

THREE PARADOXES OF THE CYRILLO-METHODIAN MISSION

BY IHOR ŠEVČENKO

One book, one article, and a series of archaeological finds have contributed the largest part to the progress of Cyrillo-Methodian studies in the past thirty years. The book was by Father Dvornik: Once and forever its author established the reliability of the *Vitae* of the Slavic Apostles—our two principal sources for their mission—by carefully fitting them into the framework of Byzantium's history in the ninth century.¹ The article was by Fathers Meyvaert and Devos: In a few pages it demonstrated *more mathematico* what many foremost scholars had already suspected—that the *Vita* of Constantine-Cyril was in existence by 882 (before Methodius' death), and that, by this time, it existed in Slavic.² The latter demonstration was a hard pill for Byzantinists to swallow. The archaeological finds were made in Southern Moravia. By unearthing several ninth-century towns, archaeologists were able to provide an explanation for the strength of the Great Moravian state; by discovering a number of early churches, they were able to demonstrate how well established Christianity was in Great Moravia even before the Cyrillo-Methodian mission had arrived.³

These three contributions, properly combined, have been blended into Professor Dvornik's latest narrative upon which I have been asked to comment. Left with little to add to his expert account, at least little of interest to the general reader, and unable to improve upon it, I shall instead restate in the form of three paradoxes some basic facts about the Cyrillo-Methodian mission. The device has helped to clarify my thinking on the mission's significance. Perhaps it will be useful to the reader as well.

The first paradox is that although the Cyrillo-Methodian mission itself was a failure, its aftermath turned it into a success that left its mark

MR. ŠEVČENKO is professor of history at Columbia University.

¹ F. Dvornik, *Les Légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance* (Prague, 1933).

² Paul Meyvaert and Paul Devos, "Trois énigmes cyrillo-méthodiennes de la 'Légende Italique' résolues grâce à un document inédit," *Analecta Bollandiana*, LXXIII (1955), 375-461.

³ For quick orientation, cf. Father Dvornik's preceding article, notes 2 and 3; J. Poulík, "The Latest Archaeological Discoveries from the Period of the Great Moravian Empire,"

upon world history. Although it is true that Slavonic liturgy, hierarchy, and letters survived for some time in Bohemia and perhaps in southern Poland⁴—fringe areas which had belonged to the Great Moravian state—it remains that the Thessalonican brothers failed both in Moravia proper, the area for which their mission was originally destined, and in Pannonia, where it was vigorously pursued.

Our first paradox, however, is more apparent than real, since the chances for the mission's success in Moravia were slim from the very beginning. For all their ecumenical outlook, Cyril and Methodius were Byzantines entering territories to which Byzantium could raise only the most tenuous of ideal claims. The Frankish Empire, on the contrary, viewed these territories as vassal lands which the Frankish bishoprics of Freising, Passau, and Salzburg had been converting and administering for the past hundred years. To the Franks, the Byzantine missionaries were not squatters on pagan soil; they were trespassers on missionary preserves. The Byzantine mission could successfully function only so long as it was able to use, or was willing to be used by, the princes of Moravia and Pannonia and the papacy, the powers which, for their own reasons, were interested in keeping Frankish political or ecclesiastical influence away. The support of the local princes for the Byzantine mission was not continuous; its presence or absence depended too much on the fortunes of war, the game of politics, or the success of a coup d'état; besides, the Frankish Empire was strong. It could be hoped that the support lent by the papacy would be more consistent, for the Popes had always had long memories and for centuries had claimed ecclesiastical jurisdiction over a part of the area where Cyril and Methodius were operating. During the decade 870-80, the papacy did rise to protect its appointee Methodius against the Franks. But the protégé posed some problems.

For one thing, Methodius was—as a contemporary and hostile Frankish source puts it—*quidam Graecus*.⁵ Being what he was, he clung to Greek views, including the conservative one on the procession of the Holy Ghost, and his Slavic disciples shared his convictions. Strictly speaking, there was nothing reprehensible in this, for until that time the Popes, although beginning to abandon the traditional view, had

Historica, I (1959), 7-70; *idem*, "Velká Morava ve světle nejnovějších archeologických objevů," in *Velká Morava: Tisíciletá tradice státu a kultury* (Prague, 1963), pp. 39-76 (with bibliography); V. Vavřínek, "Die Christianisierung und Kirchenorganisation Grossmährens," *Historica*, VII (1963), 5-56.

⁴ The mission's survival in Poland is a moot question. On this point, I tend to agree with a pessimist like T. Lehr-Splawiński, cf., e.g., his "Nowa faza dyskusji o zagadnieniu liturgii słowiańskiej w dawnej Polsce," reprinted in the same author's *Od piętnastu wieków . . .* (Warsaw, 1961), pp. 51-67, rather than with an optimist like K. Lanckorońska, *Studies on the Roman-Slavonic Rite in Poland* (Rome, 1961) (full bibliography). Cf. the negative review of Lanckorońska by J. Szymański in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, LVIII (1963), 911-20.

⁵ M. Kos, ed., *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* (Ljubljana, 1936), § 12, p. 139.

made no definite pronouncement on the subject;⁶ but this did make Methodius something of a liability.

For another thing, Methodius used the Slavic liturgy. Again this was, strictly speaking, not reprehensible, for there had been no previous adverse ruling on the subject, as the practice was without parallel in the West—hence the repeated papal authorizations to sing the Mass in Slavic, with precedence accorded to Latin. The Franks, who were right in pointing out that in the eyes of the Slavs the introduction of the new language debased the worth of those accustomed to celebrate the Mass in Latin, in other words, of the Franks themselves, were hardly just in insinuating that Slavic letters and their propagators were crowding out “the Roman doctrine,” so closely associated with the Latin tongue.⁷ But Rome might have thought that there was a grain of truth in the assertion—hence the papal ambivalence and the temporary ban on the Slavic liturgy in the 870’s.⁸ By the 880’s the papacy may have decided that a Latin prelate, acceptable to the Franks but recognizing the papal jurisdiction over the *Pannonica sedes*, would cause much less trouble than Methodius or a man of his outlook. We do know that by 886, a year after Methodius’ death, the Pope—and what was equally important, the Moravian ruler Sventopluk—sided with the Franks in all matters vital to the existence of the Slavo-Byzantine Church in Great Moravia. The hierarchy was to be headed by the Frank Wiching, not

⁶ Recent research, to which Father Dvornik has contributed so much, has taught us not to project the later picture of the irreconcilable ecclesiastical and cultural split between the East and the West back into the ninth century. Still, the very years of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission were also the years of the Photian controversy. The basic unity of Christianity continued to be held as a self-evident—and untested—truth, but just to make sure, incriminating dossiers, emotional and doctrinal, were compiled on both sides. Ever since 867, the *filioque* dispute filled two of the thickest folders.

