχετικού χωρίου της βιογραφίας του Κωνσταντίνου-Κυρίλλου είναι, το τί μπορεί να κρύβεται πίσω από την πληροφορία του κειμένου, ότι ο αυτοκράτορας, αναζητώντας σλαβομαθείς για την πιο πάνω αποστολή, απευθύνθηκε στον άγιο υποθέτοντας ή, αν θέλετε, υπολογίζοντας -όπως μπορεί κανείς να συμπεράνει από τα λεγόμενά του-ότι οι αδελφοί θα γνώριζαν καλά τη σλαβική γλώσσα λόγω της καταγωγής τους από τη Θεσσαλονίκη. Κατά τον βιογράφο του αγίου, ο αυτοκράτορας απευθυνόμενος στον Κωνσταντίνο φέρεται να του είπε: *«σείς είστε θεσσαλονικείς και οι θεσσαλονικείς όλοι γνωρίζουν καλά τη σλαβική»*<sup>3</sup>.

Το ερώτημα, σε σχέση με το προσόν της σλαβομάθειας των υποψηφίων, προκειμένου να επιλεγούν και να αποσταλούν στη σλαβική χώρα της Κεντρικής Ευρώπης, δημιουργείται από το γεγονός ότι, η φράση του αυτοκράτορα όπως είναι διατυπωμένη

2 Τη μέχρι πρόσφατα συγκεντρωμένη και δημοσιευμένη σχετική βιβλιογραφία βλ. παρά G. A. P'inskij, *Opyt sistematičeskoj kyrillo-mefod'evskoj bibliografii*, Sofija 1934, M. Popruzenko – St. Romanski, *Kirilometodievaska bibliografija za 1934-1940 god.*, Sofija 1942, I. E. Mozaeva, *Bibliografija po kirillo-mefodievskoj promlematike, 1945-1980*, Moskva 1980, Iv. Dujcev, A. Kirmagova, A. Paunova, *Kirilometodievaska bibliografija. 1940-1980*, Sofija 1983 και Sv. Nikolova, *Kirilo-Metodievaska bibliografija 1516-1934*, Sofija 2003.

3 BM, κεφ.5. Μετάφραση Ταχιάου, 198. Παλαιοσλαβική έκδοση από τους Fr. Grivec – Fr. Tomsic, “Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicenses”, *Radovi Staroslavenskog Instituta*, knj. 4], Zagreb 1960, 155: « vy bo jesta Selounjanina, da Selounjane v'si cisto slovjan'sky besëdoujt' ».

στο κείμενο, τον εμφανίζει ωσάν να αγνοεί τη σχετική ικανότητα των αδελφών Κυρίλλου και Μεθοδίου και να την τεκμαίρεται εκ του γεγονότος ότι κατάγονταν από τη Θεσσαλονίκη. Βάζει δε σε σκέψεις τον αναγνώστη αυτή η φράση που αποδίδεται στον Μιχαήλ Γ', διότι πιο μπροστά στο ίδιο κείμενο εξιστορείται πως ο Κωνσταντίνος-Κύριλλος από μικρός κλήθηκε, προφανώς στην πρωτεύουσα, για να σπουδάσει μαζί με τον αυτοκράτορα. Συγκεκριμένα, στο σχετικό εδάφιο που έχει σχέση με την παρουσία και τις σπουδές του Κωνσταντίνου-Κυρίλλου στην Κωνσταντινούπολη, αναφέρονται τα εξής: «*όταν άκουσε ο επιστάτης του αυτοκράτορα που αποκαλείται λογοθέτης, για τη χάρη του, τη σοφία και την επιμέλεια στη μάθηση, έστειλε και τον κάλεσε για να σπουδάσει μαζί με τον αυτοκράτορα*»<sup>4</sup>. Και σε άλλο σημείο, ότι «*διαπιστώνοντας ο λογοθέτης ότι ήταν τέτοιος (όπως τον περιέγραψε ήδη), του έδωσε το δικαίωμα να επισκέπτεται με κύρος την κατοικία του όπως και το παλάτι του βασιλιά*»<sup>5</sup>. Ομοίως, περί του Μεθοδίου αναφέρεται ότι πολύ πιο πριν από την ενεργό συμμετοχή του στα κοινά, όταν «*ο αυτοκράτορας πληροφορήθηκε για την οξύνειά του*», «*του ανέθεσε να διοικήσει μια σλαβική κομητεία,..... σαν να προέβλεπε ότι θα τον έστειλε ως διδάσκαλο στους Σλάβους και πρώτο τους αρχιεπίσκοπο, ώστε να μάθει όλες τις σλαβικές συνήθειες και σιγά σιγά να εξοικειωθεί με αυτές*»<sup>6</sup>.

Ότι όμως ο αυτοκράτορας όχι μόνο γνώριζε, αλλά και ότι δεν είχε στόχο ούτε πειστικό τρόπο να προσποιηθεί ότι αγνοούσε τη σλαβομάθειά τους αποδεικνύεται και από το γεγονός ότι ένα χρόνο πριν, σε αποστολή τους το 861 στη χώρα των Χαζάρων, φαίνεται να τους είχε αναθέσει, όπως εύστοχα παρατηρεί ο καθηγητής Ταχιάος, και «*μία πειραματική προσπάθεια ώστε να εξακριβωθεί η συγγένεια της σλαβικής γλώσσας των σλαβοφώνων Ρώσων της Κριμαίας με εκείνη των Σλάβων της Μικράς Ασίας, στην οποία είχαν αρχίσει οι θεσσαλονικείς αδελφοί να επεξεργάζονται μεταφράσεις ελληνικών κειμένων*»<sup>7</sup>.

Όμως η παρεξήγηση, εφ' όσον το κείμενο αποδίδει επακριβώς τα λόγια του

4 BK, κεφ.3. Πρβλ. Ταχιάου μετάφρ., 50 και υποσημείωση 18, όπου υπογραμμίζεται η διαφορά ηλικίας μεταξύ Κωνσταντίνου-Κυρίλλου και αυτοκράτορα Μιχαήλ Γ', γεγονός το οποίο, όπως είχε παρατηρήσει ο F. Dvornik, "Les Legendes de Cyrille et de Methode vues de Byzance" *Byzantinoslavica, Supplem. I, Praha 1933, σελ.34-35*) ακυρώνει τον ισχυρισμό του Βίου περί κοινών τους σπουδών. Με δεδομένο, βέβαια, ότι ο Βίος του Κυρίλλου γράφτηκε αν όχι από τον Μεθόδιο, σίγουρα υπό το βλέμμα του Μεθοδίου και σαφώς επί τη βάση των πληροφοριών του Μεθοδίου και ότι οι πρώτοι αναγνώστες του υπήρξαν πρόσωπα που γνώριζαν από πρώτο χέρι τα της παρουσίας του Κυρίλλου στην Κωνσταντινούπολη, δεν μπορεί να τεθεί υπό αμφισβήτηση και η στενή γνωριμία και συνεργασία των δύο ανδρών.

5 BK, κεφ.4. Πρβλ. Ταχιάου μετάφρ., 51.

6 BM, κεφ.2. Πρβλ. Ταχιάου μετάφρ. 195.

7 Η Θεσσαλονίκη και ο κόσμος των Σλάβων, Θεσσαλονίκη 2013, σελ.19.



αυτοκράτορα, ενισχύεται ακόμα περισσότερο εάν λάβουμε υπόψη μας ότι, με βάση τη λογική και τα συμπεράσματα της έρευνας, η προσπάθεια απόδοσης από την ελληνική στη σλαβική γλώσσα των ιερών κειμένων της Εκκλησίας εκ μέρους των θεσσαλονικέων αδελφών προηγήθηκε κατά πολύ και υπήρξε κοπιώδης και όχι μυστική δραστηριότητα, αφού έγινε με τη συνεργασία και Σλάβων μαθητών τους. Η κίνηση εκείνη υπήρξε τόσο σοβαρή, που σίγουρα χρειάστηκε και την έγκριση του Πατριάρχη Φωτίου – αν δεν ήταν έργο δικής του επιλογής και πρωτοβουλίας – και κατά συνέπεια δεν θα μπορούσε να αγνοείται από τις Υπηρεσίες του Παλατιού. Όλα τα παραπάνω οδηγούν σαφώς στο συμπέρασμα ότι ο αυτοκράτορας είχε ήδη προσωπική αντίληψη για τις δραστηριότητες και επιδόσεις των δύο αδελφών, ανάμεσα στις οποίες αναμφισβήτητα συγκαταλεγόταν και η σχέση τους με το σλαβικό στοιχείο. Κατά τη στιγμή όμως της επιλογής των κατάλληλων προσώπων για τη συγκεκριμένη αποστολή στο σλαβικό κόσμο, όπως αυτή είναι καταγεγραμμένη στο Βίο του Μεθοδίου, δίνεται η εντύπωση ότι ο αυτοκράτορας δεν έλαβε υπόψη του ούτε την υποδηλούμενη και υποτιθέμενη συμμαθητεία του με τον Κωνσταντίνο-Κύριλλο ούτε κυρίως την αναμφισβήτητη προηγηθείσα γνωριμία και σχέση μαζί του, από την οποία και ασφαλώς θα γνώριζε τις επιδόσεις του στην εκμάθηση ξένων γλωσσών (μεταξύ των οποίων πολύ πιθανώς και της σλαβικής) ούτε την εν τω μεταξύ κτηθείσα εμπειρία του Μεθοδίου από την διοίκηση του σλαβικού στοιχείου στην προαναφερθείσα ‘κομητεία’, αλλά να στηρίζει την επιλογή τους στο γεγονός ότι οι δύο αδελφοί κατάγονταν από τη Θεσσαλονίκη.

Η επίκληση, βέβαια, της Θεσσαλονίκης είναι απολύτως κατανοητή εκ του γεγονότος ότι η πόλη από τα πρώτα κιόλας χρόνια της καθόδου των Αβαροσλάβων στο βαλκανικό χώρο (6<sup>ος</sup>-7<sup>ος</sup> αι.) δέχτηκε απανωτές επιθέσεις και επισκέψεις τους, με αποτέλεσμα αρκετοί κάτοικοί της να εξοικειωθούν με την παρουσία των εν λόγω ξένων και συν τω χρόνω κάποιοι από αυτούς να μπορούν και να συνδιαλέγονται μαζί τους. Συνεπώς, ύστερα και από αυτά που αναφέρθηκαν πιο πάνω, η φράση του απευθυνόμενου προς τον Κύριλλο αυτοκράτορα δεν χωράει αμφιβολία πως αποτελούσε διπλωματική κίνηση, που απέβλεπε στην εμψύχωση των υποψηφίων για το μεγάλο εγχείρημα δια της προβολής του συγκεκριμένου περιβάλλοντος από το οποίο εξυπακούετο ότι θα μπορούσαν να προέρχονται άτομα ικανά στην κατανόηση και χρήση της σλαβικής γλώσσας. Από το άλλο μέρος είναι σαφές ότι η φήμη της πόλης ως γνωστού κέντρου επαφής με το σλαβικό στοιχείο μπορούσε αναντίρρητα να επηρεάσει θετικά τόσο την κρίση του αυτοκράτορα, όσο και τη φιλοδοξία εκείνων που θα αναλάμβαναν το εν λόγω έργο. Η φράση λοιπόν του αυτοκράτορα δεν μπορεί παρά να ερμηνευθεί μόνον ως επιβράβευση της σλαβομάθειας των αδελφών και η

αναφορά του στην εκ Θεσσαλονίκης καταγωγή τους ως αναγνώριση του ρόλου της πόλης στην καλλιέργεια της έφεσής τους προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση<sup>8</sup>.

Η εν λόγω ερμηνεία, η οποία είναι απόλυτα σύμφωνη με τον τύπο και το γράμμα των λεγομένων εκ μέρους του αυτοκράτορα, δεν παύει ταυτόχρονα να αποδίδει και τη λογική της επίδικης φράσης. Προς τούτο- είτε είναι αυτούσια η φράση είτε αποτελεί μεταγενέστερη προσθήκη – αρκεί μια αντικειμενική, αποφορτισμένη από σκοπιμότητες και προκαθορισμένους στόχους προσέγγιση στο περιεχόμενό της, για να γίνουν αντιληπτές οι παρερμηνείες που συμπαρέσυραν στο σκεπτικό τους και όσους καλοπροαίρετα θέλησαν να αποκαταστήσουν το ακριβές της νόημα<sup>9</sup>.

Η επιλογή των κατάλληλων προσώπων για το εν λόγω εγχείρημα ήταν αναμφίβολα ιδιαίτερα σοβαρή και έπρεπε να γίνει με πολλή προσοχή. Ο αυτοκράτορας, μόνος του ή σε συνεργασία με τον Πατριάρχη Φώτιο, είχαν πρακτικά δύο επιλογές: **είτε να αναθέσουν το έργο αυτό σε Σλάβους που γνώριζαν καλά την ελληνική γλώσσα ή σε Βυζαντινούς που γνώριζαν καλά τη σλαβική**. Στην πρώτη περίπτωση, αν κατέληγαν να το αναθέσουν σε Σλάβο ή ομάδα Σλάβων που γνώριζαν καλά την ελληνική γλώσσα, προκειμένου να κατανοούν τα κείμενα και ταυτόχρονα να έχουν την ικανότητα να τα αποδώσουν στη σλαβική γλώσσα χωρίς να παραχαράξουν το νόημα και κατά το δυνατό την θεόπνευστη διατύπωσή τους (για τη γνώση της σλαβικής γλώσσας δεν θα μπορούσε να κάνει λόγο ο βυζαντινός αυτοκράτορας, απευθυνόμενος σε Σλάβους!), η φράση που θα ανταποκρινόταν στο ζητούμενο (υπό την προϋπόθεση, βέβαια, ότι η βυζαντινή εθυμοτυπία θα είχε συμπεριλάβει και τους ξένους κατοίκους της πόλης στον όρο «θεσσαλονικείς»), θα έπρεπε να ήταν: «*σεις είστε θεσσαλονικείς και οι θεσσαλονικείς (εδώ και οι ξένοι κάτοικοι της Θεσσαλονίκης) ομιλούν όλοι καθαρά την ελληνική*». Τούτο δε, όπως εύκολα μπορεί κανείς να αντιληφθεί, διότι το ζητούμενο δεν θα ήταν και δεν θα μπορούσε να είναι, να γνωρίζει καλά ο μεταφραστής τη δική του γλώσσα- στην περίπτωση μας ο Σλάβος να γνωρίζει καλά τα σλαβικά (πράγμα αυτονόητο)-, αλλά να γνωρίζει τη γλώσσα στην οποία έπρεπε να αποδώσει τα ούτως ή άλλως ελληνικά κείμενα, δηλαδή την ελληνική. Στη δεύτερη δε

8 Βλ. Ι. Ταρνανίδη, «*Το σλαβικό αλφάβητο: Οι δημιουργοί του και ο ρόλος του Οικουμενικού Πατριάρχη και του Βυζαντινού αυτοκράτορα*», Σελίδες από την εκκλησιαστική γραμματεία των Σλάβων, Θεσσαλονίκη 2004, 131-163, καθώς και «*Το σλαβικό αλφάβητο: Το «θαύμα» της αποκάλυψης και η ιστορική του διάσταση*», Τιμητικό αφιέρωμα στους Ομότιμους Καθηγητές Πρόδρομο Ακανθόπουλο και Βασίλειο Ψευτογκά [Επιστ. Επετ. Τμήμ. Θεολογίας του ΑΠΘ, τ. 11], Θεσσαλονίκη 2001, 299-314, όπου βασική και λοιπή βιβλιογραφία.

9 Πρβλ. Ταχιόου μετάφρ., 226, υποσ. 12, όπου και η σχετική βιβλιογραφία με τις επισημάνσεις και τα αντίστοιχα σχόλια.

περίπτωση, δηλαδή την επιλογή Βυζαντινών, που θα έπρεπε να γνωρίζουν καλά τη σλαβική στην οποία θα απέδιδαν τα ελληνικά κείμενα, η φράση που φέρεται να τους απηύθυνε ο αυτοκράτορας («σεις είστε θεσσαλονικείς και οι θεσσαλονικείς ομιλούν όλοι καθαρά την σλαβική»), όχι απλώς ταίριαζε στη λογική και τις απαιτήσεις της στιγμής, αλλά ήταν και η πλέον εύστοχη και ακριβής. Το Παλάτι, σύμφωνα με όλες τις ενδείξεις, διέθετε και από τις δύο κατηγορίες καλά εκπαιδευμένους και ικανούς συνεργάτες. Τελικά, όπως φαίνεται καθαρά από την παραπάνω διατύπωση του αυτοκράτορα, επέλεξε να αναθέσει την ευθύνη της αποστολής σε πρόσωπο-πρόσωπα της δεύτερης κατηγορίας, σε Βυζαντινούς, στον Κωνσταντίνο- Κύριλλο και στον αδελφό του Μεθόδιο που, όπως αποδείχτηκε και στη συνέχεια, «γνώριζαν καλά τη σλαβική». Ύστερα και από αυτά τα τόσο σαφή και αυταπόδεικτα, πιστεύουμε πως δεν υπάρχουν άλλα περιθώρια αμφισβήτησης της εθνικότητας των δύο αδελφών<sup>10</sup>.

2. Ένα άλλο σημείο το οποίο χρήζει περαιτέρω σχολιασμού και επεξήγησης, εφ' όσον εξακολουθεί να απασχολεί τους ερμηνευτές και να αφήνει περιθώρια παρερμηνειών, είναι η διστακτικότητα την οποία φέρεται να εκδήλωσε ο Κωνσταντίνος, όταν ο αυτοκράτορας τον κάλεσε να μεταβεί στη σλαβική Μοραβία προκειμένου να διδάξει στον λαό της την 'ορθή χριστιανική πίστη' στη γλώσσα του, δηλαδή τη σλαβική. Κατά τον βιογράφο του, ο άγιος απάντησε στην εντολή του αυτοκράτορα ως εξής: «Και κουνρασμένος είμαι και άρρωστος, αλλά θα πάω εκεί μετά χαράς, αν αυτοί έχουν γραμμата για τη γλώσσα τους»<sup>11</sup> Σε σχετικά πρόσφατη μελέτη διατυπώθηκε η άποψη ότι πίσω από τη φράση αυτή του Κωνσταντίνου στο βάθος υποκρύπτεται η «ρατσιστική αντίληψη των Βυζαντινών έναντι των περιθωριακών γλωσσών»<sup>12</sup>. Πιστεύουμε πως η ανωτέρω άποψη είναι παντελώς αυθαίρετη και αβάσιμη για δύο λόγους: Ο πρώτος λόγος είναι ότι έρχεται σε πλήρη αντίθεση με την όλη ιστορία και συμπεριφορά της Αυτοκρατορίας απέναντι στους κατά καιρούς εμφανιζόμενους και αναδεικνυόμενους μικρότερους και περιθωριακούς λαούς, στη γλώσσα των οποίων τη μετάφραση του Ευαγγελίου είχε ήδη αποδεχτεί και νομομοποιήσει το Οικουμενικό Πατριαχείο. Την πραγματικότητα αυτή επικαλέστηκε και ο Κύριλλος στη Βενετία, όταν οι Λατίνοι κληρικοί θέλησαν να του απαγορέψουν τη χρήση της

10 Αυτά ως συμπλήρωμα στην εμπειριστατωμένη και βιβλιογραφικά πλήρως θεμελιωμένη μελέτη του καθηγητή Ταχιάου Α. Αϊ., «*Η εθνικότης Κυρίλλου και Μεθοδίου κατά τὰς σλαβικὰς ιστορικὰς πηγὰς καὶ μαρτυρίας*», *Κυρίλλω καὶ Μεθοδίω Τόμος ἑόρτιος ἐπὶ τῇ χιλιοστῇ καὶ ἑκατοστῇ ἐτηρίδι, μέρος δεύτερον*, ἔπιμ. Ἰ. Αναστασίου, *Θεσσαλονίκη 1968*, 85-132.

11 BK, 14. Ταχιάου μετάφρ., 80.

12 Βλ. Fr.J. Thomson, «*SS. Cyril and Methodius and a Mythical Western Heresy: Trilinguism. A Contribution to the Study of Patristic and Mediaeval Theories of Sacred Languages*», *Analecta Bollandiana 110(1992)*, 67-122.

σλαβικής γλώσσας στη χριστιανική λατρεία<sup>13</sup>. Κατά δεύτερο όμως λόγο, και διότι η διστακτικότητα εκείνη του Κωνσταντίνου θα μπορούσε κάλλιστα να ερμηνευτεί είτε ως αποτέλεσμα των όποιων πληροφοριών διέθετε για την απαγορευτική στάση των Λατίνων στις μεταφράσεις των ιερών κειμένων έξω από τις τρεις χαρακτηριζόμενες ως ιερές γλώσσες, την εβραϊκή, την ελληνική και τη λατινική<sup>14</sup>, καθώς και ως ανθρωπινή αδυναμία μπροστά στο πρωτόγνωρο και παντελώς καινοφανές έργο το οποίο του επιβαλλόταν να αναλάβει, να επινοήσει δηλαδή νέα γραφή για μια ξένη γλώσσα, να προχωρήσει στην απόδοση και καταγραφή των ιερών κειμένων σ' αυτή και το εξ ίσου παράτολμο, να μεταφέρει με το νέο αυτό ένδυμα το κήρυγμά του σε μια χώρα που διέθετε ήδη διαφορετική τοπική χριστιανική παράδοση αυστηρά ελεγχόμενη από τους Φράγκους και Λατίνους ιερείς!<sup>15</sup> Μη λησμονούμε δε ότι, όταν γράφονταν αυτές οι γραμμές γύρω από την πορεία του Κυρίλλου στο ιεραποστολικό του έργο, ο συντάκτης του κειμένου είχε ήδη ζήσει τις στιγμές της βίαιης λατινικής αντίδρασης κατά της χρήσης της σλαβικής γλώσσας<sup>16</sup>. Και ακόμα, ότι ο βιογράφος γνώριζε τις ταλαιπωρίες της ιεραποστολικής ομάδας που ακολούθησαν εξ αυτού ακριβώς του γεγονότος, αλλά και τη σταθερή και ανυποχώρητη προσήλωση του βιογραφούμενου και των συντρόφων του στη νέα παράδοση (τη σλαβική γλωσσική εκδοχή του χριστιανικού κηρύγματος και της λατρείας), που την υπερασπίζονταν και ως προσωπικό τους επίτευγμα.

3. Ένα άλλο θέμα που όπως περιγράφεται στους Βίους των δύο αγίων προκαλεί ερωτηματικά, είναι η απουσία οποιασδήποτε πρόνοιας εκ μέρους της Κωνσταντινούπολης έναντι της επικείμενης αντίδρασης του λατινικού κλήρου στη χρήση της σλαβικής γλώσσας. Τούτο δε, διότι είναι εντελώς απίθανο να μη γνώριζαν οι βυζαντινές Υπηρεσίες, πολύ δε περισσότερο, να μην πληροφορήθηκαν από τους απεσταλμένους του Ροσιτλάβου ότι μια τόσο μεγάλη αλλαγή στα πλαίσια

13 ΒΚ, 16. Ταχιάου μετάφρ., 84: «Εμείς γνωρίζουμε πολλές φυλές που μπορούν και γράφουν και αποδίδουν δόξα στον Θεό η κάθε μία στη γλώσσα της...οι Αρμένιοι, οι Πέρσες, οι Αβασγοί, οι Ίβηρες, οι Σύγδοι, οι Γότθοι, οι Άβαροι, οι Τούρσοι, οι Χάζαροι, οι Αραβες, οι Αιγύπτιοι, οι Σύριοι και πολλοί άλλοι».

14 ΒΚ, 16. Ταχιάου μετάφρ., 84: «Εμείς γνωρίζουμε μόνο τρεις γλώσσες, στις οποίες πρέπει να δοξάζεται ο Θεός με γράμματα, την εβραϊκή, την ελληνική και τη λατινική».

15 Σχετικά σχόλια και παρατηρήσεις βλ. στη μελέτη Ι. Χ. Ταρνανίδη, «Latin Opposition to the missionary Work of Cyril and Methodius», *The Legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodius to Kiev and Moscow* [Proceedings of the International Congress on the Millennium of the Conversion of Rus' to Christianity. Thessaloniki 26-28 November 1988], Θεσσαλονίκη 1992, 49-62 και στην ελληνική γλώσσα, «Οι λατινικές αντιδράσεις στο ιεραποστολικό έργο των αδελφών Κυρίλλου και Μεθοδίου», *Σελίδες*, 225-260.

16 Σύμφωνα με όλες τις ενδείξεις η συγγραφή του Βίου του Αγίου Κυρίλλου θα πρέπει να ξεκίνησε αμέσως μετά το θάνατό του στη Ρώμη το έτος 869. Βλ. σχετικά Ταχιάου, *Κυρίλλος και Μεθόδιος*, όπ. πιο πάνω, 11-14.

της φραγκοκρατούμενης και λατινόφωνης εκκλησιαστικής ζωής θα προκαλούσε αντιδράσεις. Ιδιαίτερα παράδοξη εμφανίζεται η στάση των Βυζαντινών ιθυνόντων στην κατά τα άλλα άριστα προετοιμασμένη και προγραμματισμένη ιεραποστολική εξόρμησή τους, αν δεχτούμε ότι δεν ερεύνησαν το τοπίο και το κλίμα στο οποίο προόριζαν να εγκαταστήσουν τους εκλεκτούς πολίτες και συνεργάτες τους. Αν δεν συνέβη αυτό που θα περίμενε κανείς, να τους είχαν δηλαδή πληροφορήσει ευθέως οι απεσταλμένοι του μοραβού ηγεμόνα για τις συνθήκες ζωής και θρησκευτικής συμπεριφοράς στη χώρα τους, εφ' όσον οι βυζαντινές υπηρεσίες δεν το είχαν επιτύχει νωρίτερα, γιατί δεν προβληματίστηκαν σχετικά όταν οι Μοραβίοι τους ενημέρωναν ότι τους επισκέφτηκαν ήδη κάποιοι ιεραπόστολοι από διαφορετικές χώρες, των οποίων η διδασκαλία ήταν διαφορετική από τον ένα λαό στον άλλο<sup>17</sup>.

Μελετώντας τα σχετικά κείμενα, αλλά και τις πολιτικές συνθήκες με τους ανταγωνισμούς, τις συγκρούσεις όχι μόνο των κοσμικών αρχόντων της περιοχής, αλλά και τη θέση της Αγίας Έδρας στην προσπάθειά της να κυριαρχήσει επί του συνόλου του χριστιανικού κόσμου, πρωτίστως βέβαια του Δυτικού, η πιο πιθανή εξήγηση, μιας και δεν διαθέτουμε κάποιες άλλες σαφέστερες πληροφορίες, θα ήταν ότι το θέμα αυτό της προστασίας των βυζαντινών ιεραποστόλων καταρχάς στη Μοραβία και κατ' επέκταση και στην ευρύτερη εκείνη περιοχή της κεντρικής Ευρώπης θα πρέπει να περιελήφθη στις βυζαντινο-μοραβικές συμφωνίες της στιγμής, με την υποχρέωση των Μοραβίων και συγκεκριμένα του Ροσισλάβου να καλύψει τις όποιες σχετικές ανάγκες και δυσκολίες των ιεραποστόλων ήθελαν προκύψει.

4. Και ερχόμαστε στο τέταρτο ερώτημα, που αφορά στην απόλυτη σιωπή, τουλάχιστον κατά την πρώτη εκείνη περίοδο του 9<sup>ου</sup> ίσως και 10<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα, εκ μέρους του σλαβικού στοιχείου, απέναντι στην άρνηση του λατινικού κλήρου να αποδεχθεί τη χρήση του σλαβικού αλφαβήτου και της σλαβικής γλώσσας-του δικού τους αλφαβήτου και της δικής τους γλώσσας- στα της λατρείας του Θεού. Τη σιωπή του σλαβικού στοιχείου, το οποίο θα περίμενε κανείς να μπει μπροστά και να υπερασπιστεί το νέο του, μοναδικό και καθοριστικό για την περαιτέρω πνευματική και πολιτιστική του ζωή, απόκτημα.

Στο ερώτημα αυτό, βέβαια, θα μπορούσε να απαντήσει κανείς επικαλούμενος την παντελή απουσία θεολογικής μόρφωσης και απαραίτητου λεξιλογίου μεταξύ του

17 ΒΜ, κεφ. 5. Ταχιάου μετάφρ. 198: «Με το έλεος του Θεού είμαστε υγιείς, ήρθαν δε σε εμάς πολλοί διδάσκαλοι χριστιανοί από τους Λατίνους, τους Έλληνες και τους Γερμανούς, διδάσκοντάς μας διαφορετικά. Εμείς όμως οι Σλάβοι είμαστε άνθρωποι απλοϊκοί και δεν έχουμε ποιον να μας διδάξει την αλήθεια και να μας εξηγήσει τη γνώση. Γι' αυτό, κράτιστε δέσποτα, στείλε μας άνδρα ο οποίος θα μας κατευθύνει σε όλη την αλήθεια».

σλαβικού χριστιανικού πληθυσμού για την αντιμετώπιση μιας τόσο εντυπωσιακής και θεολογικά τόσο καλοστημένης προπαγάνδας. Παραδόξως όμως, παρατηρούμε ότι και οι λίγοι Σλάβοι που στα αμέσως επόμενα χρόνια μπόρεσαν να ξεπεράσουν το φράγμα της απόλυτης υστέρησης σε θεολογικές γνώσεις και σε θεολογικό και λειτουργικό λεξιλόγιο, δεν στράφηκαν ευθέως κατά των πολεμίων της σλαβικής γλώσσας, όπως ήσαν οι Λατίνοι τριγλωσσίτες<sup>18</sup>, αλλά γενόμενοι μέρος της σχετικής προπαγάνδας μπήκαν στον πειρασμό να συγκρίνουν τη γλώσσα τους με την ελληνική, προσπαθώντας να αποδείξουν την ανωτερότητα της σλαβικής, «που υπήρξε δημούρημα αγίου ανδρός»(του Κυρίλλου), έναντι της ελληνικής που ήταν προϊόν «παγανιστικής παράδοσης». Ο λόγος περί του βούλγαρου μοναχού Černorizec Hrabăr<sup>19</sup>, ο οποίος έζησε και έγραψε μεν τον 11<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα, δεν αποκλείεται όμως να μετέφερε στις σκέψεις και στα γραφόμενά του και αντιλήψεις προηγούμενων ετών.

Σε κάπως διαφορετική γραμμή φαίνεται να κινείται και ο σύγχρονός του, Βούλγαρος επίσης, μοναχός Δημήτριος, ο οποίος σε αποτύπωμα των αντιλήψεων και απόψεών του γύρω από το ίδιο θέμα, της Τριγλωσσίας, φαίνεται επίσης, αντί να την αντιστρατεύεται, να πασχίζει να εμφανίσει στο ίδιο τριγλωσσικό σύστημα ενταγμένη και τη δική του βουλγαρική γλώσσα, στη θέση της μη χριστιανικής εβραϊκής<sup>20</sup>.

Και 5. Θέμα επίσης που επιδέχεται περαιτέρω μελέτης και ανάλυσης αποτελεί το ερώτημα, αν η αποστολή των αδελφών Κυρίλλου και Μεθοδίου είχε αποκλειστικά θρησκευτικό και ιεραποστολικό χαρακτήρα χωρίς στοχευμένες παράλληλες πολιτικές επιδιώξεις.

Υπέρ της σύνθετης, κυρίως εκκλησιαστικής, εμμέσως όμως και παράλληλης πολιτικής τους αποστολής, συνηγορούν οι εξής λόγοι:

18 Περί ‘τριγλωσσίων’ και ‘τριγλωσσίας’ βλ. K. Kuev, «Triezična eres» *Kirilo-Metodievaska Enciklopedija* 4, Sofija 2003, 163-169. Ειδικότερα βλ. K. Kuev, «Triezicnata eres i deloto na Kiril I Metodij na fona na srednovekovieto», *Konstantin – Kiril Filosof, Materiali ot naucnite konferencii po slucaj 1150-godisninata ot rozdenieto mu*, Sofija 1981, 85-94 και Thomson, όπ. πιο πάνω.

19 Βλ. A. Dzambeluka-Kossova, E. Dogramadzieva, *Černorizec Hrabăr “o pismeneh”*, Sofija (BAN), 1980, 114-143 και L. Graševa, «Černorizec Hrabăr», *Kirilo-Metodievaska Enciklopedija* 4, Sofija 2003, σελ.497-505.

20 Περί μοναχού Δημητρίου βλ. I.C. Tarnanidis, *The Slavonic Manuscripts discovered in 1975 at St Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai* (Hellenic Association for Slavic Studies 3), Thessaloniki 1988, 91-100, 193. H. Miklas, «Fragen und mögliche Antworten zu den frühesten Zeugnissen des kyrillomethodianischen Schrifttums», *Thessaloniki-Magna Moravia* [Proceedings of the International Conference Thessaloniki 16-19 October 1997], Thessaloniki 1999, 201-215 και H. Miklas, R. Sablatnig, M. Schreiner, I. Tarnanidis, *Psalterium Demetrii Sinaitici, monasterii sanctae Catharinae codex slav. 3/N adiectis foliis medicinalibus* (Glagolitica Sinaitica 1), Wien 2012. Ειδικά περί της θέσης του στο θέμα της τριγλωσσίας, βλ. J. Tarnanidis, «Asociativni idej otosno triezičnija (grčko-latinsko-slavjanski) Abecedar na monah Dimitar (Sin. Slav. 3/N)», *Studia mediaevalia Slavica et Byzantina* 1, Sofija 2011, 245-253 και ελληνική απόδοση «Πρώιμες σλαβικές αντιδράσεις στο Δυτικό δόγμα της Τριγλωσσίας», στον Τιμητικό Τόμο του Ομότ. Καθηγητή Χρ. Βασιλόπουλου, υπό έκδοση.

α. Η απόφαση του αυτοκράτορα και η εντολή του προς τους δύο αδελφούς, όσο και αν δεν ξεκαθαρίζονται με λεπτομέρεια στα διασωθέντα κείμενα, από τα συμφραζόμενα φαίνεται καθαρά ότι ανταποκρίνονταν πιστά στο υποκρυπτόμενο πολιτικό αίτημα του ηγεμόνα Ροστισλάβου, που ήταν ο αγώνας του να απαλλαγεί από τον κίνδυνο που προκαλούσε η συμμαχία του Λουδοβίκου Γερμανικού με τον Βόρη της Βουλγαρίας στην ανεξαρτησία της δικής του χώρας και του δικού του λαού<sup>21</sup>.

β. Είναι γνωστό ότι το θέμα της εξωτερικής ιεραποστολής στο Βυζάντιο αποτελούσε βασικό κομμάτι των ευθυνών και υποχρεώσεων της κυβέρνησης και του αυτοκράτορα, αλλά και μέσον διαπραγμάτευσης και επίλυσης σοβαρών εξωτερικών θεμάτων της χώρας. Ο Κύριλλος είχε ήδη αναλάβει και διεκπεραιώσει επιτυχώς δύο τουλάχιστον παρόμοιες αποστολές (στους Άραβες το 856<sup>22</sup> και στους Χαζάρους περί το 860-861 με τη συνοδεία του Μεθοδίου<sup>23</sup>), που δεν στερούνταν πολιτικών επιδιώξεων. Δεν βλέπουμε και δεν θεωρούμε πιθανό ότι στη συγκεκριμένη περίπτωση συνέτρεχαν κάποιοι ιδιαίτεροι λόγοι ακύρωσης αυτής της αρχής. Και μάλιστα, λόγοι τόσο σοβαροί, που θα υπαγόρευαν στον αυτοκράτορα να θυσιάσει δύο εκλεκτούς και αποτελεσματικούς διπλωμάτες του μόνο και μόνο για εκκλησιαστικούς λόγους. Από το άλλο μέρος, η απουσία αναφοράς στους Βίους τους σε δραστηριότητες σχετικές με θέματα πολιτικής και λοιπών κρατικών υποθέσεων δεν πρέπει να θεωρηθεί ότι αποδεικνύει το αντίθετο, διότι οι εκκλησιαστικοί βίοι είχαν και έχουν άλλους, δικούς τους στόχους.



21 Βλ. εμπεριστατωμένη περιγραφή των πολιτικών συνθηκών που επικρατούσαν στην περιοχή κατά την περίοδο της προεργασίας του ιεραποστολικού έργου των δύο αδελφών στη μελέτη του Ί. Καργιαννοπούλου, «Τὸ ἱστορικὸν πλαίσιον τοῦ ἔργου τῶν Ἀποστόλων τῶν Σλάβων», *Κυρίλλω καὶ Μεθοδίω Τόμος ἑόρτιος ἐπὶ τῇ χιλιοστῇ καὶ ἑκατοστῇ ἐτηρίδι, μέρος δεύτερον*, ἐπιμ. Ἰ. Ἀναστασίου, Θεσσαλονίκη 1966, 141-152.

22 ΒΚ, κεφ.6. Ταχιάου μετάφρ. 55-58. Πρβλ. F. Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs. SS. Constantine-Cyril and Methodius*, Rutgers University Press 1970, 285-306 και J. Ivanov, "Saracinska(arabska) misija na Kiril Filozof", *Izbrani proizvedenija t. I. Literatura, istorija, folklor*, Sofija 1982, σελ. 23-39.

23 ΒΚ, κεφ. 8-12. Ταχιάου μετάφρ., 60-78.

## THE CONSTANTINOPOLITAN PROJECT OF THE CYRILO-METHODIAN MISSION ACCORDING TO THE SLAVONIC LIVES OF THE THESSALONICAN BROTHERS



*Marcello Garzaniti*

### MISSIONARY TRADITION IN BYZANTIUM

In late 1988, I. Ševčenko opened the Ravenna conference on the millennium of the baptism of Rus' with a memorable speech on the Byzantine missions. He suggested that a Japanese person would have no difficulty in recognizing similarities between the Byzantine empire and empire of the Rising Sun, while at the same time immediately understanding that the main difference between the two is the missionary spirit of Christianity<sup>1</sup>. However, if we look at any introduction to Byzantine civilization, it is difficult to find a chapter devoted specifically to Constantinople's missionary work, even when the focus is on Christian tradition. For example, in H. Hunger's classic text<sup>2</sup>, there are no chapters devoted to Byzantine missions, although he speaks broadly of Byzantinische Ausstrahlungen ("Byzantine influence"). He only devoted a few pages to the spread of Eastern Christianity among the Slavs, even if this process witnessed the same degree of expansion in the Middle Ages as that of Western Christianity. The Ch. Hannick's contribution to the Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte, represented a turning point in Byzantine studies<sup>3</sup>. It is worth mentioning in the most recent historiography also the chapters devoted to this topic by J. Shepard in The Oxford History of Byzantium and by S.

1 I. Ševčenko, «Religious Missions Seen from Byzantium», in Harvard Ukrainian Studies. Proceedings of the International Congress Commemorating the Millennium of Christianity in Rus'-Ukraine, XII-XIII, Harvard 1988-1989, 7-8.

2 H. Hunger, *Reich der Neuen Mitte. Der christliche Geist der byzantinischen Kultur*, Graz-Wien-Koln 1965.

3 Ch. Hannick, «Die byzantinischen Missionen», in *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, II, 1, ed by K. Schäferdick, München 1978, 279-359



Ivanov in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire*<sup>4</sup>.

The focus of all Byzantinists, however, as demonstrated by the Hunger essay, is on the relationship between “church and state” and on the role of monasticism. In Byzantine culture, compared to early Christian missionary trends, the contemplative and ascetic tendencies of the monastic world appear to dominate. Based on a tradition that had made a synthesis of Neo-Platonic and Stoic thought with Jewish tradition, after the Christianization of the empire, the Christian mission appeared less important than contemplative life and was finalized primarily to promoting peace within the empire. This hierarchy of values is already attested, for example, in one of the founding texts of Eastern monasticism, the *Life of Anthony*, by Athanasius of Alexandria. Here the hermit is diverted from meditation and prayer only in a second phase for reasons of charity or for the fight against paganism and heresy. Similarly, Photius, as shown in his letter to Pope Nicholas I, regretfully abandoned his life of study and meditation to take up the role of patriarch, with all the hardships and responsibility that this task at the time of Emperor Michael III implied. And we remain dubious about the idea that his letters show just a *topos humilitatis*<sup>5</sup>.

Preaching to barbaric peoples was not a priority of the Byzantine church and could even provoke criticism. In his *Bibliotheca*, however Photius strongly opposed the idea that in preaching to the Gentiles there was the danger of “casting pearls before swine”, just as the esteemed patristic exegete Methodius of Olympus seemed to suggest<sup>6</sup>. According to these considerations, historians are generally skeptical about any real missionary drive in Byzantium<sup>7</sup>.

#### THE PHOTIAN PROJECT

In the second half of the 9th century the Byzantine empire followed carefully the evolving geopolitical situation. In the Middle East, Constantinople was committed to defending the rights

4 J. Shepard, «Spreading the World: Byzantine Missions», in *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, ed. by C. A. Mango, Oxford 2002, 230-247; S. A. Ivanov, «Religious Missions», in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c.500–1492*, ed. J. Shepard, Cambridge 2009, 305-332.

5 How tied Photius was to this life, how he loved his teaching, as demonstrated by the regret expressed in letters to Pope Nicholas I (858-67), who rebuked him for his election to the patriarchate. In particular, he underlined the upheaval to his quiet life brought about by high ecclesiastical office, which he had been forced to accept (Ep.290, *Nicolao Papae*, Aug.-Sept. 861, 49-71, in Photii Patriarchae Costantinopolitani, *Epistulae et Amphilochia. 3. Epistularum pars tertia*, ed. by B. Laourdas, L. G. Westerink, Leipzig 1985, 125-126).

6 See Photius, *Bibliothèque*, ed. by R. Henry, vol. V, Paris 1967, 107-108. Ivanov develops this interesting topic, referring to the testimony of Theophanes Continuatus (S.A. Ivanov, *Vizantijskoe missionerstvo. Možno li sdelat' iz "varvara" christianina?*, Moskva 2003, 144-145).