⁷ Cf. Kos, *op. cit.*: *Methodius . . . noviter inventis Slaviniis litteris linguam Latinam doctrinamque Romanam . . . vilescere fecit cuncto populo, ex parte missas et evangelia ecclesiasticumque officium illorum qui hoc Latine celebraverunt.*

⁸ An opinion current among the Frankish, Venetian (and some Roman?) clergy in the 860’s asserted that God should be praised only in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, three languages which must be “principal” or exceptional on account of their use on the Saviour’s cross. This was nothing new in the West: more than two centuries earlier Isidore of Seville asserted that *sacrae legis lingua triplex est, Hebraea, Graeca et Latina* (Jacques P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina* [Paris, 1844-64], LXXXIII, col. 182C; hereafter cited as Migne, *PL* or *PG*). In 870 and 880, the papal chancery did officially turn against this opinion, dubbed “trilingual heresy” by the adherents of the Slavic liturgy. However, this seems to have been a wise but unusual stand. The crucial passage of 880, dealing with the matter of liturgical languages (cf. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae*, VII [1928], 223, line 36, to 224, line 9), sounds like an excerpt from a memorandum submitted by Methodius or a member of his party, rather than a reflection of the Chancery’s thinking on this subject. I suspect that the routine thinking in Rome was close to that of the “trilingual heretics.” In 865, the papal secretary (Anastasius Bibliothecarius?) was called upon to defend the dignity of the Latin tongue. The first thing that issued from his pen when he came to grips with the matter was a reference to the trilingual tablet on the Saviour’s cross: cf. Pope Nicholas I’s letter to Emperor Michael III, *MGH, Ep.*, VI (1925), 459, 5-14.

by Methodius' Moravian successor-designate Gorazd;⁹ the Mass was to be celebrated only in Latin; and the *filioque* was sanctioned in the Symbol of Faith.¹⁰

The subsequent arrests and deportations (elder Slavic priests were shipped off to the Bulgarian frontier; younger ones were auctioned on the slave market of Venice) eliminated the elite of the Slavic hierarchy in Great Moravia. About twenty years later (*ca.* 907), the Hungarian invasion destroyed the Great Moravian state. It also broke the backbone of the debilitated Slavo-Byzantine Church of Moravia and Pannonia.¹¹

If Cyril and Methodius themselves continued to be remembered in the non-Slavic West, it was not for their missionary activity but for what the Westerners—whether of the ninth, the twelfth, or the thirteenth century¹²—came to consider the brothers' greatest deed: the bringing of the reputed relic of Pope Clement from the Crimea to Rome. But this story also became considerably confused in the course of time. The fifteenth-century Englishman reading about the Pope's venerable remains in the Golden Legend could hardly have realized that "a preest named phylosophre" was the same person as "the blessed Cyrille bysshop of moryanne," who "brought the holy body unto Rome." Even less could he have realized that "moryanne" was Moravia and that "Cyrille" had never been a bishop.¹³

The story of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission's success begins in exile. By 886, Bulgaria was less thoroughly Christianized than Moravia had been by 863, and Boris, the ruler of Bulgaria, was in great need of Christian cadres. Not having been quite happy with Greek missionaries, he had all the more reason to welcome St. Clement and other displaced intellectuals arriving from across the Danube. Their number must have been considerable, since Methodius had been training ecclesiastics in Moravia for about a dozen years before his death. The refugees were given the best living and working conditions and enjoyed, by

⁹ This was the gist of the decision. For a different opinion, which amounts to hair-splitting, cf. the stimulating but too speculative work by Z. R. Dittrich, *Christianity in Great-Moravia* (Groningen, 1962), pp. 277 and 282.

¹⁰ This is how I understand the unclear *Item* in Stephen V's *Commonitorium* of the year 885/886, *MGH, Ep.*, VII (1928), 353. At stake is the addition of the word *filioque* to the text of the Symbol (usually said not to have been definitely made by Rome before the early eleventh century), rather than the doctrine of the *Filioque* (which the papacy favored by the time of Cyril and Methodius).

¹¹ In the course of time, several archbishops, all Latin (Esztergom, Gniezno, Mainz), divided the territory of the Great Moravian State among themselves.

¹² Anastasius Bibliothecarius and Gauderich of Velletri, Leo of Ostia, and Jacobus de Varagine. For the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition in the medieval Slavic West, cf., e.g., Roman Jakobson in *Harvard Slavic Studies*, II (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), 53-55 (bibliography).

¹³ Jacobus de Varagine, *Legenda Aurea* [*The Golden Legend*, trans. and publ. by William Caxton, Westminster, 1483], fols. 382v-383r.

order from on high, the assistance of provincial governors.¹⁴ With such encouragement, the indoctrination of the Bulgarian elite and the formation of the Slavo-Byzantine Christian hierarchy could proceed on an impressive scale.¹⁵ What Methodius had been to Moravia and Pannonia, his follower St. Clement was to Bulgaria, only with more enduring effects.¹⁶ It might very well be said that Clement's work could live on after his death and be consolidated in the course of the next hundred years simply because the Hungarians, who destroyed Moravia, did not succeed in destroying Bulgaria. But we must go beyond this cataclysmic explanation. St. Clement's work endured and Methodius' did not because Boris and Symeon of Bulgaria enjoyed more freedom in shaping their ideological policies and in satisfying the needs of their elite than Rostislav and Sventopluk had had in their day. This in turn came about because after 886 (and certainly by 916, the year Clement died) the Byzantine Empire was weaker in relation to Bulgaria than the Frankish Empire had been in relation to Moravia in Cyrillo-Methodian days. In fact, about 916 the Bulgarians were threatening Byzantium's very existence.

Papal influence had ceased in Bulgaria about fifteen years before the Moravian débâcle of 886. This simplified matters for Clement and the other refugees. Methodius, their spiritual leader, had visited the Byzantine court about two years before his death¹⁷ and had explained his position to the emperor's satisfaction. The Great Church of Constantinople had no cause for alarm, since there were no ritual or doctrinal differences between it and the refugee missionaries. That the Great Church did not flood Bulgaria with its own Greek missionaries was due not to this doctrinal agreement or to its fondness for the Slavic liturgy, nor to lack of precedent (missionaries from Constantinople had been dispatched to Bulgaria twice before, in the 860's and 870's), but to the fact that the Bulgarian ruling class preferred another policy and was able to enforce it. Matters were a bit confused. The Bulgarian cultural elite was being formed through the use of Slavic letters, a Byzantine invention, at a time when the Bulgarian ruler Symeon was about, or so it seemed, to take Constantinople and to become the first Slavic emperor of Byzantium.