7 So wrote Shepard: “In fact the evangelistic impulse from Constantinople was more a matter of rhetoric than of sustained missionary endeavors” (J. Shepard, «Orthodoxy and Northern Peoples: Goods, Gods and Guidelines», in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. by L. James, Chichester, West Sussex, 2010, 173).

of Christian communities under the yoke of Islam, both politically and diplomatically and also culturally, in an intense polemic with Islam, while in the west was going slow, but inexorable the muslim conquest of Sicily. On the international chessboard, the Byzantine curia was aware of the important role of the peoples of the steppes, beginning with the Khazars, who not only controlled the Volga basin, but were trying to expand their influence as far as the Black Sea. In Byzantium there was great concern about the Carpathian and Balkan inland, opened to Europe and to the Central Danube area, which marked the old boundaries of the Roman empire. There the Carolingian Empire was proceeding with determination its work of colonization and christianization, particularly along the river Danube. Meanwhile, the Roman papacy had resumed the initiative beyond the Adriatic and especially at the time of Pope Nicholas I (†867), the Holy See planned to take control of Illyricum, converting the barbaric peoples and reorganizing the Catholic church in the territory<sup>8</sup>.

In our reconstruction, after coming to the patriarchal throne in 858, Photius, supported by the imperial curia, drew up a complex missionary plan, in which the conversion of the Slavs to Christianity would counterbalance the Germanic peoples' adherence to Western Christianity. A leading role in this project was to be played by Photius's "close friend" Constantine-Cyril ("fortissimus amicus")<sup>9</sup>. The constitution of the Macedonian theme and the administration of *scлавиниа* prepared this project. Since Constantine-Cyril's brother Methodius had held the office of archon in a *scлавиниа* for a long time, he was inevitably involved in the process of Christianizing the Slavs in the Byzantine Empire. All this is well presented in F. Dvornik's studies on the Thessalonican brothers' Slavic mission<sup>10</sup>. More generally, we can rebuild a picture of the Byzantine missions at the time of the famous patriarch thanks to aforementioned contributions of Hannick and S. Ivanov<sup>11</sup>.

In general, however, research in this field is limited to describing the historical circumstances of the missions and their political, legal and canonical implications, with a special focus on the Slavic mission of Constantine-Cyril and Methodius both due to the more copious materials available, and also due to the evident historical consequences of their mission. In general, the role of Photius is understated. This may be because the focus on his personality remains firmly

8 On the papal policy of the period in Central Europe and the Balkans, see the recent essay by M. Betti (M. Betti, *The Making of Christian Moravia (858-882). Papal Power and Political Reality*, Leiden 2014).

9 So it defines one of the more prominent members of the papal curia and close friend of Cyril in Rome, Anastasius Bibliothecarius (Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Epistolae Anastasii Bibliothecarii epistolae sive praefationes*, edd. E. Perels-G. Laehr, in MGH Epp. VII (*Epistolae Karolini Aevi V*), Hannover 1974, 407).

10 F. Dvornik, *Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome au IXe siècle*, Paris 1926; F. Dvornik, *Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance*, Prague 1933.

11 Hannick, «Die byzantinischen Missionen»; Ivanov, *Vizantijskoe missionerstvo*; Ivanov, «Religious Missions».

linked to the old question of the relationship between Constantinople and Rome and the so-called “Schism of Photius” with the theological diatribes that ensured the eminent intellectual’s place in history.<sup>12</sup> Even in his essay, Ivanov only links Photius to the process of converting the khanate of Bulgaria and of the Rus’ to Christianity. While admitting that the patriarch had reflected on the theoretical foundations of the mission addressed to the Gentiles, he essentially denied the existence of an overall missionary project<sup>13</sup>. Only Dvornik perceives the complexity of the project starting with Photius’s role in the planning of the mission of Cyril and Methodius<sup>14</sup>.

In our opinion, it is important to give due prominence to the patriarch Photius trying to understand the Cyrilo-Methodian mission against the background of the activity of the famous patriarch. Taking into account primarily the privileged testimony of the Lives of Constantine-Cyril and Methodius<sup>15</sup>, we suggest that it was a genuine missionary project, conceived by the patriarch of Constantinople, after his enthronement in 858 with the support of Michael III and Barda. Five years later the latter would send the Thessalonican brothers to Moravia, a mission that had one of its key points in attracting the Slavic world into the orbit of Byzantium. Five years is a reasonable time to carry out preparatory work for such a mission, beginning with the creation of the glagolitic alphabet. These years saw Constantine-Cyril engaged in other missions in the Middle East and among the Khazars, revealing the broad horizons of the Photian project.

This project was to have a universal character, ecumenical in the etymological sense of the word, and was to restore Constantinople, the Second Rome, to its historical role, as evidenced by some of Photius’s homilies<sup>16</sup>.

12 In this field Dvornik played an important role in the last century in rehabilitating the Constantinopolitan patriarch. See F. Dvornik, *The Photian Schism: History and Legend*, Cambridge 1948.

13 The Russian scholar, confirming the absence of specific references in his letters on a mission to the Khazars, Arabs and Slavs, is aligned with positions of L. Simeonova, who denies any planning, but admits only a reaction to the historical circumstances, reflecting about “the missionary enterprises of Patriarch Photios” (Ivanov, *Vizantijskoe misijerstvo*, 143.146, L. Simeonova, *Diplomacy of the Letter and the Cross. Photios, Bulgaria and the Papacy 860s-880s*, Amsterdam 1998, 72).

14 So writes the Czech scholar: “A very likely missionary activity characterizes the first patriarchate of Photius. The conversion of the Slavs settled in the middle of the Byzantine Empire in Thrace and Macedonia was completed, and during his second patriarchate the Serbs also were entirely won over to Christianity. Photius even included Armenia in his plans for Byzantine religious expansion, as can be judged from his letters. The spread of Byzantine religious influence among the Slavs, which started under the first patriarchate of Photius, yielded as is known, permanent results...” F. Dvornik, «The Patriarch Photius in the Light of Recent Research», in *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress*, München 1958, vol.III, 2, München 1958, 53.

15 We refer to the edition of *Vita Costantini* (VC) and *Vita Methodii* (VM) by P.A. Lavrov (P.A. Lavrov, *Materialy po istorii vozniknovenija drevnejšej slavjanskoj pis'mennosti*, Leningrad 1930), but also by F. Grivec, F. Tomšič (F. Grivec, F. Tomšič, «Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicenses. Fontes», *Radovi staroslavenskog Instituta* 4, Zagreb 1960), if necessary by offering my translation.

16 See in this regard B. Schultze’s essay on the worldview testified by his homilies (B. Schultze, «Das Welt-

The first aim was to preserve the security of the Christian communities in the Middle East. Undoubtedly Photius had understood their dramatic situation during a mission there. We cannot establish the exact date of this mission but it may coincide with that of Constantine-Cyril<sup>17</sup>. At the same time, Photius was certainly concerned about the spread of Judaism and the presence of Muslims among the Khazars, who controlled the trade routes to Crimea. His interest in this Eastern area is demonstrated by his relationship with the Armenian church<sup>18</sup>, but also by a letter to bishop Anthony on the conversion of Jews in Crimea<sup>19</sup>. Not surprisingly, the *Italica Legenda*, the most important Latin source on the work of the Thessalonican brothers, reports that the Emperor together with the patriarch sent Constantine-Cyril and Methodius to the Khazars<sup>20</sup>. In Photius's encyclical letter to the Eastern patriarchs (867) he finally also mentions the dreaded Ros. This Scandinavian population at the head of the Eastern Slavs had descended the Dnieper and laid siege to the capital in June 860, as testified by Photius in his homilies. According to the encyclical letter, Photius had sent a mission to their settlements at the mouth of the Dnieper, headed by a bishop, who had been crowned with success<sup>21</sup>.

The patriarch's attention was, however, specially focused on the Bulgarian Khanate which extended along the borders of the Byzantine empire and the regions of Illyricum. Since the time of iconoclasm, jurisdiction over Illyricum had been contended between Rome and Constantinople and both Latin and Byzantine missionaries operated there. In this context, at the same time as the mission of Constantine-Cyril and Methodius in Moravia, the baptism of Bulgarian Khan Boris was prepared. It seems rather difficult to separate the two initiatives, both organized from Constantinople, as often happened. It is not up to us to investigate now the complexities of

bild des Patriarchen Photios nach seinen Homilien», *Kairos* 15, Salzburg 1972, 101-115).

17 According G. Plexidas, Photius would have been in the Middle East between 838 and 855 (Φωτίου Πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, Ο Ηγεμών, μτφρ. Γιάννης Πλεξίδαζ, εκδ. Αρμός, Αθήνα 2007, 17, see also Shepard, «Spreading the World », 235). Dvornik suggests that Photius would have been in the Middle East together with Constantine-Cyril between 855 and 856 (F. Dvornik, «The Embassies of Constantine-Cyril and Photius to the Arabs», in *To Honor Roman Jakobson. Essays on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, The Hague 1967, 569-576).

18 Ep. 284 *Asotio principi principum* (878/879), in *Epistulae et Amphilochia*. 3, 94. For Armenian sources see I. Dorfmann-Lazarev, *Arméniens et Byzantins à l'époque de Photius: deux débats théologiques après le triomphe de l'orthodoxie*, Lovanii 2004, 1-53.

19 Ep. 97 *Antonio archiepiscopo Bospori* (859/m.Sept.867?), in *Epistulae et Amphilochia*. 1. *Epistularum pars prima*, ed. by B. Laourdas, L.G. Westerink, Leipzig 1983, 132. The letter may refer to the Khazars who had converted to Judaism.

20 «Tunc imperator, simul cum patriarcha, consilio habito, pefatum Philosophum advocans, simul cum legatis illorum ac suis honorifice transmisit illuc, optime confidens de prudentia et eloquentia eius» (Grivec, Tomšič 1960, p. 59). Ivanov links the initiative of the missions sent to the Arabs and the Khazars only to the Emperor Michael III avoiding any reference to the patriarch (Ivanov, *Vizantijskoe missionerstvo*, 146-147).

21 On this matter, see V. Peri, «La brama e lo zelo della fede del popolo chiamato "Ros"», *Harvard Ukrainian Studies. Proceedings of the International Congress Commemorating the Millennium of Christianity in Rus'-Ukraine*, XII-XIII Harvard 1988-1989, 124-129.

Danubian and Balkan affairs<sup>22</sup>, but it is worth pointing out the close relations between the two phases of the Photian patriarchate with respect to the Cyrilo-Methodian mission, the conversion of the Bulgarian population and the question of Illyricum.

#### PHASE 1 OF THE PHOTIAN PATRIARCHATE (858-867)

Constantine-Cyril and Methodius's mission began during the first phase of the Photian patriarchate with the invention of the glagolitic alphabet, the first translations and missionary work in Moravia and Pannonia (863). There is no doubt that Photius played a key role in preparing the mission: first in choosing the Thessalonican brothers, who did not belong to the high clergy, as members of the papal mission to Bulgaria. Only Methodius had the role of hegumen, while Constantine-Cyril probably had not even taken clerical status. By avoiding sending an episcopal mission into territory that the Holy See considered as belonging to Roman jurisdiction, Constantinople wanted to keep the door open to dialogue in the hope that the Pope would recognize Photius's rise to the patriarchate. In this sense, we should also interpret the custody of the relics of Pope Clement found in Kherson by the Thessalonican brothers. The relics represented the best evidence of readiness for reconciliation with the Roman See<sup>23</sup>. It could therefore be assumed that, since the beginning, the mission was destined to reach Rome. Therefore it was not at the initiative of the Pope that the Thessalonican brothers arrived in the ancient capital of the empire. It may also be noted that in VC the glagolitic alphabet was not invented simply to convert the Slavs but also to confront the Latin missionaries, who might level an accusation of heresy against a Byzantine mission without written testimony of teaching. And this brings us immediately to the Photian controversy with the Roman See, raised at that time by the deposed Patriarch Ignatius.

The years 864-867 certainly marked a progressive distance between Rome and Constantinople until their reciprocal excommunication, while in the Balkans, the Byzantine plan to convert Khan Boris to Eastern Christianity (between 864 and 866) was accomplished. Towards the end of 867 two events occurred that led to a radical change: the death of Pope Nicholas in Rome and the murder of Michael III in Constantinople. The installation of Pope Adrian II and the ascent

22 For a brief description of the situation from the point of view of Byzantium see Dvornik, «The Patriarch Photius », 28-30.

23 The hypothesis seems fairly plausible to Tachiaos: "The hypothesis which immediately presents itself is that either Cyril himself or his friend and teacher Patriarch Photius believed that the relics ought to be returned sooner or later to their natural home, the Church of Rome. So Cyril could have had in mind an act of brotherly reconciliation with Rome; or equally, the relics could have been destined to serve as a supplementary feature on some future mission" (A.-E. N. Tachiaos, *Cyril and Methodius of Thessalonica. The Acculturation of the Slavs*, New York 2001, 50).

to the throne of Emperor Basil the Macedonian (Emperor 867-886), created the conditions for resuming dialogue with the Holy See, but to the detriment of Photius, who was soon deposed since he was an obstacle to reconciliation with Rome. In order to reconcile with the West for more effective opposition to the Islamic world, the new Emperor restored the previous patriarch, the eunuch Ignatius, to the patriarchal throne.

Having lost the support of the previous Emperor and of their friend patriarch Photius, Constantine-Cyril and Methodius went to Rome, offering the relics of Clement as a sign of reconciliation (868). Just at that moment, the philo-Frankish party of the Roman curia, led by Formoso, who had worked so hard in the Bulgarian Khanate, appeared to be defeated and were opened new perspectives in relations with Byzantium. Following the death of Constantine-Cyril (869), Methodius, who had decided to continue with the mission, was forced to submit himself to the exclusive protection of the Pope.

#### PHASE 2 OF THE PHOTIAN PATRIARCHATE (878-886)

The second phase of Photius's patriarchate was inaugurated with his reconciliation with Rome. It was characterized by a careful policy of penetrating the Balkans as far as the Adriatic coast. At this stage Methodius, Archbishop of Great Moravia (†885), dealt with the organisation of a local church and the translation of religious texts into Slavic, including the first Slavic version of the Bible. His Life testifies to a trip to Constantinople, about which historians express doubts, but which we have no reason to deny. This episode could be explained by Photius's new rise to the patriarchal throne and the resumption of his missionary policy, but at the same time by the difficulties encountered by Methodius in defending the tradition of the Constantinople Creed in Moravia. This rapprochement with Constantinople would also explain the hostility of Rome, where the philo-Frankish party had taken a dominant position with John VIII (†884). In those years Methodius had to defend himself against attacks by the priest Viking, whom Rome had imposed as his suffragan.

Methodius probably made that journey in the year 879, when bishop Gabriel of Ochrid took part in the Synod of Constantinople convened by Photius<sup>24</sup>. Photius's activity from Ochrid to Moravia, in collaboration with Methodius, however, raised the concerns of John VIII towards the bishops of Dalmatia from Nin to Split. In letters written in 879, in fact, John VIII had expressed his fear about the spread of "Greek and Slave» influence<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, Methodius had

24 E. Naxidou, «An Aspect of the medieval History of the Archbishopric of Ochrid: its Connection with Justiniana prima», *Byzantinoslavica* LXIV, Praha 2006, 153-167.

25 In 879, Pope John VIII wrote: "*Porro si aliquid de parte Grecorum vel Sclavorum super vestra ad nos reversione vel consecratione aut de palli perceptione dubitatis, scitote pro certo, quoniam nos secundum*

introduced his disciples to the tradition of Eastern Christianity and they had been trained to translate from Greek. Methodius's funeral was also held in Greek to emphasize the relationship with Constantinople, despite the fact that Methodius recognized that the territory was under Roman jurisdiction.

The penetration of Methodian tradition in the Croatian area may already be the result of the work of the Archbishop of Moravia and not only later by his disciples from Bulgaria. Again we can assume that Photius had moved in accordance with the new Emperor Basil the Macedonian who kept close relations with prince Zdeslav, a precious ally against the Bulgarian Khan, who outside the Byzantine jurisdiction and with the help of Rome, was preparing to set up his own independent patriarchate<sup>26</sup>. Meanwhile, at the initiative of Photius, the Christianization of the Serbian population was developed<sup>27</sup>.

In this first phase, the project encompassed a vast area from Moravia to the shores of the Adriatic Sea as far as Crimea, collided with Rome, looked to the East, from Crimea to the Volga and Armenia. In the second phase, the Photius project seems to focus more on the surrounding areas, trying to contain the Bulgarian Khanate and establishing closer relations with the Danube and Dalmatic area. There is no doubt, however, that in the mission to the Slavs the patriarch's closest collaborators were Constantine-Cyril and Methodius, and that their mission was addressed to all the Slavs, especially in an anti-Frankish perspective.

PATRIARCH PHOTIUS AND THE SLAVIC LIVES OF CONSTANTINE-CYRIL (VC)  
AND METHODIUS (VM)

It might be objected that the Patriarch Photius is hardly mentioned in their Slavic Lives. This fact, however, depends on the time period in which these hagiographical texts were written. Photius is mentioned in the VC, simply as his master in philosophy, elsewhere the anonymous author speaks only of the "patriarch". Even the VM speaks only of the "patriarch", although it is obvious that the narration relates to Photius, initially at the time of Michael III and later at the time of Basil the Macedonian. There is an easy explanation: the VC was written in Moravia when Photius was still alive, but it could only remember him as a teacher and not as the patriarch in the context of the Filioque controversy with the Germanic clergy. The VM, written by

*sanctorum patrum decessorumque nostrorum pontificum statuta vos adiuvaré auctoritate curabimus* "«Registrum Iohannis VIII. papae», ed. by E. Caspar, in MGH, Epp. VII (*Epistolae Karolini Aevi V*), Berolini 1974 (II ed.), 157 (ep. 196).

26 Dvornik even suggests a trip of Methodius to Croatian territories, but his reconstruction of philo-papal Methodius orientation is not convincing (Dvornik, «The Patriarch Photius», 54, fn.187).

27 See Dvornik «Les Slaves», 132ss., 233-258.

his disciples in Bulgaria, could not bring out the figure of Photius, while the First Bulgarian empire was building its own patriarchate in opposition to the Constantinople patriarch. On the contrary, even though temporary, disagreements with Constantinople should be highlighted, as we read in his Life.

It is important to observe that Photius's missionary project was taken up by different Emperors (and even by Patriarch Ignatius, who returned to the office after Photius's first resignation from the patriarchate). The role of the Emperor, considered to be "equal to the Apostles", should not be underestimated but we cannot reduce the whole missionary initiative to imperial policy<sup>28</sup>. In this regard I would like to mention the words of Constantine-Cyril on his death bed: "From this moment I am no longer a servant of the Emperor, nor of anyone else on earth, but only of God almighty. And I have been and I will be for ever. Amen"<sup>29</sup>.

To some extent the memory of the Photian project suffered a *damnatio memoriae* in Byzantium itself because his figure remained tied to the controversy with Rome and to the anti-Ignatian party, and because at the time of the Byzantine conquest of the Balkans and the conversion of Rus' (988), the geopolitical situation had changed profoundly. There is no doubt, however, that the Photian project found a new application in the Rus' at the time of Prince Vladimir.

#### GUIDELINES OF THE PHOTIAN PROJECT

Generally, the study of the Cyrilo-Methodian mission is focused on its cultural implications, especially in the field of language history and translation: the question of the ritual adopted, the role of the Slavic language in the liturgy, the texts translated and the quality of the translation of the Thessalonican brothers's works. The guidelines of the missionary project and the arrangements for its implementation remain entirely overshadowed. In fact, the texts on the Cyril-Methodian issue, starting from their Slavic Lives, are a unique source for studying the theoretical development and practical realization of the Christian mission by the Byzantines, especially beyond the borders of the empire. Therefore we need to read the texts from this point of view in order to analyse the art of mission at the time of Photius, when the patriarchate strongly promoted his ecumenical role<sup>30</sup>.

28 So thinks, for example, V. Peri, quoting the letter of Patriarch Photius to the Eastern patriarchs (V. Peri, «Spalato e la sua chiesa nel tema bizantino di Dalmazia», in *Vita religiosa, morale e sociale ed i concili di Split (Spalato) dei sec. X-XI. Atti del Symposium internazionale di storia ecclesiastica (Split, 26-30 settembre 1978)*, ed. by A.J. Matanić, Padova 1982, 303, fn.88).

29 These words also inspired by ancient funerary inscriptions, according to R. Jakobson represent a composition in verse (R. Jakobson, «Stichotvornye citaty v velikomoravskoj agiografii», *Slavistična revija*, X, Ljubljana 1957, 118).

30 This ecumenical vision is testified evidently by the famous letter of Rastislav in VC, chap. XIV.



On the basis of VC and VM we can establish that the Byzantine mission, according to the patristic tradition, rested on certain main guidelines. First, preaching work was developed, based on the biblical and patristic sources, which placed the historical events presented in the liturgy within a historical providential pattern. It was a teleological philosophy of history, in which the Roman empire played a key role<sup>31</sup>. Second, preaching was closely linked to liturgy. It was therefore important to understand the liturgy, realized through mystagogy: just in the patristic era the celebration of the liturgy was accompanied by a set of explanatory tools, starting from the interpretation of the rites and sacraments<sup>32</sup>. Third, preaching contains a reflection on the new Christian morality, especially on questions where the pagan tradition appeared to contradict Christian practices, such as in the context of family morality.

At an organizational level, the missionaries proceeded to educate the local clergy who could perform the functions of predication and celebration also with missionary tasks. This clergy could have a role in mediating with local authorities, to whom the missionaries always referred when carrying out their work. Finally, they favoured the formation of a local monastic order, which was created almost immediately in the lands where the Christian faith of Eastern tradition had its roots<sup>33</sup>.

In the Slavic context this process became more complex when it was decided to invent a new alphabet and to write in the Slavonic language, starting from the translation of sacred and liturgical texts. Such a decision, with such far-reaching consequences for European history as a whole, presupposed an idea of religion and culture that reflected the Hellenistic and Christian Mediterranean roots: the idea of Christianity as a religion of the book and its appeal to the mind (nous), i.e. to enlighten reason able to exercise philosophy<sup>34</sup>. This perspective could help, for example, to better understand the definition of διδασκαλοὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν, which means in the Life of Clement, Constantine-Cyril and Methodius and their disciples<sup>35</sup>.

31 See on this topic the reconstruction of political Byzantine ideology by A. Carile (A. Carile, «Byzantine Political Ideology and the Rus' in the Tenth–Twelfth Centuries», Harvard Ukrainian Studies. Proceedings of the International Congress Commemorating the Millennium of Christianity in Rus'-Ukraine, XII-XIII, Harvard 1988-1989, 400-413).

32 We must underline that the patristic exegesis is largely oriented to explaining the sacramental rites, and in general to Christian worship. A deep reflection on the relationship between holy scriptures and liturgy in the patristic can be found in J. Danielou, *Bible et liturgie. La théologie biblique des sacrements et des fêtes d'après les Pères de l'Église*, Paris 1951.

33 We have scant information about it. Perhaps the first news in the Slavic field is the initiative of Patriarch Photius who had sent certain Bulgarians to monk Arsenius to be educated (I. Dujčev, *Medioevo bizantino-slavo. I. Saggi di storia politica e culturale*, Roma 1965, 268).

34 These are the key issues in the *Proglas* to the gospels, generally attributed to the same Constantine-Cyril (A. Vaillant, «Une poésie vieux-slave: la *Préface de l'Évangile*», *Revue des Études Slaves* XXXIII, Paris 1956, 7-25).

35 Hannick, «Die byzantinischen Missionen», 297.

We cannot dwell now on each of these points, which I will analyse in a special monography. Here instead, we would like to remember the biblical and patristic cornerstones of the preaching of the Thessalonican brothers, which we can find mainly in the VC and VM. In the past we had already begun to carry out this research, although not in any systematic way. We present here some results<sup>36</sup>.

#### APOLOGY OF MISSION

The teaching of Constantine-Cyril and Methodius was based primarily on holy scriptures. According to the Moravian Liturgical Service, during his stay in Rome Constantine-Cyril defended his mission in Moravia and Pannonia before the Pope and cardinals on the basis of psalms and apostolic letters (“dauidicis et apostolicis autoritatibus”)<sup>37</sup>.

Even before their departure, the Thessalonican brothers had selected certain biblical quotations, crucial to defending their actions, especially regarding the use of Slavonic in the liturgy. Later, in Moravia, these biblical passages served Methodius and his disciples to defend his work as Archbishop consecrated in Rome to build the first Slavic church.

These quotations therefore had an apologetic purpose, but they were also important for oral preaching, of which we unfortunately have no direct evidence. We can rebuild this arsenal on the basis of biblical quotations in the texts dating back to the Cyrilo-Methodian age, especially through analysis of their Slavic Lives.

Firstly we must consider the long passage from the First Letter to the Corinthians, which occupies most of chapter sixteen of VC (1 Cor. 14, 5-33, 37-40), but with a completely different meaning compared to St. Paul’s original letter. The long passage of this Pauline epistle concerns the proper order in the Christian assemblies and especially the so-called “glossolalia”, and apparently has no bearing on the dispute about the use of Slavonic in the liturgy. However, as it often happens in patristic commentaries, Constantine-Cyril extends the meaning of the passage, regarding a general topic of the First Letter to the Corinthians: to the order of Christian assemblies. So St. Paul’s criticism of the disorderly practice of “glossolalia” and its appeal for translating the languages of prayer so as to be understandable to everyone, gains a new meaning. Applied to the new situation according to Constantine-Cyril’s interpretation, the quote is

36 See more widely M. Garzaniti, «Weisheit der Evangelien und Exegese der Heiligen Schrift im Werk von Kyrill und Methodios», in *Methodios und Kyrillos in ihrer europäischen Dimension*, ed. by E. Konstantinou, Frankfurt a.M. 2005, 73-83; M. Garzaniti, «Rol’ i značenie Svjaščennogo Pisanija v “Žitii Mefodija”», in *Svjaščennoe Pisanie kak faktor jazykovogo i literaturnogo razvitija (v areale avraamskich religij)*. Sankt-Peterburg.30 ijunja 2009 g., ed. by E.N. Meščerskaja, Sankt-Peterburg 2011, 149-157.

37 See the *Moravian Liturgical Service* (prima lectio) in A. Teodorov-Balan, *Kiril i Metodi. Svezka vtora. Nabožen pomen i istorični svidetelstva za Kirila i Metodija*, Sofija 1934, 191.

used to justify the translation of sacred texts into Slavonic and the presence of Slavonic in the liturgy.

This quotation follows St. Paul's verse of the Letter to the Philippians, "And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2, 11), closely related to the interpretation of 1 Cor. 14, 39 ("and forbid not to speak with tongues"), which is the key of the previously mentioned passage<sup>38</sup>. This chapter of VC looks like a bible chain, which contains passages of holy scriptures that Constantine-Cyril had collected for his polemics against the "trilingual heresy" and it represents the authoritative basis of their mission.

#### THE UNIVERSAL HORIZON AND THE TELEOLOGICAL CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

The most significant quotes in the Lives include the verse from the First Epistle of Paul to Timothy, "God who will have everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2, 4, VC chap. I, 1; chap. XIV, 16; VM chap. II, 1). With these words, Cyrilo-Methodian teaching wishes to emphasize the universality of salvation, linking it to the Greek idea of "knowledge of truth." The St. Paul quote occupies a key position in Cyrilo-Methodian sources and we meet it in the preface of the VC and in the beginning of the VM. We read the same quotation in the Proglas to the gospel and in the Treaty on the letters of monk Chrabr<sup>39</sup>, witnesses providing a more or less direct echo of the Cyrilo-Methodian mission, and dating to no later than the first generation of disciples of the Thessalonican brothers.

The teleological conception of history plays a fundamental role in VC and VM. We can find a brief meditation on this matter at the beginning of VM. Probably inspired by the Orations on Athanasius of Gregory of Nazianzus (21, 37), the anonymous author of VM conceived the idea of including a long preamble in the VM, perhaps a catechesis of Constantine-Cyril or Methodius, which summarizes the long history of salvation, since the creation of the world through the happenings of Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, until the age of the Apostles and "Martyrs" and the celebration of the ecumenical councils<sup>40</sup>. The work of Methodius is interpreted as the latest outcome of the project of salvation, in a particular historical situation, which saw collaboration between the Eastern Roman Emperor Basil I and the Petrine See at the time

38 It is worth mentioning that this verse is explicitly quoted in the letters of John VIII *Praedicationis Tuae* and *Industriae Tuae*, sent respectively to Methodius and Svatopluk (Teodorov-Balan, *Kiril i Metodi*, 219, 222; Grivec, Tomšič, *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicenses*, 72-73; *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici*, I-V, Brno 1966-1976, III: 193, 207).

39 See text edition in K. Kuev, *Černorizec Chrabr*, Sofija 1967.

40 Vavřínek, relying on Grivec, assumed that this is a catechesis of Constantine-Cyril (V. Vavřínek, «Staroslověnské životy Konstantina a Metoděje a panegyriki Řehoře z Nazianzu», *Listy filologické* 85, Praha 1962, 121).

of Adrian II to spread the Gospel among the Slavic peoples.

#### THE CHARACTER OF MISSIONER

In the second chapter of VM, which immediately follows the long preface, the hagiographer quotes the First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor.9, 22). Referring to the virtue of Methodius, the anonymous author underlines his readiness to become “all things to all, to win all” (VM, chap. II, 3). But in the Bible we read: “all things to all, to save at least some” (1 Cor. 9, 22). Verse 22 is evidently not reproduced literally. The hagiographer seems to look at the whole passage of 1 Cor. 9, 19-23. The key role of this quotation in the Life is confirmed by its presence in the epilogue of the VM, but even here the Pauline passage is not reproduced literally, “was all things to all, to win all” (VM, chap. XVII, 13).

We have been able to demonstrate that verse 1 Cor. 9, 22, revised in the light of 1 Cor. 9, 19-23, it has a key position in the writings of Gregory of Nazianzus and is applied particularly to the figure of the bishop<sup>41</sup>. In the first half of the ninth century, probably on the basis of the funeral Oration on Basil, this quotation was included in the Life of the patriarch of Constantinople, Taras (730-806), who restored the worship of icons and, we must underline, that he was a relative of Patriarch Photius. Maybe, inspired by Patriarch Photius, the quotation, elaborated according to the patristic tradition, could have been included in Cyrilo-Methodian teaching<sup>42</sup>. We have also observed that the aforementioned Pauline quote appears several times in a reworked form in Photius’s letters. We meet it, for example, in the conclusion of his letter to the Archbishop of Thessalonica, Paul<sup>43</sup>.

This Pauline passage, then, is entered in the reflection of the Thessalonican brothers according to the exegesis of the church father, becoming the leitmotif of Methodius’s pastoral work. After his death, presenting the inheritance of the bishop of Great Moravia to posterity, the revised quotation of 1 Cor. 9, 22 was adopted to interpret his teaching in the light of the apostolic model, offered by St. Paul, assuming the function of biblical key of the VM.

41 Garzaniti, «Rol’ i značenie», 152-154. We find traces even in his sermons. The Pauline passage that contains this verse is read in the liturgy of the vigil of the Epiphany, and to this important feast Gregory devotes a sermon in which the preacher expands on the concept of “gain” and “salvation”, exhibited in the Pauline reading (Oration 38). For the Orations of Gregory of Nazianzus we used the edition by C. Moreschini (Gregorio di Nazianzo, *Tutte le orazioni*, ed. by C. Moreschini, Milano 2000).

42 See *Sancti Tarasii Constantinopolitani Vita*, in PG 98, coll. 1385-1424, particularly col.1420.

43 See Ep.283 Paulo Archiepiscopo Thessalonicae, 529-532, in *Epistulae et Amphilochia. 2. Epistularum pars altera*, ed. by B. Laourdas, L.G. Westerink, Leipzig 1984, II, 253.

## MORAL TEACHING

Lastly, we just want to mention the series of biblical quotations concerning Methodius' moral teaching. In his Life (VM, chap.XI) we read that the Archbishop tried unsuccessfully to dissolve the marriage between an adviser to the prince and his godmother, which certain complaisant priests had supported. A. Vaillant linked this passage with the fragment of a sermon in Codex Clozianus, which follows the Homily for Palm Sunday of John Chrysostom, and identified Methodius with the author of this homily<sup>44</sup>. In this sermon, of which we retain only the end, we read an appeal to the prince for the enforcement of God's law, without any preference, and specifically an explanation of the prohibition of marriage between the baptized and their godmothers or their godchildren. This severe speech is followed by a presentation of the doctrine of Christian marriage with the help of a biblical chain (Eph. 5, 3-6, but with remodelling, Mt.19, 3, Mt.5, 32, Mt.19, 6, Mal.2, 15-16).

Even with another order, we find a similar chain in the VC (chap. XV), which accuses the Latin clergy of allowing the celebration of illegitimate marriages. It starts with the quotation from the prophet Malachi, which presents several verses in an elaborated form (Mal. 2, 15-16. 15.14), followed by several gospel passages against adultery and the indissolubility of Christian marriage (Mt 5, 27-28, Mt 5, 32; Mt.19, 6). Interestingly, this chain is introduced by the invitation to rightful sacrifice, with the quotation of Ps. 54, 14, while in the epilogue of the homily we read an adapted quotation from the Book of Samuel, in which obedience is recognized as being better than any gift (1 Sam. 15, 22). We are probably dealing with a chain drawn up by the Thessalonican brothers for pastoral practice already in their mission to Moravia and one that Methodius applies in a particular case, when he opposed the marriage of an adviser to the prince to his godmother. In Photius's letter to Khan Boris, who took the name Michael at his baptism, despite the dominating exposure of Christian dogmas, reflections on moral issues are not entirely absent. Notable among these are the attitude towards women and the issue of marriage, with a clear reference to Mt.5, 28<sup>45</sup>.

Although both brothers aspired to retire into a monastery, to devote themselves to prayer and meditation on the holy scriptures, the imperial court forced Constantine-Cyril and Methodius to engage in a difficult mission among the Slavs. They faced this challenge with the instruments in their possession, according to the Eastern Christian tradition, based on the interpretation of the gospel and the holy scriptures according to patristic thought, which put the liturgy and the

44 See A. Vaillant, «Une homélie de Méthode», *Revue des Études Slaves* XXIII, 1-4, Paris 1947, 34-47.

45 Ep.1, 1043-1067, in *Epistulae et Amphilochia. I*, 34.

celebration of the sacraments at the centre of Christian life. The reference to the holy scriptures, then, was essential, both for apologetic purposes, especially for defending the mission against its detractors, and for the catechetical instruction of neophytes. The brief reflection on the biblical quotations and chains in the Lives of the Thessalonican brothers is the best testimony to the work that was prepared in Constantinople, most likely under the leadership of Patriarch Photius. Other elements might result from more detailed research into biblical exegesis in the work of Photius, but this study requires specific research.

#### CONTINUITY OF THE PHOTIAN LEGACY IN THE SLAVIC AREA

There are additional elements that link Photius to the work of Cyril and Methodius beyond the witnesses of the Lives of the Thessalonican brothers and their biblical quotations, corroborating their testimony. The first is the presence of the Slavic version of a Photian homily in the Codex Suprasliensis, which could date back as far as the time of Constantine-Cyril and Methodius<sup>46</sup>. The subject, linked to the idea of Christian pedagogy, develops a key theme of missionary work.

Further testimony of Photius's influence on their mission is provided by: *Izbornik 1073*. This miscellaneous codex, compiled at the time of prince Sviatoslav Kiev, goes back to a Slavic manuscript related to the age of Tsar Simeon of Bulgaria. Thirty years ago, however, I.V. Levočkin advanced the hypothesis that this collection of patristic writings could be identified with the "Book of the Fathers" translated by Methodius during his episcopal ministry in Moravia (VM chap. XV, 5). His thesis, however, was not followed especially because of the weakness of his arguments<sup>47</sup>. About ten years later, however, fundamental research was published by M.V. Bibikov (1996) devoted to this work in which the eminent Byzantine scholar studying the Greek tradition of the model of *Izbornik 1073* suggests that this miscellany was conceived in Constantinople in the imperial curia in the second half of the ninth century.

Firstly Bibikov refers to the dedication of a Parisian code (Paris.gr.922, f.4), which speaks about "Augusta Eudoxia". This person could be identified with the Empress Eudoxia Ingerina, a figure of the Byzantine court who played an important role in the court at the time of the Emperor Michael III, and later as a wife of the Emperor Basil and mother of future Emperors Leo and Alexander, as well as of the Patriarch Stephen<sup>48</sup>. She was thus the originator of the

46 See text edition in *Suprasl'ski ili Retkov sbornik*, ed. J. Zaimov, M. Capaldo, voll. I-II Sofija 1982.

47 I.V. Levočkin, «"Otečeskie knigi" i *Izbornik Svatoslava 1073g.*», *Sovetskoe Slavjanovedenie* 6, Moskva 1985, 75-80.

48 M. V. Bibikov, *Vizantijskij prototip drevnejšej slavjanskoj knigi. *Izbornik Svatoslava 1073g.**, Moskva 1996, 301-307. See on this figure C. Mango, «Eudocia Ingerina, the Normans, and the Macedonian Dynasty»,

Macedonian dynasty. It is worth recalling not only that she belonged to the noble family of Martinakioi, but in particular her Varangian origin (Ingerina from Ingvar). We must, therefore, presume, some relationship with the Eastern Slavic world, in which the Varangians had settled.

Secondly in the Greek manuscript, the short patriarchal chronicle therein contained ends with a reference to the second rise of Photius to the patriarchal throne<sup>49</sup>. Nevertheless the Russian scholar seems to prefer a later date for the composition of the Greek model of *Izbornik* 1073, namely the era of Emperor Alexander, the son of Basil, and the Patriarch Nicholas Monk, mentioned in other Greek manuscripts of the Greek miscellany at the basis of the *Izbornik*, but still deeply attached either to the same Eudoxia or, as in the case of the Patriarch Nicholas, to Photius<sup>50</sup>.

In any case, it seems clear that this anthology was compiled in a Photian environment, before or after his death. We favor the first hypothesis, however, considering that Photius was famous for his collections of texts and quotes, starting with his famous *Bibliotheca*.

The content of the miscellany should also be taken into account<sup>51</sup>. The *Izbornik* is an anthology of the writings of the church Fathers, extraordinarily useful for training the clergy. Photius or his associates may have completed and dedicated it to the empress Eudoxia Ingerina, planning to use it to train missionaries destined to work with new peoples, from the Rus and the Probulgarians to the Slavs. At the time of Photius's second patriarchate, Methodius may have heard about this work or its prototype during his stay in Constantinople, when he reestablished contact between the Archbishop of Moravia and the curia of Constantinople. There is no doubt that if Methodius had effectively translated the Bible, as the VM (chap.XV, 1-3) tells us, he would also have needed this miscellany, which is essential for proper exegesis, starting from the list of canonical books and the question of the figural interpretation. Methodius could have brought the Greek prototype of *Izbornik* 1073 or a similar anthology from Constantinople and have had it translated for the disciples and clergy that he was training. The definition of "Book of the Fathers" well corresponds to the titration of the same *Izbornik*: "Collection of many Fathers. Interpretation of obscure words in the Gospel and Epistles, and other books, briefly explained for memory and for ready answers".

In general, the research focuses on the nature of this encyclopaedic miscellany, but the constructive principle that revolves around the holy scriptures is not clearly identified, beginning

Zbornik radova Vizantoloskog Instituta, XIV-XV, Beograd 1973, 17-27.

49 *Ibidem*, 317.

50 *Ibidem*, 318.

51 See F. Thomson, «The Symeonian Florilegium – Problems of its Origin, Contents, Textology and Edition, together with an English Translation of the Eulogy of Czar Symeon», *Palæobulgarica* 17/1, Sofija 1993, 37–53.

with the Gospel and the Apostle, which are interpreted according to the patristic exegesis in the pedagogical form of question and answer. The erotapokriseis genre is, in fact, the core of *Izbornik* and most of the questions are related to the biblical exegesis<sup>52</sup>.

This hypothesis, which we will develop in the future, allows us to recognize at the very beginning of Methodius's translation work, his attempt to build up a fundamental library including not only liturgical texts, but also the Bible and the tools for commenting on it, in a miscellany that represents the first exegetical anthology of Slavic literature. This is probably why Methodius's disciples edited a copy to offer to Tsar Simeon, adding a eulogy which testified to the Tsar's protection towards the formation of a church of Methodian origin in Bulgaria. The choice had to fall precisely on this miscellany for its educational purposes, the same purposes as the Greek anthology conceived at the time of Patriarch Photius.

#### CONCLUSION

The missions of Cyril and Methodius were part of a broader missionary project developed in Constantinople in the second half of the ninth century, particularly by Patriarch Photius in an area which includes the space of ecumene from the Middle East to central Europe. This far-reaching missionary effort was based on theological reflection, which is testified by the use of the Bible and patristic exegesis in the Cyrilo-Methodian sources. The complex history of *Izbornik* 1073 can also be placed in this vein. The analysis of VC and VM affords us an open window on the missionary idea in the Byzantine empire, which differs in certain aspects from the missionary concept developed by the Roman Apostolic See.



52 On the trail of Bibikov and with the support of F. Thomson, S. Sieswerda, who prefers to give the Greek model of *Izbornik* the remarkable title of *Soterios*, continued to study the Greek manuscript tradition without being able to identify the constructive principle of the miscellany (D.Tj. Sieswerda, «The Σωτήριος, the original of the *Izbornik* of 1073», *Sacris erudiri* 40, Turnhout 2001, 293-327).





## THE MORAVIAN MISSION – A SUCCESSFUL AND AN UNSUCCESSFUL RESULT OF THE ACTIVITY OF STS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS



*Svetlina Nikolova*

**T**he Moravian Mission of the Slavonic brothers Cyril and Methodius, which crowned their activity, is in fact the only part of their work that has had an enormous impact on the development of written culture in Europe after their deaths. Up to the present day it has been a work of Pan European importance. As witnessed by the sources, Cyril and Methodius lived and worked among the Slavs in Central Europe over a period of only 22 or 23 years. During that time their mission went through different stages of development. In each of these stages this work received different assessment both by the state authorities of the Slavs among whom it was carried out and by the church authorities that had direct or indirect jurisdiction over the lands where the Slavonic enlighteners worked. Obviously, their activity received an ambiguous appraisal also in the sphere of the Byzantine state authorities, which had entrusted that mission to them. These differing assessments of the work of the two brothers and respectively the attitude of Cyril and Methodius to these assessment and the subsequent steps that they took led to a number of successful and unsuccessful results. This article analyses these processes and makes an attempt to present and systematize the causes of that development of the Moravian Mission.