During the last century and a quarter of the First Bulgarian Empire, the Bulgarian elite gathered enough strength and added enough works

¹⁴ Theophylactus of Ochrida, *Vita Clementis*, in А. Милев, ed., *Теофилакт: Климент Охридски* (Sofia, 1955): § 48, p. 68; § 53, p. 70.

¹⁵ Theophylactus of Ochrida speaks of 3,500 "select people" receiving instruction from St. Clement, of schools where children were taught to read and write (in Glagolitic?), and of three hundred readers, subdeacons, deacons, and priests assigned by St. Clement to each of the (seven?) Bulgarian dioceses. Cf. *Vita Clementis*, in Милев, *op. cit.*, §§ 57 and 59, p. 72.

¹⁶ Clement viewed Methodius as his model. *Ibid.*, § 65, p. 76.

¹⁷ For the date, cf. Dittrich, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

to the core of Cyrillo-Methodian writings to enable it not only to help in the re-Christianizing of the Serbs, but above all to assist in the Christianization of the Eastern Slavs. A sort of corollary to our first paradox—a subparadox, as it were—is that the Cyrillo-Methodian Mission's most important achievement lives on in Russia, a part of the Slavic world where the mission was never active, rather than among the Slavs for whom it was intended. It is among the Eastern Slavs that the image and works of the Thessalonican brothers survived most securely. Cyril and Methodius figure prominently in Nestor's Primary Chronicle.¹⁸ The story of the largest missionary venture of the early Muscovite state is patterned on the exploits of Cyril,¹⁹ and the bulk of the manuscripts containing one or another of Cyril and Methodius' Lives comes from the East Slavic area.²⁰

But these are mere details compared to the contribution made by the brothers' most important creation, Old Church Slavonic, to literary Russian. Old Church Slavonic functioned as the Latin of the Balkan and East European Slavs down to the eighteenth century. It was dis-

¹⁸ *Sub anno* 898.

¹⁹ Cf. Epiphanius the Wise's Life of St. Stephen of Perm, reprint of V. Druzhinin's edition in *Apophoreta Slavica*, II (1959), ed. D. Čiževskij and C. H. van Schooneveld. St. Stephen (d. 1396) Christianized the Zyrans, invented an alphabet for them, and translated the Gospels into their language. Epiphanius not only compared his hero with Constantine-Cyril and called him "the new Philosopher" (*Apophoreta*, p. 69; Druzhinin, fol. 728), and not only copied—and improved upon—some parts of the tenth-century treatise *O pismenexъ* by the Monk Khrabr (*Apophoreta*, pp. 69-73; Druzhinin, fols. 728-32^v), but also (a fact which seems to have passed unnoticed) freely adapted the first chapter of the Slavic *Vita Constantini* (i.e., the Life of Cyril) and applied some of its quotations and phraseology to Stephen. Cf. the combination of I Tim. 2:4 and Ez. 33:11 occurring in Stephen's Life (*Apophoreta*, p. 32; Druzhinin, fol. 686^v) and at the very beginning of the *Vita Constantini* (text, e.g., in T. Lehr-Splawiński, *Żywoty Konstancyjna i Metodogo* . . . [Poznań, 1959], p. 3; subsequent quotations from the *Vitae* will follow this edition, to be referred to as Lehr-Splawiński); cf. also the following parallels:

Apophoreta, p. 69 (Druzhinin, fol. 727^v): *No B(o)gъ, m(i)l(o)stivyi č(e)l(ovč)koljubecъ, iže vse ustrača na pol'zu ljudem' si, i ne ostavlja roda č(e)l(ovč)čę bez razuma, no vsečesky privodeč na razumъ i na sp(a)senie, iže počadě i pomilova ljudi per'mъskag(o) jazyka, vъzdviže i ustroi imъ, jakož(e) drevle Veseleila vъ I(zra)ili, i napolni m(u)drosti i xitrosti, tako i sego Stefana; muža dobra i bl(a)gogovčina, i posla k nimъ.*

Vita Constantini, § 1: *Bogъ milostivъ . . . ožidaje pokajanje človečьsko, da bъ vъsi sъpaseni byli i vъ razumъ istinъni prišli . . . ne ostavlajetъ človeča roda otpasti . . . jako isprva daže i do nyně . . . vъzdvižъ namъ učitelja sego.*

In his treatise, Khrabr praised the Slavic alphabet and translation in defiance of the Greeks. Somewhat incongruously, he invoked the Greek Cyril's name as the decisive argument in the dispute: Slavic letters were more hallowed and honorable than the Greek ones, for they had been invented, all at once, by one saintly man, Cyril; as for the Greek alphabet, it was created in several consecutive stages by a number of heathen Hellenes. Epiphanius repeated the same argument (except that in his version Cyril invented "Russian," not "Slavic," letters), but went one step further: In inventing the alphabet and translating the Gospel, Cyril was often assisted by Methodius; Stephen, on the contrary, had no helper but God in creating his alphabet. Thus Stephen was made slightly "more equal" to Cyril.

²⁰ At least forty-four out of fifty-nine manuscripts of the *Vita Constantini*, and fourteen out of sixteen manuscripts of the *Vita Methodii*. Cf. B. St. Angelov, «Славянски

carded by them in the formation of their modern literary tongues. The exception to this was Russian: its vocabulary was happily blended with that of the vernacular during the period when literary Russian was formed; it is an old school saying that modern Russian owes much of its greatness and flexibility to the interplay between its two lexical strata.

The second paradox of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission is the spirit of friendliness and equality with which this mission was conducted by the two Byzantines, although their cultural background must have conditioned them to hold a low opinion of all barbarians, particularly that low man on the barbaric totem pole, the Slav. To the Byzantines, who inherited from their Hellenic past the habit of dividing the world into Hellenes and barbarians, scorn for the barbarians was a counterpart to their own limitless cultural pride. Throughout the better part of Byzantium's existence, the barbarians—that is, non-Byzantines—appear in stereotyped descriptions as cunning, false and cowardly, cruel, refusing to abide by the rules of civilized behavior, overbearing in victory, abject in defeat. God Himself imposed on the Byzantines the duty of subduing the barbarians and of incorporating them into the empire. We should certainly expect this picture, not quite adequate for pagan antiquity, to have been modified in a Christian empire. The Byzantines, who knew St. Paul by heart, should have realized that the Lord called upon barbarians first and that in the eyes of God barbarians were their brothers. This realization should have been especially vivid during missionary activity. Alas, only a few Byzantines faced the consequences of the Pauline doctrine squarely. Baptism did change the barbarians, those bestial creatures, into human beings, but the mere fact of the barbarians' conversion was indeed a miracle. How else could they have changed from animals into our brothers?²¹ True enough, when the going was rough, one would try to mollify the newly converted barbarian adversary by appealing to the recently achieved community of faith.²² But, on the whole, barbaric nations, as opposed to individual barbarians, were too despised to be genuinely accepted into the community of Byzantine civilization, even

пъзвори за Кирил и Методий» *Известия за 1956 г. of the Държавна библиотека «Васил Коларов»* (Sofia, 1958), pp. 179-214, esp. pp. 181-86. For texts in which Cyril appears as the inventor of the Russian alphabet and as the translator from Greek into Russian, cf., e.g., *idem*, «Кирилметодиевото дело и идеята за славянско единство в старославянските литератури», *Българска Академия на науките: Славистичен сборник*, II (1958), 47-48.