Today, after more than two centuries of research on the activity of the brothers from Thessalonica, we know a lot about the overall development of their activity as well as about their work in the different periods of their life. Of course, no details have reached us about their lives and work – not like the ones we have about prominent church, community and state persons of the Modern times. Information of different scope has been preserved about the different periods of their life. Fortunately, as far as the beginning of their mission to

Great Moravia is concerned, as well as the process of its implementation, completion and its immediate consequences, the scholars have sufficiently well documented data at their disposal. It is important that a significant part of it is located in the only extant sources which contain indisputable documentary evidence - the messages of higher Roman clergymen from the end of 872 until the end of 885 - a period covering more than half of the time during which the Great Moravian mission took place<sup>1</sup>. The evidence included in the earliest Slavonic sources – the Long Life of St. Cyril and St. Methodius - is extremely important both for this period as well as for the beginning, the end and the consequences of the mission<sup>2</sup>. Without this evidence we would not have a complete picture of their lives and work. The evidence is characterized by a high degree of reliability, and so are some works of their students and followers who worked in Bulgaria at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>3</sup>. Unfortunately, we do not know the Byzantine sources from the 9 -10<sup>th</sup> century, which describe this period of the activity of the brothers from Thessalonica. The earliest evidence of it, written in Greek language, belongs to Theophylact of Achrída (the 80s of the 11<sup>th</sup> century - 1107)<sup>4</sup>. However, this unique information about the destiny of the work of Cyril and Methodius during the mission of the Slavic teachers in Great Moravia, about the events immediately after the death of Methodius and the activities of his students in Bulgaria, is based on other, previously unknown, older Slavic sources, apparently associated with the followers of Cyril and Methodius and providing important reliable data to scholars.

Taking into account the early sources that contain information about the activity of Cyril and Methodius, related to their mission in Great Moravia, how could the results of it be assessed?

Firstly I would like to point out the fact that the very beginning of the Great Moravian mission

1 *Magnae Moraviae Fontes Historici. III. Diplomata. Epistolae. Textus historici varii*, . Brno 1969, 161–171, 189–193, 197–208, 210–212, 215–229 (=Opera Universitatis Purkynianae Brunensis. Facultas Philosophica, 134). See also: А. Теодоров-Балан, *Кирил и Методиј*. 2, София 1934, 211–230.

2 Климент Охридски, *Събрани съчинения*. Т.3. *Пространни жития на Кирил и Методиј*..Подготвили за печат Боню Ст. Ангелов и Христо Кодов, София 1973.

3 Й. Иванов, *Български старини из Македония*. Второ, допълнено издание. София 1931(Фотопипно издание. София 1970), 305–311. К. М. Куев, *Черноризец Храбър*, София 1967.

4 Ал. Милев, *Гръцките жития на Климент Охридски*. Увод, текст, превод и обяснителни бележки. София 1966, 76–147; *Гръцки извори за българската история*. Т.9. *Произведения на Теофилакт Охридски, архиепископ български, отнасящи се до българската история*. Част 2. *Житие на св. Климент Охридски, мъченичеството на 15-те тиверуполски мъченици, писма, стихотворение, посветено на Никифор Вриений, част от обяснението към писмото на ап. Павел до римляните*. Подготвени от Илия Г. Илиев, София 1994, 8–41.

is considered a successful result of the previous work of the brothers from Thessalonica in Byzantine Empire both by the Byzantine authorities and by contemporary science.

The medieval hagiographer of Cyril presents in great detail the creation of the Slavonic alphabet before 882 in his *Long Life*, chapter 14th. It can be inferred from this passage that the alphabet was created at God's suggestion as a result of the request of the Moravian Prince Rastislav and after the direct order by Byzantine Emperor to Constantine the Philosopher in the presence of his associates, before his departure to Great Moravia, with the purpose of spreading Christianity in plain language<sup>5</sup>. We can also infer that no Slavonic alphabet had existed before that. However, one can make other inferences from the text of this chapter about the attitude of the Byzantine state power to the activity of Constantine and Methodius until that date. In order to assign this mission to them, the Emperor, without doubt, not only valued highly the great abilities of the two brothers as missionaries, but also knew their literary activities and thought that on this basis they could complete successfully the mission in Great Moravia. In addition, he and his advisers were convinced that they were the most appropriate persons to carry out this mission. The *Vita* presents not only the personal encounter of the Emperor with Constantine, but also his efforts to convince publicly the philosopher to undertake the difficult task of creating a script before his departure. This is how the *Long Life* presents emotionally the actions of the Emperor and his advisers after the task is completed<sup>6</sup>: Възвеселѣ же се цѣрь ѿ прославѣ бѣга съ своѣмѣ съвѣтнѣкѣ. И посла его съ дарѣ мнѣмѣ... At that he wrote a special letter to the Moravian Prince, characterizing his messengers in the following way: И послахъN тѣ того... мУжа чТѣтна ѿ блѣговѣрна, ѿ кнѣжна сѣло фѣлософа. Н съ прѣмѣ дарѣ болшѣ ѿ чѣстнѣ паче вѣсакаго злата ѿ сребра, ѿ каменѣ драгаго ѿ богатѣства преходѣшаго. At the conclusion of the Emperor's letter it is pointed out that if the Moravian king supported the mission of Cyril and Methodius, he would leave for himself a memory equal to the memory about the first Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire. Though it may seem that the letter was full of hagiographic formulas, it is also evidence of appreciation by the Byzantine state authorities of the qualities and previous success of the activity of the brothers from Thessalonica, specifically highlighting their work in the field of spiritual culture. We do not have any information about the attitude of the Byzantine church authorities to assigning the Moravian mission to Constantine and Methodius. However, taking into account their previous missionary activity and the close relationship of their life until that time with the church community, there can hardly be any

5 Климент Охридски, *Събрани съчинения*. Т.3. *Пространни жития на Кирил и Методий*, р. 104.

6 Климент Охридски, *Събрани съчинения*. Т.3. *Пространни жития на Кирил и Методий*, 104-105.

doubt that it started with their approval, which was the result of high appreciation of their work in this regard.

The Modern science should also evaluate the launch of the Great Moravian mission as a successful result of the activity of the two Byzantine clergymen both as missionaries and active characters in the field of written spiritual culture.

Scholars agree that the transfer of the Slavonic alphabet from Byzantine Empire to Great Moravia indeed happened at the request of Prince Rastislav and the order of the Emperor Michael III. At the same time, however, it is clear that it is not possible to perform in such a short time such a complex task as the compilation of an alphabet and the translation of difficult liturgical texts, and it is not possible to create a comprehensive written system only at someone's suggestion, request or order. In addition, neither the extraordinary abilities of the two brothers from Thessalonica, nor even the philology genius of Constantine are sufficient to explain the speed with which the task was performed, and the reasons why they not only agreed but also managed to successfully complete it. The only plausible explanation is that during the few months in 862–863 they only systematized and finalized their many-year work in this direction, based on their long and direct communication with the Bulgarian Slavs in the Byzantine Empire, and that Constantine and Methodius might have used the Slavonic alphabet and Slavonic language in some form and some initial version among Slav residents in the Byzantine Empire. This activity was hardly carried out without the knowledge and consent of the Byzantine authorities, which were interested to some extent in the use of the Slavonic script in order to more easily Christianize and consequently transfer the Slavic tribes, which in the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century enjoyed high autonomy and independence, into loyal subjects of the Byzantine Empire. At the same time, there was a danger that the Slavonic alphabet could become an important factor in maintaining the identity of Byzantine Slavs. As a result, the ruling parties did not provide favourable conditions for its creation and distribution, and it can be considered that the progress in the work of Constantine and Methodius is mainly due to the personal activity of the two brothers. This personal activity is undoubtedly a result of their strong interest in resolving an important cultural issue of the mighty old Byzantine Empire – the integration of large Slavic population, scattered both in its European territories and the Asia Minor territories, and raising it to the level of its Christian culture.

The interest of Constantine and Methodius had its deep roots and accompanied Constantine and Methodius from their early childhood to death. Here we can point out that they may have

come from a Hellenized Slavic family, or at least the mother could be Slavic<sup>7</sup>. Without doubt they communicated with Bulgarian Slavs in Thessalonica and had a perfect knowledge of their speech: one of their closest disciples, Kliment of Achrida, testified in the most authoritative source on the life of St. Methodius – his Long Life, chapter 5 „You are Thessalonians and all Thessalonians speak pure Slavonic language“ (взи во уста селочинина, да селочине всн ѹнсто словѣньскзи вєсѣдоуѹть)<sup>8</sup>. The sources indicate that Methodius was a governor of a Slavic principality for about ten years<sup>9</sup>. Most scholars identify its location in Strymon area, north of Thessalonica, but some researchers believe that it was located in Bithynia area, in Asia Minor. We also learn from them that a Slavic tribe of the Bulgarian group „Strumtsi“ lived in Strymon area since the 7th century<sup>10</sup> and that after 658 and 688-689 two Byzantine Emperors (Constant II, 641–668 and Justinian II, 685–695, 705–711) moved significant Slavic population masses from the European lands of the empire (from Thessalonica and the southern parts of Thrace and Macedonia) to Asia Minor<sup>11</sup>. Because of this empathy for the fate of the Slavs, the two brothers knew perfectly their lives and captured their needs. Adding to this their ability to work to meet those needs in the cultural area, both due to the extremely high education of Constantine and the access of the brothers to those Byzantine social circles who made government decisions, it is clear why they undertook the task to create the Slavonic alphabet. We should not also forget the objective need during that time for Byzantium and the Byzantine church to maintain and expand their influence - political and religious - among the new Slavic nations in Europe.

7 The most important facts and opinions about this problem are summarized with rich bibliography until 2001 in: В. Тълкова-Заимова, Д. Чешмеджиев, „Произход на Кирил и Методий“, *Кирило-Методиевска енциклопедия*. Т. 3, София 2003, 343–349.

8 Климент Охридски, *Събрани съчинения*. Т. 3. *Пространни жития на Кирил и Методий*, р. 188.

9 According to chapter 3th of the Long Life of St. Methodius he spent in the Slavic principality „many years“ (Климент Охридски. *Събрани съчинения*. Т. 3. *Пространни жития на Кирил и Методий*., р. 174, 187, 198, 205); according to the Encomium of Sts. Cyril and Methodius – „a short time“ (Климент Охридски, *Събрани съчинения*. Т. 1. Обработили Б. Ст. Ангелов. К. М. Куев, Хр. Кодов, София 1970, р. 457, 469); according to the Prologue Life of St. Methodius – „ten years“ (Св. Николова, „За възникването на Проложното Методиево житие“, *Литературознание и фолклористика. В чест на 70-годищината на академик Петър Динев*, София 1983, с. 91).

10 See for example В. Златарски, *История на българската държава през средните векове. Т. 1. Първо българско царство. Ч. 1. Епоха на хуно-българското надмощие*, София 1970, р. 315, 436, 506, 509, 512; Д. Ангелов, *Образуване на българската народност*, София 1971, р. 160, 174, 317; *История на България*. Т. 2. Първа българска държава, София 1981, р. 45, 90; А.-Е. Н. Тахиаос, *Святые братья Кирилл и Мефодий, просветители славян*, Сергиев Посад 2005, р. 27; А.-Е. Н. Tachiaos, *Cyril and Methodius. The Thessalonian Enlighteners of the Slavs*, Thessaloniki 2013, р. 19.

11 Вж. напр. Златарски, *История на българската държава през средните векове. Т. 1. Първо българско царство. Ч. 1*. р. 51, 191–192, 219; *История Византии в трех томах*. Т. 1, Москва 1967, р. 362–353; *История на България*.. Т. 2, р. 42, 86, 108, 110, 199, 465–466; Тахиаос, *Святые братья Кирилл и Мефодий*, 54–57, 105; Tachiaos, *Cyril and Methodius*, 42–43.

As I already said, without doubt the invention of the Slavonic alphabet is a process that continued for a long time. However, it is needless to guess exactly when it started because there is no specific data on this, and we could only be left in the field of interpretation of the well-known references and their comparative studies. However, Chernorizets Khrabur provides precise parameters for the time of completing the process of creation of the Slavonic alphabet and we have no right to ignore them. Chernorizets Khrabur mentions in his work that, when he was asked when Constantine created the alphabet, the literate Slav answered: „At the time of Michael, the Greek King, the Bulgarian Prince Boris, the Moravian Prince Rastitsa and Prince Kotsel of Blaten in the year of the creation of the world 6363“<sup>12</sup>. There is hardly any opportunity to question any of the information mentioned here. They are not limited to the statement for the year, which the Bulgarian men of letters actually never recalculated in any way, because until the end of the Bulgarian Middle Ages they show all dates introduced by themselves relative to the creation of the world, not relative to the Birth of Christ. The eminent Old Bulgarian writer mentions the names of several rulers during whose reign the Slavonic alphabet was created, by means of which the first translations were made, and this allows further specification for the chronology. The time of the reign of these kings is well known. As for the first three - Emperor Michael III (842-867), Bulgarian Prince Boris (852-889), Moravian Prince Rastitsa (846-870) – both 855 and 863, the two possible years, associated by the scholars with the creation of the Slavonic alphabet, are included in the years of their rule. This is not the case with Prince Kotsel. He ruled the principality of Blaten after his father Prince Pribina. However, the last accurately dated information about Pribina is from 20 February 860, when Emperor Ludwig called him „our faithful prince“ (fidelis dux noster) in a document confirming a donation made by Pribina, intended for the monastery of Niederaltaich, and preserved in its original until today in the State Archive in Munich<sup>13</sup>. And undoubtedly Kotsel ruled from 860/861, since the first precisely dated document, which mentions his name as a ruler (comes de Sclavis) who donated property to the church „St. Mary“ in Freising, is from March 21, 861. It is also preserved in its original in the same archive.<sup>14</sup> Therefore we can conclude that the time of the final completion of a comprehensive written system reflecting in the most perfect way the features of a south-eastern Bulgarian manner of speaking and the translation of the most important liturgical texts to the newly created literary language, is definitely identified as 863 by Chernorizets Khrabur at a time when people who have seen the two Slavic educators were still alive - no

12 Куев, *Черноризец Храбър*, p. 191.

13 *Magnae Moraviae Fontes Historici. III*, 53-55, 319.

14 *Magnae Moraviae Fontes Historici. III*, p. 61, 319.

doubt this is entirely credible information.

We know from Chapter 14th of the Long Life of St. Cyril that only after the creation of the alphabet Constantine and Methodius were sent to Great Moravia. Thus the completion of the process of the creation of the alphabet, accelerated by order of the Byzantine Emperor, is an obvious successful result of the work of Constantine and Methodius until their departure - a result, which has received the recognition of the state and church authorities in Byzantium. Therefore it can be concluded that the Moravian mission started with a proven success - personal as well as state and church.

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The arrival of the two brothers to Prince Rastislav marked the beginning of the initial spread of the Slavonic alphabet in Europe. During this new stage, their activity, developing already in a completely new environment and under different social conditions, faced completely different challenges. How did they overcome them?

We should immediately say that the need of the Byzantine Slavs to have a writing system of their own, caught by Constantine and Methodius in the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, was also a need of some Slavs outside Byzantium. At that time the new, Slavonic alphabet, was very important for Great Moravia. This need was directly declared in the request of Prince Rastislav. Behind this request, the science sees the aspirations of the young Slavic state, which emerged in the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, to defend by all means its independence from the powerful Eastern Frankish Kingdom and to break away its dependence on the Bavarian church organization, conducting the Christianization of the Moravian Slavs in Latin language since the first decades of the 9<sup>th</sup> century<sup>15</sup>. An important role in this situation was also played by the state of the relations in Europe and the existence of individuals who had the motivation and ability to implement the initial impetus for radical change of the type of development of the verbal culture of the Slavs.

15 The earliest written Slavonic sources dedicated completely to Sts. Cyril and Methodius already contain information about the spread of Christianity in Great Moravia until their arrival in this country: The Long Life of St. Cyril, chapter 14<sup>th</sup> and The Long Life of St. Methodius, chapter 5<sup>th</sup> (Климент Охридски, *Събрани съчинения*. Т.3. *Пространни жития на Кирил и Методий*, p. 80, 104, 136, 154, 175, 199, 206). In recent times see for example: J. Steinhübel, *Nitranske kniežstvo. Počátky stredovekého Slovenska*, Bratislava 2004, 79-81; Б.Н. Флоря, *Сказания о начале славянской письменности*. Санкт-Петербург 2004, 45-47, 241-242, 285; М. Куѐра, *Postavy veľkomoravskej histórie*, Bratislava 2005, 95-101; М. Куѐра, *Slovenské dejiny. I. Od príhodu Slovanov do roku 1526*, Bratislava 2011, 90-98; Tachiaos, *Cyril and Methodius*, 64-66, 68-69; V. Vavřínek, *Cyril a Metoděj mezi Konstantinopolí a Římem*, Praha 2013, 89-110.



In this initial situation, when the Byzantine clergymen began to live in Central and Western Europe, according to chapter 15<sup>th</sup> of the Long Life of Cyril, the mission was received by Prince Rastislav „with honours“ (съ велнкою ѣздитію).<sup>16</sup> Immediately after this message, in the same phrase, there is a statement saying that the prince gathered the students entrusted to Constantine „to teach them“ (и оученикы събравъ, въздасть емоу ѡучити ю). The next sentence states that for a short time Constantine translated the whole ecclesiastical rank and taught the students entrusted to him how to use the texts in the Liturgy of the Hours. According to this Life, however, when the scope of the mission was expanded, the first opposition to their work started, using in the first place the theory of trilinguism, widely practiced in Europe at that time. There is no accurate data when exactly this process began. However, it is clear from the sources that it developed intensively.

It is neither possible nor necessary here to go into details that are known to all. However, it is worth pointing out several circumstances. Firstly, it was extremely important for the Bavarian clergy to keep its leading role in this process. That is why it led a fierce battle against the Slavonic script and the Slavization of the church institutions. It had on its side the interests of the Eastern Frankish Kingdom, which at that point in time was loosing its influence in Central Europe. But when we track the development of the activity of Constantine and Methodius in Great Moravia until the death of Constantine, and the activity of Methodius afterwards, we can immediately notice certain synchronization between this development and the socio-political situation in Great Moravia and Pannonia. From the time the brothers stepped on the Moravian land until the death of Methodius, this situation changed frequently, the Moravian princes Rastislav and Svetopluk had internal struggles for power that affected the course of the Moravian mission. They interacted differently with the East Frankish Kingdom, the Bavarian clergy and the Cyrilo-Methodian mission during the stay of the Byzantine mission in their lands, and depending on whether they managed to preserve to some extent their independence or not, the attitude to the Slavonic alphabet and its supporters changed accordingly. Probably due to these circumstances, the fight against the Slavonic alphabet began shortly after the enthusiastic reception of Constantine and Methodius, back in 864. It was then that Ludwig the German conquered large parts of the territory of Great Moravia and Prince Rastislav was forced to become his vassal as this allowed the German clergy to intensify its activities.<sup>17</sup>

16 Климент Охридски, *Събрани съчинения.Т.3. Пространни жития на Кирил и Методий.*, р. 105.

17 See for example: Г. Сотиров, „Моравска мисия“, *Кирило-Методиевска енциклопедия.Т.2. И–О*, София, 1995, 732–740; Тахиаос, *Святые братья Кирилл и Мефодий*, 140–154; М. Kučera, Král' Svätopluk. (830? – 846 – 894), Martin 2010, 45–67,74–79,112–121. Tachiaos, *Cyril and Methodius*, 103–118; Vavřínek,

That is why, only in a few years' time, Constantine and Methodius were forced to seek support for their work from the church authorities<sup>18</sup>. Internecine struggles between Rastislav and Svetopluk led in 870 to the enthroning of Svetopluk on the Moravian princely throne with the help of the eldest son of Ludwig the German – Carloman, selected by his father to be the prefect of Pannonia since 856, and during 869-870 – appointed to rule Bavaria instead of his father<sup>19</sup>. It is hardly a coincidence that it was then, in 870, when Svetopluk was in the closest relationship with the Eastern Frankish Kingdom, which practically began to rule Great Moravia. Methodius even stood in trial and was dismissed from his job in Pannonia and Great Moravia for three years. He was granted an opportunity to continue his work only after 874, when Svetopluk returned to the Moravian throne and the country was practically freed from its dependence on the Franks. In 879, however, a new cycle of resistance began against the use of the Slavonic alphabet, where, according to the data in the sources, the main role was played by the church circles. It is clear, however, that Methodius did not receive support by the government authorities, nor was there sufficient the support given by Pope John VIII, clearly expressed in his letters to Svetopluk and Methodios from 879, 880 and 881<sup>20</sup> and in Long Life of St. Methodius, chapter 12<sup>th</sup> <sup>21</sup>. There can hardly be any doubt that it was because of that that in the early 80s Methodius, after nearly 20 years of work in Great Moravia and Pannonia, was forced to seek the support of the Byzantine Emperor (at that time – Basil I, 867-886), even more so that Photios was the Patriarch at that time (858–867, 877–886), who according to the sources was in friendly relationship with the Thessalonian brothers before their mission to Great Moravia.

In practice, in the same way, which was different from the attitude of the Slavs to the alphabet specifically created for their needs, we can refer to the Roman Church. With its unstable positions, predetermined by its interests in each given moment, it allowed the immediate participants in the process to solve the problem almost alone from the position of the force.

Cyril a Metodij mezi Konstantinopolí a Øímem, 123–132, 193–203, 214–217, 237–241, 250–251, 268.