²¹ Much of what precedes is based on K. Lechner, *Hellenen und Barbaren im Weltbild der Byzantiner . . .* (dissertation; Munich, 1954), *passim*.

²² Cf. Theophanes Cont., *Hist.*, 408, 6, to 409, 5, Bonn (Romanus Lecapenus admonishing Symeon of Bulgaria); Leo Diaconus, *Hist.*, 79, 13-18, Bonn (Nicephorus Phocas admonishing the Bulgarians); a *Logos*, Ф. И. Успенский, ed., *Летопись историко-филол. общества при Импер. Новороссійскогъ университетъ*, IV, *Визант. отдел.*, II (1894), 67, 15, to 68, 2 (Bulgarians and Byzantines united now, all called Christians). Cf. also Leo VI, *Tactica*, XVIII, 42 and 44, Migne, PG, CVII, cols. 956D and 957A.

after they had accepted baptism.²³ Voices like that of Theodoretus of Cyrillus, who in the first half of the fifth century advocated the natural equality of all human beings and of all languages, were extremely rare except in the closing years of Byzantium's history. In Theodoretus' opinion, virtue could be acquired in any language—after all, the Old Testament prophets did not know Greek. Foreign tongues might sound barbaric to the Greeks, but Greek dialects sounded no less barbaric to the barbarians themselves. Sometimes a barbaric language—Persian or Latin, for instance—might even be superior, by virtue of its natural conciseness, to Greek verbosity. Both Theodoretus and before him John Chrysostom knew that by their time the word of God, transmitted originally in Hebrew, had been translated into “all” languages: Egyptian, Persian, Indian, Armenian, Scythian, and Sarmatian.

This liberality, anticipating the Cyrillo-Methodian tolerance, had its explanation in the historical circumstances prevailing at the time Theodoretus wrote, as well as in the personality of the author. Theodoretus was himself a Syrian and his mother tongue was Syriac. He could therefore poke fun at Greek, especially since he wrote it very well himself. Moreover, he was attacking the pagans who rallied around the banner of Greek-Pagan culture and invoked the excellence of the Greek tongue. They had to be deflated, shown that they, too, owed a great deal to the barbarians, and told not to boast too much but rather to admire those who told the truth without rhetorical embellishment in any language whatsoever.²⁴ No wonder that in later Byzantium where pagans were no more and where most writers were native Greeks, views like those of Theodoretus were hardly repeated at all.²⁵

Voices idealizing the barbarians and relativizing the value of Byzantine culture began to be strongly heard only in the last two centuries of the empire, when Byzantine intellectuals lost faith in the absolute value of their culture and state. In early and middle-Byzantine times, the most positive ideal picture of barbarians was that of the Brahmins and of the Chinese, that is, of barbarians dwelling as far away as possible. Barbarians who lived closer by, and especially the neighbors of the empire, had to be satisfied with the stereotyped and pessimistic evalua-

²³ For a different view, cf. D. Obolensky, “The Principles and Methods of Byzantine Diplomacy,” *XII^e Congrès international des études byzantines, Ochride 1961*, Rapports, II (1961), 55.

²⁴ Theodoretus of Cyrillus, *Graec. affect. curatio*, V, 55-60, 66, 70-72, and 74-75; cf. also I, 10 and 25. Cf. John Chrysostom's *Homily* held in the Church of St. Paul, in Migne, *PG*, LXIII, esp. cols. 500-501 (word of God translated for speakers of foreign and barbaric languages: Scythians, Thracians, Sarmatians, Moors, Indians); 506 and 509 (God turns to barbarians first and is first proclaimed in a barbarian tongue). John Chrysostom is not pro-barbarian. He is anti-“Hellenic.” The defense of the merits of barbaric tongues goes back to St. Clement of Alexandria, cf. *Stromata*, I, 77, 3, to 78, 1.

²⁵ In the twelfth century, Eustathius of Thessalonica insisted that God's word preached in any language was valid, but Eustathius was just scoring a preacher's point. *Eustathii ... Opuscula*, ed. G. L. F. Tafel (Frankfurt am Main, 1832), XV, 34 (p. 133, 91-94).

tion.²⁶ In the sixth century, Agathias did not share Theodoretus' favorable view of the expressiveness of the Persian language. Instead, he "proved" that it was impossible to render clear and precise Hellenic notions into the rough and unrefined speech of the Persians.²⁷ Three centuries later, our Cyril's protector, Emperor Michael III, pointed out to the Pope that the Latin tongue was barbaric and Scythian.²⁸ As for Cyril's other protector, the Patriarch Photius, he lectured the Armenians on the superiority of the Greek culture and reminded them that the Gospels had been written in Greek for the Greeks.²⁹

We lavish praise upon the Byzantines for their encouragement of national Slavic liturgy. Not all of this praise is deserved. In Byzantium, a multinational state, cultivated people were familiar with the past and current use of tongues less perfect than Greek for Christian worship.³⁰

²⁶ From the fifth century to the seventh and from the thirteenth to the fifteenth, barbarians (including Slavs) were occasionally idealized for their truthfulness, simplicity, frugality, and self-control. This motif, which was always secondary, seems not to occur in the time of Cyril and Methodius (praise of Slavic hospitality and of the chastity of Slavic women found in Emperor Leo VI's [886-912] *Tactica* is borrowed from the *Strategicon* of Pseudo-Mauricius [sixth-seventh century]); its usual purpose was the indirect criticism of Byzantium's own society.

²⁷ Agathias, *Hist.*, 126, 1, to 127, 14, Bonn (shaft aimed at Chosroes).

²⁸ Pope Nicholas I's letter 88 (to Michael III), *MGH, Ep.*, VI (1925), 459, 6, 15, 18, 28, and 32 (date: 865).