18 According to chapter 15<sup>th</sup> of the Long Life of St. Cyril they spent in Great Moravia 40 months (Климент Охридски, *Събрани съчинения.Т.3. Пространни жития на Кирил и Методий*, с. 105, 137, 156–157). According to chapter 5<sup>th</sup> of the Long Life of St. Methodius they have spent in Great Moravia three years (Климент Охридски, *Събрани съчинения.Т.3. Пространни жития на Кирил и Методий*, р. 188, 199, 206.). According to chapter 7<sup>th</sup> of Vita Constantini-Cyrilli cum translatione S. Clementis – four years and a half ( *Magnae Moraviae Fontes Historici. II. Textus Biographici, Hagiographici, Liturgici*, Brno 1967, 128–129 (Opera Universitatis Purkynianae Brunensis. Facultas Philosophica, 118).

19 *Magnae Moraviae Fontes Historici, I. Praha 1966, 77–80, 82, 95–97, 99–108, 164–167, 336, 351–360, 362.* (Opera Universitatis Purkynianae Brunensis. Facultas Philosophica, 104).

20 *Magnae Moraviae Fontes Historici. III*, 189–193, 197–208, 210–212, 215–229.

21 Климент Охридски, *Събрани съчинения Т.3. Пространни жития на Кирил и Методий*, р. 202, 209.

In my opinion this position follows very precisely the attitude of the state authorities in Great Moravia and Pannonia to the work of Cyril and Methodius, although with some nuances<sup>22</sup>.

In this process, which continued from the final formation of the Slavonic alphabet and the beginning of the Great Moravian mission almost until the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, an important role was played by remarkable persons such as the Moravian-Pannonian Princes Rastislav (846–870), Svatopluk (830?–846–894) and Kotsel (861–874), the Frankish bishops Adalvin of Salzburg (859–873), Hermanrih of Passau (866–874), Anon of Freising (854 – 875), King Ludwig the German, Emperor of East Franks ( 843–855–876), the Popes Hadrian II (867–872), John VIII (872– 882) and Stephen V (885–891). It is interesting, however, that there is not any data about the participation of a single prominent Frankish man of letters participating in these battles, which ended in 885.

So, if we consider the data in the early sources , it appears that the time when Constantine and Methodius could work fairly safely in Great Moravia and Pannonia, was only about 12 years: between 863 and 867, between 873 and 879 and between 882 and 885. They were forced to devote the entire remaining time mainly to direct action in defence of the right of the Slavonic alphabet to be used in all areas of church life, travelling outside of Great Moravia and Pannonia. Without doubt, however, during their entire stay in Central Europe, after their departure for Great Moravia, Cyril and Methodius made enormous efforts for the spread of the Slavonic script among the Western Slavs and its institutional recognition by the government and church authorities.

But the situation for the Western Slavs was very complicated. Under the conditions of fully developed written traditions in Western Europe, and seeking to destroy the established status quo, Cyril and Methodius caused inevitable resistance and fluctuations in the attitude towards its introduction. The script introduced from outside caused resistance among the church circles, which were spreading the written culture for decades in another language, not knowing the Slavonic language and believing that it was not necessary for the practicing of the Christian religion. These are the reasons for the fierce fighting of the Frankish clergy against the Slavonic alphabet and the Slavicization of the church institutions in Great Moravia. Thus, the Moravian mission had a recent and unpredictable at the beginning end, which occurred with the death of Methodius in 885.

22 Св. Николова, „Методий“, *Кирило-Методиевска енциклопедия*. Т.2. И–О. София 1995, 639–645, 647–650.

Hard days followed for the supporters of the Archbishop's activity after his death. Pope Stephen V not only disapproved the Moravian Gorazd whom Methodius indicated as his successor, but also appointed Wihing as the Archbishop. He renewed the fight against the Slavonic script immediately after the death of Methodius. Moreover, in his letter to Prince Svetopluk of 885, the Pope condemned the activity of Methodius, differentiated himself from him, prohibited the liturgy in Slavonic language and ordered that all violators of the prohibition, after two warnings, be excommunicated from the church and expelled from the country: „Contumaces autem et inoboedientes contentioni et scandalo insistentes post primam et secundam admonitionem si se minime correxerint, quasi zizaniorum seminatores ab ecclesiae gremio abici sansimus et, ne una ovis morvida totum gregem contaminet, nostro vigore refrenari et a vestris finibus procul excludi praesipimus“<sup>23</sup>. For Wihing and the Frankish clergy the papal message was a convenient camouflage in carrying out their intentions. This is how the months after Methodius' death are described in two of the most important Cyrilo-Methodian sources - the Long Life of St. Clement of Ochrid, written in the 11<sup>th</sup> c. by Archbishop Theophylact of Ochrid on the basis of older Slavic sources, and the First Life of the Cyrilo-Methodian disciple St. Naum, written in the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century by an unknown author, who knew personally Naum and Clement. Theophylact wrote, „Those who had the job of teachers, as was the case with the famous Gorazd.... and the priest Clement – a very learned man, Lavrentiy, Nahum and Angelariy, as well as many other renowned men were put in iron chains, imprisoned and denied any consolation, since neither their relatives nor friends dared in any way to visit them... After these inhumane tortures and not allowing the Saints to take food..., they were submitted to the soldiers who took them separately in different places in the Danube area, and condemned the heavenly citizens to eternal exile from their city. The soldiers, cruel by nature, and increasing their cruelty following an order, took the Saints, brought them out of town and after stripping their clothes, began to drag them naked. And by one act they caused them two evils: dishonour and suffering from the icy mist... Moreover, they touched their swords to their necks, ready to stain them with blood, so that they do not die only once but experience mortal terror as many times as they were threatened with an attack... When they were out of town, they left them and went back to town.“<sup>24</sup>. St. Naum's hagiographer testified, „Let this be known to all, who will read it, as we wrote earlier, that heretics tortured some persons a lot, while they sold others - presbyters and deacons - to Jews for money. And when the Jews took them, they

23 *Magnae Moraviae Fontes Historici. III*, p.225.

24 Милев, *Гръцките жития*, 110–111, 114–117.

brought them to Venice<sup>25</sup>.

Thus, for less than 25 years, the Slavonic script and culture in Great Moravia was liquidated, the impressive and successfully built structure was knocked down to the ground, albeit at the cost of enormous efforts, by the genius creators of the Slavonic alphabet. After everything that happened during those years, it is impossible to assess the Moravian mission as a successful result of the activity of Constantine and Methodius.

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But even though the death of Methodius in 885 marked the end of the work of Cyril and Methodius in Great Moravia, as is well known from the early sources, their life-work did not cease with that. Immediately after describing the expulsion of the students of Cyril and Methodius from Great Moravia, Theophylact of Ochrid continued as follows: „The confessors of Christ ... were longing for Bulgaria; they were thinking about Bulgaria and hoped that Bulgaria would give them rest... Clement, taking with him Nahum and Angelariy, went along the road, leading to the Danube... When they arrived at Boris' place, they were received with respect and in the way that respectable in all aspects men should be received, and were questioned about what happened to them. They told everything from beginning to end, without missing anything. After the Prince heard this, he thanked God that he sent such servants as benefactors of Bulgaria and granted for teachers and promoters of faith not just casual persons but confessors and martyrs<sup>26</sup>. And Naum's hagiographer presented their life in Venice and afterwards as follows: „And when they sold them, with God will a royal person arrived in Venice from Constantinople in royal business. And, learning about them, the royal person bought them back. He brought them to Constantinople and told King Basil about them. And they regained their ranks and titles – presbyters and deacons, which they had earlier, and started working. And no one died in slavery. But some, patronized by kings, received relief in Constantinople, while others who came to the Bulgarian land found peace with great honour<sup>27</sup>.

What caused this initial favourable attitude of the state authorities in Byzantium and Bulgaria to the exiles? In the first place, we should not forget, as far as the Slavonic alphabet

25 Иванов, *Български старини из Македония*, p. 306.

26 Милев, *Гръцките жития*, 110–111, 114–117.

27 Иванов, *Български старини из Македония*, p. 306.

is concerned, that it originated in Byzantium from Byzantine clergy, who were well known in the highest circles of the state. We cannot say anything more specific about the place where its creation was prepared - whether it was Constantinople or the monastery of Olympus Mountain in Bithynia in north-western Asia Minor, south of the modern city of Bursa, where Constantine and Methodius spent in literary work the period between their Saracen and Khazar missions, probably between 855-856 and 860, or whether they used other job opportunities in this regard. The fact that the Slavonic alphabet was created in regions with significant Slavic population on the basis of perfect knowledge of their language and in accordance with its characteristics is, of course, a favourable factor for the positive attitude among the Slavs towards it. Perhaps this fact was also important for the Byzantine state and church authorities, under whose jurisdiction lived large Slavic masses at that time.

As far as Bulgaria is concerned, we can briefly say the following. The new, Slavonic phonological alphabet, reflected in the literary language, created by Cyril and Methodius in Byzantium and based on a dialect of South-Eastern type, spoken also in the territory of Bulgaria, perfectly have met the public, religious and state needs in Bulgaria in the time after the adoption of Christianity – a religion, which is much more complex and comprehensive than paganism, and which is impossible to learn only orally. Thus the Slavonic alphabet originated in a favourable time for the Bulgarian Slavs and was desired and supported.

The early sources do not contain any information about any activity in the territory of Byzantium by the students of Cyril and Methodius who arrived in Constantinople. To my knowledge, to this date absolutely no signs have been preserved of the use of the Slavonic alphabet in Byzantium before it was transferred to Bulgaria by the students of Cyril and Methodius, neither from the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> nor the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century., after the arrival of the students of Cyril and Methodius in Constantinople.

These sources, however, provide much information about the work of some of them in the Bulgarian state<sup>28</sup>. This is confirmed by all data about the development of the written culture in Bulgaria after 885, which is available to scholars today. It turns out that in fact the future destiny of the Slavonic alphabet at that time depended on the attitude of the Bulgarian state. This is how this attitude was assessed by Roger Bernard (1908-1997), one of the most

28 Detailed information and bibliography on this question until 2003 can be found in: *Кирило-Методиевска енциклопедия*. Т. 1. А–З, София 1985, 740 p.; Т.2, София 1995, 911 p.; Т. 3. П–С, София 2003, 794 p.; Т.4. Т–Я. Допълнение. София 2003, 750 p.

renowned French Slavists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his speech delivered at a ceremony in Paris in 1963 to an international audience of several hundred people, and published in an unknown for the author way on 22 May 1964 in the Brazilian newspaper „Diariu de Sao Paulo“, he said: „A young country, which attracted the attention of the medieval world with its military victories, acted in a noble and wise way by giving shelter to the chased away disciples of Cyril and Methodius, most of whom were its children. This country stored and incited the flame that the two brothers had lit in order to pass it later to other Slavic peoples and future generations. This country was Bulgaria. Because of its noble behavior and the importance of the legacy it saved, Bulgaria gained the undying gratitude of the other Slavic peoples and the respect of the civilized world“<sup>29</sup>.

Indeed, a crucial role in the preservation of the work of Cyril and Methodius, immediately after its defeat in Great Moravia, was played by Prince Boris-Mihail (852-889) and his son King Simeon (893-927). They changed the cultural model relatively easily after 885, excluding the attempts by Prince Vladimir-Rasate to preserve the status quo by returning to paganism in 889 – 893. Boris and Simeon patronized in a skilful and far-sighted way the disciples of Cyril and Methodius and the Slavonic alphabet, created the most favourable conditions for the spread and development of the Slavonic literature and culture in all of Bulgaria. Probably in 893, at the council in Preslav they approved the Old Bulgarian language as the official language of the church and state. Always protected by the state, the disciples of Cyril and Methodius took active part in the church and cultural life of Bulgaria. Working for the rest of his life in the Bulgarian lands, they performed perfectly the great ideals of their teachers. They dealt with teaching, educational and religious activities both in Eastern Bulgaria, and in the South-western Bulgarian lands. They taught many students and developed a large preaching activity – the sources suggest that Clement of Ochrid alone trained about 3500 students. The disciples of Cyril and Methodius were organizers of church life: in 893 Clement became the first Slavic bishop in the Bulgarian lands, Methodius' disciple Constantine was appointed as bishop in Preslav in 906. The disciples of the two brothers from Thessalonica were also talented writers and organizers of the cultural life in the country. They created substantial oeuvre in volume, content and original translated form and works in Old Bulgarian language. Furthermore, they were able to unite around their creative principles the talented and well-known today men of letters of their time. Thanks to them, the Cyrilo-Methodian work was well known and used as a source of inspiration by John the Exarch of Bulgaria, Chernorizets

29 Р. Бернар, „Великани на духа“, *Българистика и българисти. Статии и изследвания. Българистиката в чужбина. Портрети на българисти*, София 1981, р. 28.

Khrabur, the author of the First Life of St. Naum, who also wrote an unknown to date life of St. Clement, etc. The disciples of the two brothers contributed greatly to the formation of the first major centres where the Bulgarian written culture and spirituality developed: Pliska, Preslav and Ochrid. The activity of these centres, functioning under the sign of the Cyrilo-Methodian church and written traditions, formed at the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, marked a new stage in the development of the Bulgarian culture, a stage of expansion and progress, designated in the science with the name “Golden Age”. It was during this period that the new Cyrillic alphabet was formed in Bulgaria, which facilitated further the adoption of the Christian values in written form among the large circles of the Bulgarian people. It followed all the basic principles of the Glagolitic alphabet, established by the two brothers from Thessalonica and even had specific borrowings of letters from it. Thus the Bulgarian people were the first among the Slavic peoples to create rich writings in the native language, bookmen centres, literature and culture that was commensurate with the performance of the most advanced European countries at that time.

The Cyrilo-Methodian oeuvre continued to be an integral part of the Bulgarian culture after the death of the direct disciples and followers of the two brothers during the Middle Ages. The Cyrilo-Methodian translations were widely spread in Bulgaria, starting with the earliest preserved till today Bulgarian manuscripts of liturgical books from the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century. And these manuscripts are the oldest representatives of the translations of the two brothers made in the Old Bulgarian literary language, formed by them. The Bulgarian medieval writers copied also the original writings of the first teachers, they were excited about their life and work and made them the subject of a number of works devoted to them.

Getting a chance to develop in a commonly understood language, thanks to the support of the Bulgarian state, the Slavonic written culture was able to establish its niche in the European cultural space. The wise policy of the Bulgarian Prince Boris and Simeon stabilized the position of the Slavonic letters in Bulgaria. Existing successfully for over a century, from the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, it spread from Bulgaria to all Southern and Eastern Slavs, and the Old Bulgarian literary language formed the basis of their old literary languages. So we give the credit to the Bulgarians and Bulgaria for the historical merit for the survival of the Slavonic writing – the only one in medieval Europe, which developed in a language, contemporary to its appearance. That is so the Bulgarian Cyrillic alphabet, formed at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, spread from Bulgaria worldwide and more than 300 million people use it today. In essence, the failure of the mission in Great Moravia turned out to be a possibility for its successful continuation in Bulgaria. It was thanks to this new beginning that the final words spoken



at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century by the remarkable Old Bulgarian man of letters Chernorizets Khrabur are valid today: „If you ask a Greek scholar, „Who created your alphabet and translated your books, or when“, only few of them would know the answer. However, if you ask literate Slavs, „Who created your alphabet and translated your books, they would all know and would answer „St. Constantine the Philosopher, called Cyril; he and his brother Methodius created our alphabet and translated the Books“<sup>30</sup>.

Taking into account the development of the Slavonic written culture and Slavonic alphabet in Bulgaria immediately after the death of Methodius and the failure of the mission of the brothers from Thessalonica in Great Moravia, we cannot but evaluate this third posthumous stage in the history of their life-work as a successful result of their activity. This successful result is also undoubtedly due to the tremendous efforts of the Slavic Apostles to spread the Slavonic alphabet in Great Moravia. It was during their mission in Great Moravia, despite all the obstacles, that they were able to expand the scope of their activity in the field of written culture, to form a huge corpus of texts necessary to the Slavic Christians, to demonstrate the ability to use it at all levels of life and to involve the Slavs in the public and religious development of all levels of the state and church hierarchy.

That is why, all in all, despite the unsuccessful outcome of the work in Great Moravia, the Moravian mission cannot be considered an unsuccessful result of the activities of the brothers from Thessalonica. It is an important and integral result of the implementation of the three major stages in the development of the activity of Cyril and Methodius - the preparatory work in Byzantium, the development of the Moravian mission itself and the posthumous development of the life-work of Cyril and Methodius. It is this successful overall result of the work of Constantine and Methodius, including their mission to Great Moravia, which has ensured its great importance for the development of the written culture in Europe from the 9<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, as well as the influence of the perception of this work in different spheres of the social, church and state life of many European countries.

Creating a perfectly functioning system of writing, Constantine-Cyril and Methodius laid the foundations of a new written civilization in Europe, which changed significantly the picture of the overall development of the European spiritual culture. For the first time in medieval Europe, they created a new, comprehensive and complete writing system, reflecting in the most perfect way the peculiarities of a living national language. For the first time they

30 See: Кувев, Черноризец Храбър, 190-191.

translated into vernacular language all major liturgical texts and introduced the new literary language created by them in the liturgy. For the first time they purposefully and systematically distributed a new script and education in the vernacular.

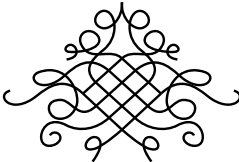
That is why the life-work of Cyril and Methodius is a phenomenon of great importance to the cultural and social history of Europe from its appearance in the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. Thanks to it, the configuration of the written culture in Europe changed completely as early as the 9<sup>th</sup> century. By creating and putting into official use an entirely new script and making great efforts to establish it as a third official writing system in contrast to the Latin and Greek script used in Europe at that time, Constantine and Methodius went against the strict hierarchy, which was the norm in all aspects of the medieval public life. In fact, their work is an attempt to get centuries ahead of their time because they adhered to the principles that were gradually adopted on our continent, starting from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment right up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Foremost among these principles is their firm belief that every nation has the right to freely develop its own culture in its own modern language. This belief of theirs is not just a theoretical postulate. Based on it, they created and used a new literary language for Europe, using a Slavic dialect - the manner of speaking of Bulgarian Slavs from Thessalonica, enriched and then used for 22 years in Great Moravia and Pannonia during the distribution of the first translations of the Holy Scripture made by them in Byzantium, and later used in various modifications among all Orthodox Slavs and even among some non-Slavic peoples.

Thus, an important principle of the European Union where we live today - the principle of democracy - is embedded in the foundations of their activity. And maybe it is exactly this principle that has ensured its vitality for more than a millennium and has made it sympathetic to the historical development of many European nations and an integral part of the national identity of some of them.

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In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the overall successful outcome of the Great Moravian mission is both a personal merit of the two brothers and a merit of Byzantium, Great Moravia and Bulgaria. In my opinion we should not forget that it was achieved through the cooperation of these three European countries immediately after the termination of the activity of the mission in Great Moravia. This is a lesson that could be very useful to learn in our world of today.



## “WITH THE EMPEROR’S HELP”: AN OPEN-HANDED MISSION AND BYZANTINE DIPLOMACY



*Sergey A. Ivanov*  
(Higher School of Economics, Moscow)

According to the Vita of Constantine, the Saint was invited for a trip to Khazaria to engage in religious discussions with Muslims and Jews, but he prepared for it as for an evangelical trip. He told the Emperor: “If you so order, sovereign, I will go joyfully to the task, and go barefoot and on foot without taking anything, God did not order the disciples to carry (with them).’ The ruler answered: ‘If you would like to do that for yourself, you have spoken well, but knowing imperial power and dignity, proceed properly with the Emperor’s help.’”<sup>1</sup> This disagreement is a good presentation of two views of the mission: Constantine’s reply refers to Christ’s order to the Apostles: “Do not take with you... a bag for the journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor staffs” (Matth. 10: 9-10). But the Emperor objects that a missionary of Byzantium is simultaneously its ambassador, and that the precept of evangelical simplicity therefore does not apply. Mission had merged with diplomacy in a visible sense. At the crossroads of the Empire’s religious and diplomatic functions, a practice was born that would subsequently become an extremely important part of Byzantine governmental missionary activity: the tradition of inviting a foreign ruler to Constantinople and baptizing him there, which simultaneously drew the barbarian into the Empire’s political orbit<sup>2</sup>.

The desire to amaze the barbarians with the luxury of the festive service in the Hagia Sophia is the most “missionary” of the details on how foreign embassies were received in

1 Б. Н. Флоря, Сказания о начале славянской письменности. Санкт-Петербург 2000, 77.

2 A. Angenendt, Kaiserherrschaft und Königstaufe, Berlin, New York 1984.

Constantinople<sup>3</sup>. There is no doubt that barbarian ambassadors and pagan rulers were brought into the church in order to dazzle their imaginations and incline them toward baptism. Of particular note is the place in Constantine Porphyrogenitus' work "De Administrando Imperio" where the royal author gives advice to his son on how one should reject various kinds of requests by barbarian ambassadors.