²⁹ Letter to Zachary, Catholicos of Armenia, in *Православный палестинский сборник*, XXXI (1892), 185, 11-24, and 233-34 (Russian translation). Cf. also F. Dvornik, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), pp. 240-41. In his letter to Valpert, metropolitan of Aquileia (ed. I. N. Valettas [1864], p. 185), Photius says that Pope Leo III had the Symbol of Faith incised on tablets in Greek, so that "the teaching of piety" might not be "falsified through a barbaric language," presumably through Latin.

³⁰ Any reader of John Chrysostom's *Homily* quoted in note 24 *supra* did realize that once upon a time the Gospels were read in Gothic during the service in the "Gothic" church of Constantinople. Byzantine polemical tracts listed trilingualism (see note 8 *supra*) among Latin "errors," cf. J. Hergenröther, *Monumenta graeca ad Photium eiusque historiam spectantia* (Ratisbonae, 1869), p. 68, error 19, repeated in the text published by J. Davreux, *Byzantion*, X (1935), 105, error 33, and in Constantine Stilbes (early thirteenth century), ed. J. Darrouzès, *Revue des études byzantines*, XXI (1963), 63, error 9. Hergenröther's tract (which is not by Photius, cf., e.g., K. Ziegler in Georg Wissowa *et al.*, eds., *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, XX, 1 [Stuttgart, 1941], col. 735, and Darrouzès, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56) seems to date from the eleventh-twelfth century, but some of its accusations may go back to the ninth century. In answer to a query, the learned twelfth-century canonist Theodore Balsamon approved the use of liturgical books in the vernacular by the Syrians and Armenians living in the Patriarchate of Alexandria, provided that these books went back to (were *metagraphenta* from) texts written "in Greek letters," Migne, *PG*, CXXXVIII, col. 957B. To my knowledge, these four (actually, two) passages are the sum total of positive evidence adduced in the discussions of Byzantine attitudes toward national liturgies. Though this is perhaps enough to show that the Byzantines were prone to saddle the Latins with all sorts of errors and that they were perfectly ready to tolerate other languages in liturgy, it is hardly enough to substantiate the "fundamental Byzantine concept in favor of national languages." The other piece of direct evidence customarily invoked comes from Cyril's forceful words in *Vita Constantini*, § 16, a not quite sound procedure if we want to assign to Cyril's ideology a place in the spectrum of current Byzantine attitudes. The perspicacious study by I. Dujčev, "Il problema delle lingue nazionali nel Medio Evo e gli Slavi," *Ricerche Slavistiche*, VIII (1960), 39-60, is handicapped by this circular thinking. However, he does admit (p. 59) the

One more translation of the liturgy *ad usum barbarorum* could have caused no scandal in Constantinople, especially since the decision to provide the prince of the Moravians, a faraway ruler, with a Slavic alphabet and liturgy was reached at the highest level. But in these matters the goals of the Byzantine court were different from those of the British and Foreign Bible Society. In areas closer to home, or wherever the Byzantines felt strong enough, they practiced vigorous cultural imperialism, which implies linguistic intolerance. In the sixth and seventh centuries, Slavs had overrun Greece and penetrated into the Peloponnesus and the islands. They were made to disappear as Slavs not by the sword alone and certainly not by the encouragement of Slavic letters, but—so we surmise more than we know—by the reimposition of the Greek administration, the introduction of Greek Church hierarchy, and by the celebration of the liturgy in Greek.³¹ The forced Hellenization of conquered Bulgaria in the eleventh and twelfth centuries requires no surmises.³² This Hellenization seems to have included the introduction of Greek as the liturgical language and, in addition, attempted to supplant Church Slavonic literature by Greek equivalents.³³

Cyril was a highly cultivated man—it is important that our Latin and our Slavic sources firmly agree on this point. This protégé of the emperor and the patriarch, lionized in the highest circles, must have

existence of a current in Byzantium (a nonofficial one, he says) opposed to the use of the vernacular in liturgy.

³¹ For this Hellenization through Christianization, and through resettlement of Greeks on the Peloponnesus, cf. the so-called Monembasia Chronicle, best edition of the pertinent part in the excellent study by P. Lemerle, "La Chronique improprement dite de Monembasie: Le contexte historique et légendaire," *Revue des études byzantines*, XXI (1963), esp. p. 10, lines 61 ff.

³² The way in which cultivated Byzantine ecclesiastics felt about the Slavic flock entrusted to their care may be learned from the writings of Theophylactus, archbishop of Bulgaria, who, toward the end of the eleventh century, had been sent from the glittering capital of the empire to the cultural desert of the autonomous See of Ochrida. Bulgarians of the early tenth century, among whom St. Clement was spreading the word of God, found little favor with Theophylactus. Bulgarian priests he considered to have been stupid; the rulers of Bulgaria, barbaric by nature, and the Bulgarians in general ignorant, wild, undomesticated, beastlike, and slow in acquiring the knowledge of God. When Theophylactus came to his own parishioners, his language grew even more colorful. Alluding to a passage in Matthew, he compared the Bulgarians to swine possessed by demons; himself, he likened to an eagle wallowing in mud, forced to live with frogs who leap upon the royal bird's back. He deplored the loss of his culture and polish in the midst of his barbarian surroundings and he exchanged books and complaints with a correspondent who was as unhappy as he was about turning into a barbarian in the midst of the Bulgarian population. Both worthy prelates behaved as English officials, jogging along in some far off colony of the empire, might have behaved half a century ago. Cf. *Vita Clementis*, in Милев, *op. cit.*, § 63, p. 74, 32-33; § 66, p. 76, 8-11; § 67, p. 78, 6-9; § 74, p. 84, 2-3; and the often quoted passages of the *Letters*, Migne, *PG*, CXXXVI, cols. 464B, 308B, 320C, 396BC.

³³ See В. Н. Златарски, *История на българската държава през средните векове*, II (София, 1934), 265-69 (no source references, however); according to Г. Г. Лятаврич, *Болгария и Византия в XI-XII вв.* (Moscow, 1960), pp. 363-75, there was no systematic assimilation policy on the part of the Byzantines in Bulgaria, but the results were the same as if there had been such a policy.