"Should they ever require and demand, whether they be [K]hazars, or Turks (i.e. Hungarians. – S.I.), or again Russes, or any other nation of the northerners and Scythians, as frequently happens, that some of the imperial vesture... should be sent to them...then thus you shall excuse yourself: '[W]hen God made Emperor the former Constantine the Great...He sent him these robes of state by the hand of His angel...and charged him to lay them in the great and holy church of...St. Sophia; and not to clothe himself in them every day... [T]hey hang above the Holy Table in the sanctuary of this same church. And the rest of the imperial vestments and cloaks lie spread out upon this Holy Table... Moreover, there is a curse of the holy and great Emperor Constantine engraved upon this Holy Table of the church of God, according as he was charged by God through the angel...'"<sup>4</sup>

Constantine also goes on to advise referring to the testament of Constantine the Great in the event of other barbarian demands, whether for Greek fire or marriage with a Byzantine princess, but we are interested in the above-quoted proposed deception, which was in a way the most audacious of them. In the event a barbarian dreams of receiving Imperial vestments and diadems as a gift, Constantine sacrilegiously proposes to proclaim these ordinary items from the palace wardrobe to be holy and belonging to the Hagia Sophia. The subterfuge invented by the Emperor supposes that the barbarians inquiring about such gifts had been in the Great Church and had seen the aërs and altar cloths that Constantine is evidently proposing be referenced. Let us now examine the fact that the Emperor advises directing all the above mentioned speeches to the ambassadors of non-Christian peoples (the Khazars, the majority of Hungarians, and the Rhos were all unbaptised when the work was composed). The Basileus knows for sure that they have been to the Hagia Sophia. Why? Evidently because they had been brought there with missionary goals.

Yet, we are interested not in cases when a mission was an auxiliary means for politics, but

3 Cf.: *Повесть Временных Лет*, изд. Д.С.Лихачев, Санкт-Петербург 1996, 20.

4 Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Moravcsik Gy., trans. Jenkins R. J. H., Washington, D. C. 1967, 69.

the opposite situations when a missionary himself had to address issues of politics.

What did Greek preachers say about politics? We have no data, and therefore must turn to the related Caucasian tradition. In the fourth century the Armenian Grigoris, the grandson of Gregory the Illuminator, set off for the land of the Maskut (Sabir Huns) somewhere in today's Daghestan, and appeared before Samasan, the ruler of the Maskut. His preaching progressed in a highly successful fashion until he began instructing the barbarians in peacefulness and non-resistance. Here is what they answered him, according to the historian Pawstos Buzand:

“If we don't steal, rob, and take from others, how can we feed ourselves? And no matter how he tried to engage them favorably, they did not wish to hear him, but said:... ‘How can we live if we cannot mount horses according to our native custom? The Armenian king has instigated this and sent him to us with this teaching in order to stop our raids on his country.’”<sup>5</sup>

The hapless missionary was tied to the tail of a wild horse, which was let loose across a field. The barbarians were right in their own way; even if a Christian missionary was not an official ambassador, he could not be completely indifferent to the interests of his own country. It was the Irish monks, the “people from nowhere,” without political loyalties, and with no connection to Roman Imperial tradition and Mediterranean linguistic and cultural snobbery, who had the best chances of converting the barbarians that had settled the forested expanses to the North of the Alps. On foot (rarely, on donkeys), and in small groups, exposed to various types of dangers, they made their way to the most outlying regions of Europe. Thus the concept of mission as an activity independent of the state was born and developed by the Irish,<sup>6</sup> and taken up by monks of continental France. But a missionary who was an envoy of his own king looked absolutely different. His preaching was going to be advantageous for the Christianizers. And then what advantages could the Christianized attain? Preachers were obliged to find an answer to this question if they did not wish to share the sad fate of Grigoris.

The half-legendary tale of Sharaf az-Zaman Tahir al-Marwazi, the Persian writer of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, indicates, that in due time the very same doubts regarding Christianity arose in Rus' as had several centuries earlier among the Caspian Sea Huns: when the Russes accepted Christianity, “the faith blunted their swords, and the door of their livelihood became closed to them... Then they desired Islam, so that it would be lawful for them to conduct raids... and

5 P'awstos Buzand, *The Epic Histories Attributed to P'awstos Buzand*, trans. Garsoian N., Cambridge, Mass. 1989, 72-73; cf. *История агван Мойсея Каганкатвази, писателя X века*. Перевод К. Патканяна, Санкт-Петербург 1861, 28-29.

6 See G.F.Maclear, *Apostles of Medieval Europe*, Freeport. 1972.

thus recover by a return to that which they had done before.”<sup>7</sup> An answer to these barbarian doubts was apparently found both in Caucasus and in Byzantium.

When the very same nomadic Hun tribes of the Caspian Sea area began to devastate the Christian Caucasian Albanian kingdom again in the seventh century, Prince Varaz-Trdat “conferred with the princes and with the Catholicos Eliazar...(and he said) ‘The Hunnish forces are invading our country...Choose a bishop from our country, that he should depart... and dispose them toward peace and indissoluble love’.”<sup>8</sup> As we see, the Prince’s goals might have confirmed the barbarians’ worst fears. In 682 Bishop Israyel was sent as a missionary. Moses Kalankatuaci’s account of his mission is too vast (alas, the Greek tradition has not preserved for us a single source regarding missions that even approaches Moses in its informativeness), to be quoted in even some detail. We note most importantly what distinguishes the “Apostleship” of Israyel from the “Apostleship” of Grigoris. After listening to the missionary’s instruction, the ruling Prince of the “Huns,” Alp’ Ilit’uer, said to his confidants:

“The Lord has sent us a leader of life in the person of this bishop, who...has given us to know the all-creating God and his wondrous might, in which all my thoughts have believed...Let us take as an example all the countries that have accepted this faith, and the great Roman Empire. They say there was once a certain Emperor Constantine who built Constantinople. They say he was the first Christian of this Empire and was a believing man to such an extent that an angel of God served him. And with a great victory of this faith he crushed all his enemies. If one can be rendered so glorious and victorious by means of the Christian faith, for what reason should we tarry to believe in the living God? Here is the teacher of God’s commandments, Bishop Israyel. Let us ask him to remain in our country and enlighten us.”<sup>9</sup>

From a religion of non-violence, as it was presented in the preaching of Grigoris, Christianity had been transformed into a recipe for military success, which immediately attracted the barbarians.

The mention of the Empire’s power and of Constantine the Great, whom one should imitate, is highly intriguing. This theme was clearly present in the sermons of Byzantine missionaries as well. It is no coincidence that Patriarch Photius called the Bulgarian Prince Boris a “New Constantine,” as the Emperor Michael did the Moravian Prince Rostislav and Ilarion did

7 W. Watson, “Arabic Perception of Russia’s Christian Conversion”, *The Millennium: Christianity and Russia (AD 988-1988)*, Chestwood 1990, 35.

8 История агван, 190.

9 История агван, 207 .

Vladimir of Kiev. Alexander Avenarius believed that such usage had the goal of belittling the barbarian ruler; after all, the Basileus was compared to God himself, while the newly Christianized barbarian was compared “only” to an earthly ruler.<sup>10</sup> One cannot agree with this interpretation. For the Kievan Metropolitan Ilarion was himself Russian, and if it seemed to him that the comparison of the baptizer Constantine lacked sufficient solemnity, he could easily have rejected it and the Greeks would have been none the wiser. The fact that the barbarian rulers themselves liked to call themselves “New Constantines”<sup>11</sup> indicates the honorific nature of this title. We have practically no data regarding the impression that the Greek missionaries made on the barbarians themselves, but one can surmise that the Albanian Bishop Israyel utilized a standard set of clichés in his interactions with the “Huns.” Moses did not invent this image of Constantine. Armenian historian Agathangel tells: “Having conquered all his enemies, Constantine established himself to such an extent that during all his lifespan an angel appeared before him and served him all day, and every morning this angel took a crown marked with Christ’s sign and put it on Constantine’s head. Thus, Constantine, whom all kings beloved, had an angel from heaven serving him»<sup>12</sup>. This reference to an angel who served the Emperor Constantine the Great bears a great resemblance to the speeches that Constantine Porphyrogenitus recommends making to barbarian ambassadors. Thus, official Christianity advertised itself not only as a religion that performed miracles, conquered illnesses, and brought the benefits of civilization, but, first and foremost, as a religion of military victory – otherwise it could not help being perceived as means for weakening the potential enemy in front of imperial might.

Ambassadorial and missionary tasks frequently overlapped in Byzantium and this stain of imperial involvement inevitably hindered the activities of such Byzantine missionaries as Euthymius in Alania or Hierotheos in Hungary. We do not know what for Methodius, Cyril’s brother, travelled to Constantinople at the end of his life, his vita is reticent about the reasons of this trip, and yet we can be sure that Thessalonika brothers were effective in Moravia in as much they dissociated themselves from the diplomatic goals of Byzantium.

10 A. Avenarius, *Die byzantinische Kultur und die Slawen. Zum Problem der Rezeption und Transformation* (6. bis 12. Jh.), München 2000, 48-49.

11 Mercurius, the eighth-century Sudanese king (*History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic church of Alexandria*). III, Agathon to Michael I (766), arabic text ed., trans., annot. Evetts B., [*Patrologia Orientalis* X], Paris 1910, 115), comes to mind or even the Mongolian Hulagu Khan (cf. J. M. Frieu, *Chrétiens syriaques sous les Mongols*, [*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, 362, Subsidia, 44], Louvain 1975, 85-87).

12 „Agathangelus“, ed. de Lagarde P., *Abhandlungen der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* XXXV, 1889, 871.







**ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΕΣ ΕΠΙΔΡΑΣΕΙΣ  
ΣΤΟΝ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟ ΤΩΝ ΣΛΑΒΩΝ**



**BYZANTINE INFLUENCES  
IN THE CULTURE OF THE SLAVS**

## LITURGY AND MUSIC: CYRILO-METHODIAN IMPACT ON THE CHRISTIAN EPIGRAPHY (PRESLAV CERAMIC PLATE)



*Stefan Harkov*

**A**mong the earliest known today sources of Christian music with notation there is a small fragment of an ecclesiastical ostracon found in Great Preslav, the second capital of the Mediaeval Bulgarian Empire. At first that artifact was named *Preslav ceramic fragment with liturgical texts*<sup>1</sup>, later it became popular as *Preslav ceramic plate with prokeimena*<sup>2</sup>. Not surprisingly plates were in common use in the ecclesiastical practice in South Eastern Europe and Eastern Mediterranean during the early Middle Ages: after the Muslim overrunning of Egypt in the seventh century papyrus, was gradually replaced in Europe by the parchment, but parchment was prepared from animal skins and was relatively expensive<sup>3</sup>. In contrast to parchment, ostraca were cheap and readily available. Long before the time of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Greece and in Bulgaria a developed tradition of epigraphy existed.

Today the fragment is preserved in the National Archeological Museum in Sofia [Example 1: preserved fragment from the plate in *Recto* and *Verso*]. It has a rectangular form and it is almost the half of the whole plate. The plate itself most probably had a square shape.

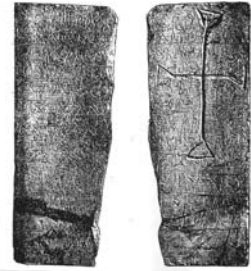
1 Goschew, I. "Ein keramisches Bruchstück aus Preslav mit altbulgarischen Gottesdienstlichen Texten aus dem 9.- 10. Jahrhundert" [Преславски керамичен фрагмент с богослужебни текстове от IX-X век]. *Annuaire de l'Université de Sofia. Faculté de Théologie. Livre IX. Sofia (1933-1934)*, 1-19.

2 Toncheva, E. "Keramikplatte aus Preslav mit Prokeimena-Repertoire aus dem 9./10. Jahrhundert als altbulgarisches Musikdenkmal". In: *Symposium Methodianum. Beiträge der internationalen Tagung in Regensburg (17. bis 24 April 1985) zum Gedenken an den 1100. Todestag des Hl. Method.* Herausgegeben von Klaus Trost, Ekkehard Völkl, Erwin Wedel, Neuried, Hieronimus Verlag, 1988, 315-340; Тончева, Е. "Преславската керамична плочка с прокименов репертоар от IX-X век като старобългарски музикален паметник". *Музикални хоризонти (София)*, 1985, № 4, 15-42.

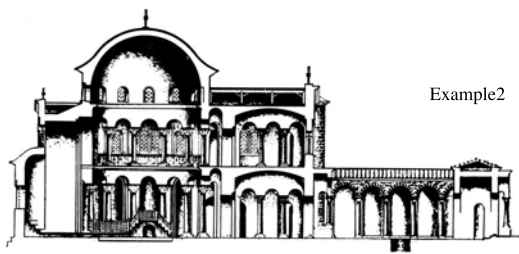
3 Kaufmann, C.M. "Christian ostraca". In: *Catholic Encyclopedia. Volume 11.* Edited by Charles George Herbermann et al. New York, The Encyclopedia Press, Inc., 1913, 347.

Obviously the original square plate was divided deliberately by some sharp edge soon after it was written<sup>4</sup>. Why a plate with liturgical texts would be divided deliberately is still a mystery for the scientists. Over the texts a big cross was cut out and the fragment was put in a tomb probably during a funeral. It is possible that procedure had a symbolic nature as a part of the funeral religious ceremony.

The paleographic features of the liturgical texts points to the late ninth or the early tenth century<sup>5</sup>. It was a time when the famous Preslav ceramics appeared to be with an astonishing quality<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore that ceramic fragment was found near the Round church, also known as the Golden church, the Cathedral of the capital city which was build at the same period of time [Example 2: The Round church in Preslav]. The Round church in Preslav is an impressive monument of early mediaeval Christian architecture<sup>7</sup>.



Example 1



Example 2

The most important part of the church is the rotunda covered by a dome where the Divine Service was celebrated. The marble ambon was situated in the middle of a circle of columns directly under the dome's centre<sup>8</sup>. The bishop's throne and chanter's area were situated near

one of the south vaults. Exactly that vault was enlarged<sup>9</sup> which might be an evidence that the number of chanters there was more than just a few.

Most probably the Preslav ceramic plate had served as an exercise. The scribe was not very skillful, he may have been a young fellow of the Great Preslav Academy housed at Saint Panteleimon monastery<sup>10</sup>. He had put down the everyday prokeimena either for exercise or as an aide-mémoire during the chanted office. The text is bilingual written in Byzantine

4 Миятев, Кр. Кръглата църква в Преслав. София, Държавна печатница, 1931, 169-172.

5 Ibidem

6 Totev, T. The Ceramic Icon in Medieval Bulgaria. Sofia, Pensoft Publishers, 1999.

7 Kazhdan, A. "Bulgarian art and architecture". In: Oxford dictionary of Byzantium. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, 334-335; Curta, F. Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500 – 1250. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, 220-221.

8 Мавродинов, Н. Старобългарското изкуство: изкуството на Първото българско царство. София, Наука и изкуство, 1959, 150-164.

9 Николова, Б. Православните църкви през Българското средновековие IX – XIV век. София, Академично издателство "Марин Дринов", 2002, 90.

10 Goschew. "Ein keramisches Bruchstück aus Preslav", 4; Гошев, Ив. Преславски керамичен фрагмент с богослужбени текстове. Годишник на Народния археологически музей в София. Том V (1926-1932), 233.

Greek and Old Bulgarian. The liturgical texts are written in Greek while the names of the days and other words are written in Old Bulgarian. It is worthy to note that the liturgical texts are written not grammatically but phonetically as they had been pronounced and sung <sup>11</sup>.

In 1932-33 shortly after the discovering of the Preslav ceramic fragment the Very Revered Father Professor Iwan Goschew (Иван Гочев) analyzed thoroughly the artifact and gave a convincing reconstruction of the entire texts of the plate<sup>12</sup>. According to him the liturgical content of the plate is as it follows:



*RECTO* [Example 3]:

During the Morning Service after Καταξίωσον, Κύριε

Psalm 89:17 **καὶ ἔστω ἡ λαμπρότης Κυρίου**

Psalm 89:14 **ἐνεπλήσθημεν**

During the Evening Service

Psalm 122:1 **ΠΡΟΣ σὲ ἦρα τοὺς**

Psalm 122:3 **ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, Κύριε**

Psalm 133:1 **ἸΔΟΥ δὴ εὐλογεῖτε τὸν Κύριον,  
πάντες οἱ δούλοι Κυρίου**



*VERSO* [Example 4]:

On Sunday evening

Psalm 133:1 **ἸΔΟΥ δὴ εὐλογεῖτε τὸν Κύριον,  
πάντες οἱ δούλοι Κυρίου**

On Monday evening

Psalm 4:4 **Κύριος εἰσακούσεται μου**

On Tuesday evening

Psalm 22:6 **τὸ ἔλεός σου, Κύριε**

On Wednesday evening

Psalm 53:3 **Ὁ ΘΕΟΣ, ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου**

11 Goschew. "Ein keramisches Bruchstück aus Preslav", 2.

12 Goschew. "Ein keramisches Bruchstück aus Preslav", 3-16.

On Thursday evening

Psalm 120:2 ἡ βοήθειά μου παρὰ Κυρίου

On Friday evening

Psalm 58:10 ὁ Θεός, ἀντιλήπτωρ μου

The biggest part of that psalm selection contains prokeimena for chanting. The prokeimenon is part of the melismatic liturgical chants<sup>13</sup>. The prokeimena or dochai are a series of psalm verses chanted in responsorial style by solo psaltis and psalte-chorus (ensemble) before Scriptural readings in the Office and Liturgy<sup>14</sup>. Till the thirteenth century in Byzantium the melismatic chants have been written in two notated liturgical books: Psaltikon (for solo repertoire) and Asmatikon (for choir repertoire). Dochai were part mostly of Asmatikon, the Byzantine choir book<sup>15</sup>. The psalm selection of the Preslav ceramic plate follow the Asmatikon order therefore that Byzantine choir book might be the prototype which has been adapted for the Slavonic liturgy. Few manuscripts without notation can support that conclusion. For example in *Codex Assemanianus (Evangeliarium Assemani* – Ms. Vaticanus Slav. 3) the incipits of five prokeimena are written, in *Euchologium Sinaiticum* (Mss. Sinaiticus Slav. 37 and Sinaiticus Slav. 1/IV; Mss. Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Glag. 2 and Glag. 3; Ms. Saint Petersburg, Russian Academy of Sciences, No. 24.4.8) they are three, but in *Enina Epistle* (Ms. Sofia, Saints Cyril and Methodius National Library, No. 1144) we could have seen twenty five prokeimena incipits and among them one is the same as in the Preslav ceramic plate<sup>16</sup>.

Most probably the Preslav ostrakon represents a rare and important trace for the existence of Palaeobyzantine Asmatikon<sup>17</sup>. It is well known that the Palaeobyzantine Asmatikon represents high level of professional chanting practice of Hagia Sophia Cathedral church in Constantinople. The Preslav ceramic plate testifies that it is possible the same chanting

13 Hintze, G. Das byzantinische Prokeimena-Repertoire: Untersuchungen und kritische Edition. (Hamburger Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft, 9). Hamburg, Verlag der Musikalienhandlung Wagner, 1973; Harris, S. "The Byzantine Prokeimena". *Plainsong and Medieval Music*. Cambridge, 1994, Volume 3, Issue 2, 133-147; Troelsgård, Ch. "The Prokeimena in Byzantine Rite: Performance and Tradition". *Cantus Planus Papers Read at the Sixth Meeting*, Eger, 1993. Budapest, 1995, 65-77.

14 Myers, G. A Historical, Liturgical and Musical Exploration of Kondakarioie Pienie. The Deciphering of a Medieval Slavic Enigma. Sofia, Cyrilo-Methodian Research Centre – BAS, 2009, 56.

15 Floros, C. "Die Entzifferung der Kondakarien-Notation". *Musik des Ostens*. Kassel, Volume 3 (1965), 7-71, Volume 4 (1967), 12-44.

16 Тончева. "Преславската керамична плочка", 21.

17 Тончева. "Преславската керамична плочка", 21-23.

practice, the so-called All-Chanted Cathedral Office *Asmatiki Akoluthia* has been in use in the Cathedral church of Great Preslav too. Gregory Myers quoting Elena Tocheva does not exclude “the possibility of at least some portion of the *Hagia Sophia Typikon* had been rendered in Old Bulgarian and used in a South Slavic center such as Preslav and possibly had been brought to Rus’ at the time of Christianization”<sup>18</sup>.

All of the mention above is a direct result of the Saints Cyril and Methodius’ blessed life and serving of God. Probably the most significant part of their archpastoral ministry is the translation of the Holy Liturgical Books in Slavonic. The Church Typicon was one of the first among them. According to the Saint Cyril’s *Vita* the Holy Brothers translated that liturgical book very soon after their arrival in Great Moravia in 863: ВЪЗКОР<sup>Ѡ</sup> же сѣ весь ЦРЪКОВИ<sup>Ѡ</sup>ЗИ ЧИНЪ ПРЛОЖИ<sup>Ѡ</sup> (*Vita Sancti Cyrili*, XV)<sup>19</sup>. We have similar information from the *Vita* of Saint Methodius where it is mentioned that in Great Moravia, translations in Slavonic have been done по ВСЕМОУ ЦРЪКОВНОМУ ЧИНУ (*Vita Sancti Methodii*, VIII)<sup>20</sup>.

But exactly which Typicon did they translate: the Studite Monastic or the Constantinopolitan Cathedral? However we have indications that the Holy Brothers might have been familiar with the Studite Typicon. Part of the scientists think that they used the Typicon of the Great Church in Constantinople which means that they used the All-Chanted office (*Asmatiki Akoluthia*) in their liturgical practice<sup>21</sup>. If we accept that suggestion we have to say that the Holy Brothers have been acquainted with melismatic chanting. Or at least Saint Methodius was. In the anonymous *Eulogy* of Saints Cyril and Methodius it is written that during St. Methodius’ service in the Polychron monastery in Bithynia (Asia Minor) he: ПООСЧАЮСѢ ВЪ ПСАЛМЪХЪ И ПНИИХЪ И ПЕНЬХЪ ДХОВЫ<sup>Ѡ</sup>ЗИХЪ<sup>22</sup>. According to Svetlana Kujumdzieva ПЕНЬХЪ ДХОВЫ<sup>Ѡ</sup>ЗИХЪ in that case refers to a melismatic type of chanting, where one syllable is linked to a larger melody<sup>23</sup>.