shared the cultural credo of the Byzantine elite. This is not mere speculation: Cyril's Slavic *Vita* depicts his victory over the Arabs in a dispute which ranged over the whole field of the arts. When the astonished adversaries wanted to know the reason for Cyril's vast knowledge, the *Vita* has him reply: "All the arts have had their origin with us [i.e., with the Byzantines]." ³⁴ Yet we find no trace of such haughtiness in reports on the Slavic Apostles' missionary activity or in works which reflect the atmosphere prevailing among the Apostles' first disciples. ³⁵ In order to assert the Slavs' rights to a liturgy in their own language, Cyril improved upon the verses of Matthew "for He [i.e., the Heavenly Father] makes His sun rise on the *evil* and on the *good*, and sends rain on the just and the unjust." ³⁶ Quoted literally in the Apostle's dispute with the "trilinguists," these verses might still have been interpreted as a tacit admission that the Slavs were somewhat evil or inferior. Cyril's own—or rather his *Vita's*—formulation was "does not the rain, <coming> from God, fall equally upon all men? Likewise, does not the sun shine upon all? Do we not breathe the air in the same manner?" ³⁷ Cyril's was a plea for equality of all men, whether they were barbarians or speakers of the three "God-made" languages, Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. When Cyril was briefed on his forthcoming mission to the Slavs, he not only objected that setting out without texts (or alphabet?) in Slavic would amount to "writing on water"—which was a level-headed judgment worthy of a philologist as well as of a missionary—but also hinted that spreading the Holy Writ in Slavic might be viewed as heresy—which was a way of forestalling possible attacks from some bigoted Byzantine prelates. ³⁸ The Preface (originally Greek?) to the lectionary, written by Cyril, or at least in his time, discussed the difficulties of translating from Greek into Slavic. This was a technical discussion without the slightest hint that these difficulties might be due to the lesser sophistication of the Slavic tongue. ³⁹ The versified Preface which Cyril (or one of Methodius' disciples) wrote to the full text of the

³⁴ *Vita Constantini*, § 6 (Lehr-Splawiński, p. 25): *a otъ nasъ sqtъ vsja xodožstvъja išla*. *Vita Constantini*, § 9 (Lehr-Splawiński, p. 35) defends the Byzantine system of succession to the throne; § 11 (Lehr-Splawiński, p. 57) asserts that the Christian (i.e., Byzantine) emperor has been given power over *all* nations.

³⁵ The only possible exception is *Vita Methodii*, § 5 (Lehr-Splawiński, p. 107), where Rostislav of Moravia, writing to Emperor Michael III, uses the phrase *a my Slověne prosta čedъ*, "but we, the Slavs, <are> simple folk." ³⁶ Matt. 5:45.

³⁷ *Vita Constantini*, § 16 (Lehr-Splawiński, p. 75). Cyril's argument may have been influenced not only by the words of Matthew (who does not refer to the air at all), but also by a passage in John Chrysostom's *Homily* quoted in note 24 *supra*; cf. col. 502: "even as the sun is common <to all> and the earth is common and the sea and the air, in the like fashion, but to a higher degree, has the Word of the Message become common <to all>." Cyril may very well have been familiar with this *Homily*, which bore directly on the subject of proclaiming the Christian message in languages other than Greek.

³⁸ *Vita Constantini*, § 14 (Lehr-Splawiński, p. 67).

³⁹ Best edition by A. Vaillant, "La Préface de l'évangéliste vieux-slave," *Revue des études slaves*, XXIV (1948), 5-20.

Gospels⁴⁰ appealed to “all (?) ye Slavs”⁴¹ and offered them the Gospels which make all men abandon their bestial existence. This reference was in good Byzantine tradition. But the Preface continued by paraphrasing St. Paul and saying that the Slavs would no longer have to listen to the voice of a noisy gong, that is, to the Word of God preached in a foreign language.⁴² This would have been quite an unpatriotic statement if its author had been an average Byzantine.

The main purpose of those who dispatched Cyril and Methodius on their mission may have been the furtherance of Byzantium’s ideological and cultural interests. At the start, this may also have been one of the purposes the Thessalonican brothers themselves had in mind. But in the course of years spent abroad, their perspective must have changed. Men of their caliber do not voluntarily exchange lecturing at a university in the Imperial City for teaching the catechism in Prince Kocel’s Mudtown, or peaceful contemplation in a monastery on the Bithynian Olympus for a dungeon in a Swabian prison, merely to further Byzantine cultural imperialism. Like Albert Schweitzer in his African station, the Thessalonican brothers came to identify their lives with those of the people among whom they worked. Since they were typical, if highly refined, products of Byzantine culture, they redeem it of some of its responsibility for the mixture of arrogance and pusillanimity with which it imbued a Theophylactus of Ochrida—relegated here to a footnote (32), where he belongs—and his like.⁴³

The third paradox of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission has to do with the high quality of that mission’s literary output. The peak achievements of Old Church Slavonic literature stand at its difficult beginnings, not at the end of a leisurely development.

⁴⁰ Latest reconstruction by A. Vaillant, “Une Poésie vieux-slave: La Préface de l’évangile,” *Revue des études slaves*, XXXIII (1956), 7-25; English translation by R. Jakobson in “St. Constantine’s Prologue to the Gospels,” *St. Vladimir’s Seminary Quarterly*, II, No. 4 (1954), 19-23 (revised version, *ibid.*, VII [1963], 14-19).

⁴¹ So the manuscripts: *sloveni vsi*. But this gives thirteen instead of twelve syllables in the line. Therefore most editors (Sobolevsky; Vaillant, “Une Poésie . . .,” p. 10; R. Nahtigal, *Akad. Znanosti in Umetnosti v Ljubljani, filoz.-filol.-hist. razred, Razprave*, I [1943], 93 and 100) write *Slověne, si*: “<hearken> ye Slavs, to this.” The difference is of importance, for several modern scholars construe the activity of Cyril and Methodius as destined for all the Slavic lands.

⁴² The words *mědъna zvona* in line 49 allude to *khalkos ēkhōn* of I Cor. 13:1; this seems to have escaped editors of the Preface. The *Šišatovac Apostol* (date: 1324) renders the Greek words by *mědъ zvъneštii*. Cf. F. Miklosich, *Apostolus . . . Šišatovac . . .* (Vienna, 1853), p. 237.

⁴³ In the first decade of the tenth century, Peter, archbishop of the newly Christianized Alania (north of the Caucasus) wrote Patriarch Nicholas I a series of letters in which he complained about his remoteness and the country to which he had been assigned. Cf. Nicholas’ answers in Migne, *PG*, CXI, cols. 244C, 245BC, 336B, 356A. I doubt that Cyril wrote similar letters to Photius half a century earlier. On Byzantine attitudes toward Slavic cultural independence, cf. now D. Angelov, «Кирил и Методий и византийската култура и политика,» *Хиляда и сто години славянска писменост . . .* (Sofia, 1963), pp. 51-

The Old Church Slavonic language was formed in a short period of time, primarily in the process of translation from late antique and Byzantine Greek. It was born out of the struggle between Slavic and the relatively unsophisticated Greek of the Gospels as well as between Slavic and the much more ornate diction of the liturgical books, the technicalities of juridical texts,⁴⁴ some tidbits from two rhetorically minded Church Fathers,⁴⁵ and the doubtlessly involved Greek of Cyril himself.⁴⁶ The struggle with the millenary tradition of Greek prose was not without its dangers: Old Church Slavonic could have turned out like Coptic, with throngs of undigested loan words, including not only technical terms but also the very building blocks of the lexical system. Most of these dangers were avoided. Still, Greek left an indelible imprint upon the earliest literary Slavic, mainly in the form of loan words and semantic and phraseological *calques*, but also in the use of practices prevalent in later Greek prose and alien to the spirit of Slavic, such as the abundant coining of composite words.⁴⁷

One would expect that the infant Church Slavonic language and literature, quasi-immobilized by the tutelage of Greek in Cyrillo-Methodian days, would slowly discard it as time went on. In the field of translation, which accounts for the bulk of Church Slavonic letters, the exact opposite occurred. Cyril's Slavic lectionary is justly acclaimed as a masterpiece. The translator rendered various meanings and nuances of the same Greek noun or verb by different Slavic words; he translated thoughtfully and freely when the sense of the original required it; he went out of his way to create Slavic equivalents to Greek stylistic devices.⁴⁸ The relative simplicity of New Testament Greek may account in part for Cyril's success, but he seems to have done better than his contemporaries who were faced with the same task: in Vondrák's opinion, Cyril's work is superior to the (somewhat later) translation of the nonlectionary parts of the Gospel.⁴⁹

69. I note with pleasure that Professor Angelov's basic conception is quite close to mine. He may, however, be a bit too hard on Photius. Photius is not guilty of duplicity in attacking the Latins for their "trilingual" error while not breathing a word about it in his letter to Prince Boris of Bulgaria, for Photius is not the author of the anti-Latin tract in which the "trilinguists" are upbraided. For this tract, cf. note 30 *supra*.

⁴⁴ See note 11 of Professor Dvornik's preceding article.

⁴⁵ St. Gregory of Nazianzus; Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita.

⁴⁶ Some of Cyril's Greek writings were translated into Slavic by Methodius, cf. *Vita Constantini*, § 10 (Lehr-Splawiński, p. 53), and were used by the compiler of Cyril's *Vita*. Cf. also E. Georgiev, «Книгите' на славянския просветител Константин-Кирил . . .» *Slavistična revija*, X (1957), 119-28 (attributes too many writings to Cyril) and I. Dujčev, "Constantino Filosofo nella storia della letteratura bizantina," *Studi in onore di Ettore Lo Gatto e Giovanni Maver* (Florence, 1962), pp. 205-22 (excellent).

⁴⁷ M. Weingart, "Le vocabulaire du vieux-slave dans ses relations avec le vocabulaire grec," *Studi bizantini e neo-ellenici*, V (1939), 564-77; K. Schumann, *Die griechischen Lehnbildungen und Lehnbedeutungen im Altbulgarischen* (Wiesbaden, 1958).

⁴⁸ O. Grünenthal, "Die Übersetzungstechnik der altkirchenslavischen Evangelienübersetzung," *Archiv für slavische Philologie*, XXXI (1910), 321-66; XXXII (1911), 1-48; E. Berneker, "Kyrills Übersetzungskunst," *Indogermanische Forschungen*, XXXI (1912), 399-412.

The first post-Methodian generation of translators undertook quite formidable tasks, and accomplished them boldly and on the whole successfully, witness Constantine Presbyter's rendition, dating from 907 (the year of Moravia's ruin), of St. Athanasius' *Discourse Against the Arians*.⁵⁰ But the work of John the Exarch, who came next in time, is less satisfactory. He copied the theoretical statements on translation contained in the Preface to Cyril's lectionary without understanding them;⁵¹ the Exarch's own translation technique tended to establish a mechanical one-to-one correspondence between the Greek and the Slavic words.⁵² Things worsened as time went on. If the early translations were literal without being mechanical, and if the early translators seldom translated without understanding, the later translations were mechanical without being precise, and translating without understanding occurred quite often: the easiest way to unravel a text like the *Izbornik* of the year 1073 is to read it along with its Greek original. Refreshing exceptions like the Slavic Josephus Flavius, a Kievan translation of the eleventh century, or the simplifying but reasonable translation of Zonaras' Chronicle, made by a thinking Bulgarian in the fourteenth century, are infrequent enough to confirm the rule.

Increasing lack of familiarity with Greek was not at the root of the difficulty. This is apparent from the linguistic and orthographic reforms of Church Slavonic, undertaken by Euthymius, Patriarch of Tarnovo, in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. The spirit of these reforms may be gathered from Euthymius' own works and from those of his indirect disciple, Constantine Kostenečki, whose *Skazanie o pismenexu* is the most detailed linguistic treatise of the Orthodox Slavic Middle Ages. Constantine dreamed of writing a Slavic counterpart to Moschopoulos' *Erôtēmata*, a late Byzantine grammar of standard Greek; when he proposed that unqualified people should be forbidden to "copy" (that is, edit and transcribe) sacred books, he referred to similar measures taken "among the Greeks, in Tarnovo and even on Mount Athos." To say, as Jagić did, that Constantine Kostenečki was so utterly Hellenized that in his thinking and mode of expression he was a Greek, rather than a Bulgarian or a Serb, is to pay him too great a compliment.⁵³ In any case, all that polish did Constantine more harm than

⁴⁹ V. Vondrák, "O církevněslovanském překladu evangelia . . .," *Daničičev zbornik* (1925), pp. 9-27, esp. pp. 18-20 and 27; accepted by K. Horálek, "La traduction vieux-slave de l'évangile . . .," *Byzantinoslavica*, XX (1959), 278; denied, however, by Weingart, "Le vocabulaire . . .," pp. 571-73.

⁵⁰ A. Vaillant, ed., *Discours contre les ariens de Saint Athanase* (Sofia, 1954), esp. p. 11.

⁵¹ Cf. Vaillant, "La Préface . . .," pp. 15-17.

⁵² Cf. the severe judgment by A. Leskien, "Die Übersetzungskunst des Exarchen Johannes," *Archiv für slavische Philologie*, XXV (1903), 48-66.

⁵³ I. V. Jagić, «Рассуждения южнославянской и русской старины о церковнославянскомъ языкѣ,» *Изп. Академія наукъ: Изследованія по рускому языку*, I (1885-95), 366-517, esp. pp. 367, 369, and 420.

good, for his opinions on what was wrong with previous translations from Greek were those of a narrow pedant.⁵⁴

But we must not attribute all of Constantine Kostenečki's failures to the smothering effect of too close a contact with Byzantine models. Otherwise, we would be at a loss to explain the Slavic Apostles' success six centuries earlier. Even those who stress the role of impersonal cultural trends will realize that translations are done by individuals or—*pace* the Septuagint—by small committees, and will admit that there is no substitute—in the fifteenth century no less than in the ninth—for genuine culture and, above all, for genuine talent.