During the ninth century larger melismatic melodies have been written with notation in two books of so called “pure” chanting: Psaltika and Asmatika as it was mentioned above. But in the sources about the blessed life of the two Holy Brothers there is no information about

18 Myers. A Historical, Liturgical and Musical Exploration, 30; Toncheva. “Keramikplatte aus Preslav”, 315-323.

19 Лавров, П. А. Материалы по истории возникновения древнейшей славянской письменности. (Slavistic printings and reprintings, 67). The Hague – Paris, Mouton & Co., 1966, 28. Cited after Kujumdzieva, S. “Viewing the Earliest Old Slavic Corpus Cantilenarum”. *Paleobulgarica*, Sofia, 2002, Volume 26, Issue 2, 83-101 (86-87).

20 Лавров. Материалы, 73. Cited after Kujumdzieva. “Viewing”, 87.

21 Arranz, M. “Les grandes étapes de la liturgie Byzantine: Palestine-Byzance-Russie”. In: *Liturgie de l’église particulière et liturgie de l’église universelle*. Rome, 1976, 43-72; Arranz, M. “La tradition liturgique de Constantinople au IXe siècle et l’Euchologe Slave du Sinai”. *Studi sull’oriente cristiano*, Volume 4 (2000), 2, 41-110.

22 Лавров. Материалы, 81. Cited after Kujumdzieva. “Viewing”, 86.

23 Kujumdzieva. “Viewing”, 86.



translation activity on that chanted books. The only survived evidences on that direction today are the Old Russian Kondakaria (from the eleventh to the thirteenth century). In the earliest among them, the so called *Tipografsky Ustav* (Ms. Moscow, State Tretyakov Gallery, K-5349, No.142)<sup>24</sup> we can observe a unique mixture of repertoire which belongs to the different kind of chanted books: Asmatikon and Sticherarion<sup>25</sup>. The same principle we can observe in the Preslav ceramic plate where in the beginning of *Recto* side the verses from Octoechos Paraklitiki are written. That example is very important and it supported the theory that the Old Russian Kondakaria are not arising directly in Russia, but they might have been used as an element of the South Slavic Cyrilo-Methodian liturgical practice<sup>26</sup>. It makes it very possible that Russian music has begun its long way on Balkan Orthodox background<sup>27</sup>. Recent research seems to corroborate this theory. A newly discovered manuscript with notation in Russia, so called *Iliya's Book*, *Ильина книга* (Ms. Moscow, Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents RGADA, f. 381, no. 131)<sup>28</sup> which “*reflects the initial stage of adaptation of the South Slavic literary heritage in Russia ... is based on an Old Bulgarian source and the core of the manuscript date back to the Moravian period of the history of the Slavonic liturgy, in other words, the Iliya's Book, a manuscript from the late 11<sup>th</sup> – early 12<sup>th</sup> century, reflects the liturgical practice of the late 9<sup>th</sup> – early 10<sup>th</sup> century*”<sup>29</sup>: exactly the time when the Preslav ceramic plate was written.

Finally we have to say how important it is to study liturgical traditions on the base of primary sources. The Byzantine melismatic chant books Psaltikon and Asmatikon represent a part of the chanting practice of Hagia Sophia Cathedral Church in Constantinople. The survived small ecclesiastical ostracon from Preslav testifies that in the Cathedral church of the mediaeval Bulgarian capital Great Preslav the Typicon of Hagia Sophia has been followed.

24 Успенский, Б.А. (ред.) Типографский устав: Устав с кондакарем конца XI – начала XII века. Т. 1 – 3. Москва, 2006.

25 Strunk, O. *Essays on Music in the Byzantine World*. New York, W.W.Norton Inc., 1977, 188-190.

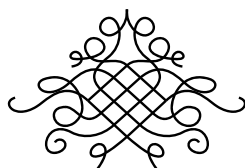
26 Gardner, J. von. *Russian Church Singing. History from the Origins to the Mid-Seventeenth Century*. Trans. and ed. Vl. Morosan. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000; Poliakova, S. Sin 319 and Voskr 27 and the Triodion cycle in the liturgical praxis in Russia during the Studite period. Ph. D. Thesis. Lisbon, 2009; Myers, A. *Historical, Liturgical and Musical Exploration*, 44-61.

27 Palikarova Verdeil, R. *La musique Byzantine chez les Bulgares et les Russes. Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae (Du IXe au XIVE siècle)*. Seria Subsidia. Copenhagen, 1953, volume 3; Кююмджиева, С. *Стара българска музика*. София, Марс 09, 2011.

28 Древнейший славянский богослужебный сборник “Ильина книга”. Факсимильное воспроизведение рукописи. Билинейно-спатическое издание источника с филолого-богословским комментарием. Подготовил Е. М. Верещагин. Москва, 2006.

29 Artamonova, Y. “On the Archaic Form of Znamennaya Notation (Neumes in the so-called “Iliya's Book”)”. In: *Byzantium without borders: hymnography and music in the Byzantine world (Proceedings of the 22nd International Congress of Byzantine Studies – Sofia, 22-27 August 2011)*. *Bulgarian Musicology Journal*, 2012, № 3-4, 23-34 (23-24).

It means that under the majestic golden dome of the King Simeon's Cathedral the beautiful divinely inspired melismatic melodies of *Asmatiki Akoluthia* have been chanted. It is a direct result of the Sts. Cyril and Methodius blessed life and service of God: they translated the Ecclesiastical Constantinopolitan Typikon in Slavonic and gave the Slavs the main condition for creating of their own chanting tradition. During the centuries that Orthodox tradition has existed in parallel with Byzantine and is developed its own way on the Balkans and in Russia in the framework of what Riccardo Picchio called *Slavia Orthodoxa* <sup>30</sup>.



30 Пикио, Р. Православното славянство и старобългарската културна традиция. София, Университетско издателство “Свети Климент Охридски”, 1993; Пикио, Р. *Slavia Orthodoxa*: Литература и язык. Москва, Знак, 2003.





**Η ΠΑΡΑΔΟΣΗ ΤΟΥ ΒΙΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥ ΕΡΓΟΥ  
ΤΩΝ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΚΥΡΙΛΛΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΘΟΔΙΟΥ  
(ΑΠΟ ΤΟ ΜΕΣΑΙΩΝΑ ΜΕΧΡΙ ΣΗΜΕΡΑ)**



**THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LIFE AND WORK  
OF SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS TO THE SLAVS  
(FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE PRESENT)**

## THE VITA CONSTANTINI: TRANSMISSION AND SCHOLARSHIP



*Giorgio Ziffer (Udine)*

**T**he *Vita Constantini* (or the *Life of Constantine*) is one of our most important sources for the life and deeds of St. Cyril and the Cyrilo-Methodian mission up to the year 869, the year of the Saint's death. Moreover, inasmuch as the work was written between 869 and 882, it is also most probably the first original work composed in Old Church Slavonic, the new language "invented" by the brothers Constantine-Cyril and Methodius. These facts are well known to all scholars; and no less evident to specialists in the field of Slavic philology is the fact that the manuscripts in which this outstanding work has been preserved were copied in much later periods: indeed, the first complete copies of the *Life of Constantine* do not go back to earlier than the fifteenth century. It is important to note, however, that the significant gap between the alleged date of composition and the emergence of the manuscript tradition is hardly unique to the *Life of Constantine*; on the contrary, it is a feature common to most writings from the oldest period of Church Slavonic literature.

My task today is to identify the distinctive characteristics that distinguished the textual transmission - that is, the history of the text - of the *Life of Constantine*. In addition to providing a brief overview of the work's textual transmission, I shall refer to some important stages in the history of the relevant modern scholarship. Although the history of the studies has a rather long prehistory, I will pass over it and "officially" begin my discussion with the seminal 1843 article by Alexandr Gorskij, devoted to both the *Lives* of Constantine and Methodius and

which is still worth reading today.<sup>1</sup> Eight years later, in 1851, there appeared the first modern edition of the *Life of Constantine*, published by Pavel Šafařík.<sup>2</sup> If this edition did not achieve the same high standards as his edition of Monk Hrabr's treatise *On the Letters*,<sup>3</sup> we should not see this as a failure on the part of the editor. The reason for the qualitative difference in the editions, instead, results from the fact that (1) the textual transmission of the *Life of Constantine* is much more intricate and (2) Šafařík was not nearly as fortunate—and could not have been nearly as fortunate—to have at his disposal the majority of the most important manuscripts that he had when he prepared the edition of Hrabr's treatise.

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Given the limited aims of the present study, I regrettably shall be unable to provide a systematic presentation of both the history of the text and a history of the studies. What I hope to do, instead, is to draw your attention to some turning points in regard to both topics.

In modern scholarship one of the fundamental turning points is most certainly the appearance in 1968 of a small booklet by the Italian slavist Natalino Radovich, because it is here that for the first time the method of common innovations (or common errors)—formerly known as the “Lachmanian method”—was applied to the manuscript study of the *Life of Constantine*.<sup>4</sup> The title of Radovich's work—namely, “The Glagolitic Pericopes of the *Vita Constantini* and the Cyrillic Manuscript Tradition”—proved a true understatement, for the author offered much more than a thorough examination of the Glagolitic and of the corresponding Cyrillic traditions. In point of fact, he also established the genealogical relationship among all the witnesses then known; and he proposed a kind of *stemma* that retains even today far more than mere historical value.

Radovich was thus the first scholar to challenge the idea of the existence of a South-Slavic (Serbian) branch of the tradition separated from an East-Slavic branch—an idea that apparently goes back to the 1930 edition of Petr A. Lavrov and that still has some followers today;<sup>5</sup> and he also was the first to assess the importance of what would be viewed in sub-

1 A. V. Gorskij, «Žitija sv. Kirilla i Mefodija», Moskviťjanin 3, Moscow 1843, 405-434. Reprod. in *Kirillo-Mefodievskij sbornik*, Moscow 1865, 1-42.

2 P. J. Šafařík, *Památky dřevního písemnictví Jihoslovanů*, Prague 1851, I-IV, 1-32 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: Prague 1873).

3 P. J. Šafařík, *Mnich Chrabra o písmenech slovanských*, Prague 1851; see also K. M. Kuev, «K istorii izdanija P. J. Šafaržikom skazanija černorizca Chrabra ‘O pis'menach’ (Stranička iz rusko-češskich naučnych svjazej XIX v.)», Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoj literatury XIX, Leningrad 1963, 448-451.

4 N. Radovich, *Le pericopi glagolitiche della Vita Constantini e la tradizione manoscritta cirillica*, Naples 1968.

5 P. A. Lavrov, *Materialy po istorii vozniknovenija dřevnejšej slavjanskoj pis'mennosti*, Leningrad 1930,

sequent years as the Ruthenian branch of the tradition. From that branch—made up of four complete copies and a dozen copies containing only the final three chapters of the *Life of Constantine*<sup>6</sup>—Radovich had knowledge of only the Vatican copy, which had already been at least partially known to Šafařík. Owing to the method of common innovations, the Italian Slavist was entirely correct in defining the Vatican copy as representative of one *individual* branch, separated from the rest of the tradition; and in his last footnote to the study, he alluded to the possibility that this manuscript might be published by the Institute of Slavonic Philology at the Orientale of the University of Naples, a project that unfortunately never came to fruition.<sup>7</sup>

The importance of Radovich's work was promptly recognized by some of its reviewers, above all by Angiolo Danti;<sup>8</sup> however, when some five years later, Bonju Angelov and Christo Kodov published their fundamental work on the *Lives* of Constantine and Methodius, which included a rich inventory of manuscripts for the *Life of Constantine*, the study by Radovich seems to have been neglected.<sup>9</sup> It is not that Radovich's study was really ever *completely* ignored; on the other hand, its methodological relevance as one of the first applications of the method of common innovations to Church Slavonic texts—as well as its importance for the text of the *Life of Constantine* in particular—appears not to have been fully appreciated.

In his study, Radovich also focused on the stemmatic importance of the group of the miscellaneous codices (*sborniki*)—or, as I prefer to call it, the 2nd Novgorodian group—concluding that this group represents a second branch of the tradition.<sup>10</sup> This group, as we can now demonstrate, does represent another independent branch in addition to the Ruthenian branch. In addition, it is a very significant group because it is the only one to preserve some important readings that disappeared from all other groups of the tradition: thus, to give you one example, in this branch we find *Blatъnъskъ kostelъ*, the correct Slavic name for the residence of

xix-xx; A. Vaillant, *Textes vieux-slaves. Deuxième partie: Traductions et notes*, Paris 1968, 26; C. Diddi, «Apunti sulla tradizione manoscritta della *Vita Constantini*», *Ricerche slavistiche* 44, Rome 1997, 5-60, esp. 59; A.-E. N. Tachiaos, *Cyril and Methodius the Thessalonian Enlighteners of the Slavs*, Thessaloniki 2013, 179. 6 G. Ziffer, «La tradizione russa sud-occidentale della *Vita Constantini*», in *Studi slavistici offerti a Alessandro Ivanov*, ed. M. Ferrazzi, Udine 1992, 370-397.

7 Radovich, *Le pericopi glagolitiche*, 101-134 and 167, fn. 126.

8 A. Danti, “[Review of] Radovich, *Le pericopi glagolitiche*”, *Pamiętnik słowiański* 20, Warsaw 1970, 281-283.

9 Kliment Ochridski, *Săbrani săčinenija*, vol. 3: *Prostranni žitija na Kiril i Metodij*, ed. B. St. Angelov and H. Kodov Sofia 1973.

10 Radovich, *Le pericopi glagolitiche*, 101-134. On this group see now C. Diddi, «Materiali e ricerche per l'edizione critica di *Vita Constantini*». VI. «I testimoni delle collezioni di contenuto variabile (gruppo ‘C’)», *Ricerche slavistiche* VII (LIII), Rome 2009, 173-224, and idem, «Materiali e ricerche per l'edizione critica di *Vita Constantini*». VII. «Edizione del gruppo ‘C’», *Ricerche slavistiche* VII (LIII), Rome 2009, 225-280.



the margrave Kocel', which is better known even among Slavists under its German name *Mosapurc* or its Latin equivalents *urbs paludarum* or *castrum Chezilonis*.<sup>11</sup>

The 2nd Novgorodian group is also very peculiar, given that it goes back to a contamination in which one copy of the October Menologium (or the 1st Novgorodian group) and one copy from the February Menologium (or the Muscovite group) were involved. In fact, close ties with this latter (Muscovite) group had already been noted by Vladimír Kyas, who believed that the 2nd Novgorodian group depended entirely on the Muscovite group, a conclusion which—although not entirely true—is not completely erroneous.<sup>12</sup> As we now are able to understand rather clearly, neither Radovich nor Kyas were able to grasp the complex origins and history of this group, because they knew only a few copies for a group which is by far the largest in the manuscript tradition: there are indeed no fewer than twenty-two copies, all of which go back to the above-mentioned contamination.<sup>13</sup>

Until now, I have been engaged in a discussion on contamination. Permit me now to add that at issue here is not a random contamination but rather something very similar to a form of “editorial activity”: in other words, not only did the copyist in question very carefully compare the three copies at his disposal; but—in addition to writing down many variants and, in several cases, even all three variant readings he had before him—placing one in the text and the other, or others, in the margins—he also added some glosses and segmented the entire text into five chapters (viz., I-V, VI-VII, VIII-XIII, XIV-XV, XVI-XVIII) at least five hundred years before Šafařík proposed the modern segmentation into eighteen chapters we are still using at the present time.

The third and last branch of the tradition for the *Life of Constantine* comprises the two above-mentioned Menologia (or the 1° Novgorodian and the Muscovite) groups as well as the Serbian and Croat Glagolitic groupings. This third branch is not only the most ramified branch; it is also the most difficult to define because its innovations—the first of which had been revealed by Ivan Berčić in the nineteenth century—are not as evident as the innovations of the other two branches<sup>14</sup>.

11 G. Ziffer, «Il margravio Kocel' e la *Vita Constantini*», in I. Podtergera (ed.), *Schnittpunkt Slavistik. Osten und Westen im wissenschaftlichen Dialog. Festgabe für Helmut Keipert zum 70. Geburtstag*, vol. 2: *Einflussforschung*, Göttingen 2012, 145-155.

12 V. Kyas, «Chrvátskohlaholské teksty *Života Konstantinova*», *Slavia* XXXV, Prague 1966, 530-553, esp. 552.

13 G. Ziffer, «Il 2° gruppo novgorodiano della *Vita Constantini*. Considerazioni preliminari», *Russica Romana* XVIII, Rome 2011, 99-103; idem, «Un'ulteriore premessa allo studio del 2° gruppo novgorodiano della *Vita Constantini*», *Russica Romana* XIX, Rome 2012, 179-182.

14 I. Berčić, *Dvje službe rimskega obreda za svetkovinu svetih Ćirila i Metuda*, Zagreb 1870, 73-74; G. Zif-

As for the transmission and the history of the text, it is of the utmost importance to prove stemmatically that the Serbian and Croatian groups go back to an East Slavic ancestor. This conclusion was not directly expressed by Radovich, but was implicitly suggested in his analysis. A conclusion of this sort might have seemed perhaps strange or even illogical in the past, even if scholars had remembered that the *Life of Methodius* has come down to us exclusively in East-Slavic codices. But nowadays, in the light of the enormous impact of the First East-Slavic influence on the South Slavic tradition that took place in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,<sup>15</sup> it is—at the historical level as well—not surprising at all that the Serbian and Croatian groups go back to an East Slavic ancestor.

Several philological problems remain to be solved before it will be possible to provide a critical edition of the text. One of these problems has to do with the fragmentary copies, containing more or less smaller parts of the text. Many of them have been cited in the literature, but not all of them have been studied systematically and stemmatically. The group of Ruthenian copies containing the final three chapters is closely connected with the four full copies already mentioned; and they form a second ramification of the same Ruthenian branch. But what about the Bulgarian fragment of the fourteenth century published by Radčenko, and then more completely by Angelov and Kodov?<sup>16</sup> Where does this fragment belong? As to the even older fragment discovered by Anatolij Turilov in the codex St. Petersburg, Russian National Library, Q.p.I.18, dating from the thirteenth century,<sup>17</sup> here we can conclude that it belongs to the so-called “Paleja group,” which in turn appears to derive from the third branch I have just discussed.<sup>18</sup> In any event, it is evident that a complete study of the history of the text must include a thorough analysis of all the fragments containing small (or not so small) parts of the text.

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fer, «Intorno al subarchetipo b della *Vita Constantini*», in *Contributi italiani al XV Congresso Internazionale degli Slavisti (Minsk, 20-27 agosto 2013)*, ed. M. Garzaniti, A. Alberti, M. Perotto, and B. Sulpasso, Florence 2013, 11-22.

15 A. A. Turilov, «Pamjatniki drevnerusskoj literatury i pis'mennosti u južnych slavjan v XII-XIV vv. (problemy i perspektivy izučenija)», in his *Slavia Cyrilomethodiana: Istočnikovedenie istorii i kul'tury južnych slavjan i Drevnej Rusi. Mežslavjanskije kul'turnye svjazi epochi srednevekov'ja*, Moscow 2010, 181-209, esp. 193-194.

16 Kliment Ochridski, *Săbrani săčinenija*, vol. 3, 47-49.

17 H. Wańróbska, «The Izbornik of the XIII<sup>th</sup> Century (Cod. Leningrad, RNB, Q.p.I.18)», Polata k'nigopis'naja 19-20, Nijmegen 1987, 42-43; A. A. Turilov, «Drevnejšie otryvki prostrannogo Žitija Konstantina-Kirilla Filosofa», in *Balkany v kontekste Sredizemnomor'ja. Problemy rekonstrukcii jazyka i kul'tury. Tezisy i predstavitel'nye materialy k simpoziumu*, Moscow 1986, 99-100, esp. 100.

18 G. Ziffer, «Un nuovo gruppo di testimoni (frammentari) della *Vita Constantini*: il ‘gruppo della Paleja’», Slovo 44-46 Zagreb 1994-1996, 7-25, esp. 12-13.

I am nearing the end of the present study, and thus permit me to sum up the main conclusions of my brief survey on the transmission of the *Life of Constantine*. The seven main groups of the tradition, which we are now able to characterize at a geographical level—that is, the two Ruthenian groups, the two Novgorodian groups, the Muscovite group, and the Serbian and Glagolitic groups—form three main branches: one of them is Ruthenian, and the other two are probably both of Novgorodian origins; and these three branches descend from an archetype written somewhere in Kievan Rus'. The names of the scholars I have mentioned—Gorskij, Šafařík, Berčić, Radčenko, Lavrov, Kyas, Radovich, Danti, Angelov and Kodov, and Turilov—are of course only a few names among the many that I could have cited and that other participants referred to during the proceedings of our conference. With its complex textual transmission and its no less interesting, history of modern scholarship, the *Life of Constantine* seems indeed to be, in addition to its intrinsic value for the history of the first phase of the Cyrilomethodian mission, a case study for Church Slavonic textual philology in general.