Among the major original works of Church Slavonic literature, the *Vitae* of Constantine-Cyril and Methodius occupy an exceptional position. In the tenth century, not only the awkward Life of St. Naum but also the much more ambitious Panegyrics of Cyril and Methodius attest to the superiority of the *Vitae* as literary works. As a Byzantinist, I measure the excellence and sophistication of a literary work written in Church Slavonic by its understandability and by the degree of gracefulness and spontaneity of its language and form in relation to its Byzantine or Byzantinizing elements and models. Within this scale of values the *Vitae* at least hold their own when juxtaposed with such choice pieces of the Church Slavonic *koinē* as the Russian Life of Theodosius of the Cave Monastery or the Serbian Lives of the princely saints.⁵⁵ Whenever I reread the *Vitae*, I marvel at the lucidity of their by no means simple sentences and at the success with which they have amalgamated their numerous Byzantine elements—including most of the passages going back to the Greek—with the main body of their text.⁵⁶

The first two Cyrillo-Methodian generations initiated one particular experiment: close imitation of the forms and structures used in Byzan-

⁵⁴ He insisted that to render *ho pro aiōnōn theos* one should say *īze prēvēčnyi b(og)ŏ*, rather than simply *prēvēčnyi b(og)ŏ*; thus he wanted the Greek article translated, too; his own translation of a Greek grammatical passage (cf. Jagić, *op. cit.*, p. 482) is appalling gibberish (*ti esti soloikismos? hē akatallēlos symplokē tōn lexeōn—ēto es(t)ŏ solikizmo? edino sŏ drugim sŏpleteno leksia*); on top of being nonsense, this translation attempts to state the opposite of the Greek.

⁵⁵ For positive appreciation of the earliest Old Church Slavonic works, cf. N. van Wijk, "Zur sprachlichen und stilistischen Würdigung der altkirchenslavischen *Vita Constantini*," *Südostforschungen*, VI (1941), 74-102, esp. 98, and K. Horálek, "K problematice cyrilometodějské literatury," *Slavia*, XXXII (1963), 328. R. Picchio, "Compilazione e trama narrativa nelle 'Vite' di Costantino e Metodio," *Ricerche Slavistiche*, VIII (1960), 61-95, finds *Vita Methodii* superior to *Vita Constantini*; our tastes differ.

⁵⁶ Compare, e.g., the borrowing from the famous funerary Oration on St. Basil by Gregory of Nazianzus, § 23 (Migne, *PG*, XXXVI, col. 525C), as it stands in the *Vita Constantini*, § 4 (Lehr-Splawiński, p. 11), with the same chapter 23 as it stands in a later Slavic translation of Gregory's Oration, ed. A. Будиловичъ, *XIII слово Григорія Богослова . . . по рукописи Импер. Публичной Библиотеки XI века* (St. Petersburg, 1875), p. 33. The version of the *Vita* is a free simplifying rendering, the Greek having been well understood by the compiler; the version of the Slavic (tenth century?) translation, with its clumsy *blagoveštijemŏ* ~ *euphyia* (dative) makes the reader doubt whether the translator knew what he was doing.

tine liturgical and secular poetry.⁵⁷ Imitation of Byzantine liturgical texts may have continued in later stages of medieval Slavic literature, but imitation of Byzantine secular meters, the dodecasyllable and perhaps even the hexameter,⁵⁸ seems to have been limited to the initial period of Church Slavonic literature. The Preface to the full text of the Gospels is certainly not later than the year nine hundred; though hardly a masterpiece of Byzantine poetics,⁵⁹ it is composed in regular Byzantine dodecasyllables. No medieval Slavic poems in this verse are known after the early tenth century; the mid-fourteenth-century Bulgarian translation of Constantine Manasses' Chronicle, written in fifteen-syllable verse, is in prose. In the field of formal devices, the most articulate period in the history of medieval Slavic letters created by Cyril and Methodius was the initial one.

The excellence achieved by the very first works of Church Slavonic literature gave rise to disbelief that this literature could have been born overnight, and to speculations that it, and the Glagolitic alphabet, must have gone through a preparatory, pre-Cyrillo-Methodian stage.⁶⁰ These

⁵⁷ On Old Church Slavonic poetry, cf. in addition to the works of Vaillant, Nahtigal, and Dujčev quoted in notes 40, 41, and 46 *supra*, and the reconstruction by Trubetzkoy quoted in note 58 *infra*, the brilliant if in part too speculative studies by R. Jakobson, «Стихотворные цитаты в великоморовской агиографии,» *Slavistična revija*, X (1957), 111-18; "The Slavic Response to Byzantine Poetry," *XII^e Congrès international des études byzantines, Ochrde 1961, Rapports*, VIII (1961); «Гайская Служба Константина философа и дальнейшее развитие старославянской поэзии,» *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta*, VIII, No. 1 (1963), 153-66.

⁵⁸ Cf. the interesting reconstruction in R. Burgi, *A History of the Russian Hexameter* (Hamden, 1954), pp. 5-9 (suggestion *ad* p. 9: in the *Archive Manuscript*, read *Zakona gradьska* [instead of *granьska*] *glavy*. This will introduce the more plausible "Civil Law" [*nomos politikos*] and will eliminate the "Law of Verse" and the postulated but otherwise unknown Old Church Slavonic treatise on versification). N. S. Trubetzkoy, "Ein altkirchenslavisches Gedicht," *Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie*, XI (1934), 52-54, has postulated that the praise of St. Gregory of Nazianzus contained in *Vita Constantini*, § 3 (Lehr-Spřawinski, p. 9) is a poem, and obtained (by slightly changing the text) a seven-line structure of seventeen or sixteen syllables each (the sequence being 17, 16, 16, 17, 16, 16, 17) with a caesura after the fifth or seventh syllable, and with the last syllable of a line always unstressed. When, for the sake of comparison, we take an early tenth-century Byzantine inscription, in hexameters, which happens to be seven lines long, we find that its verses have 17, 16, 16, 17, 17, 17, 16 syllables respectively, that the penthemimeres caesura (or rather, in P. Maas' terminology, the *Binnenschluss*, always coinciding with the end of the word) stands after the seventh syllable in four out of seven cases, and that the final syllable is never under stress. For the text of the inscription, cf. A. M. Schneider, *Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Archäologischer Anzeiger 1944/45* (1949), p. 78. I am leaving it up to the specialists to evaluate this juxtaposition. A. Vaillant, *Revue des études slaves*, XIV (1934), 236, considers the praise of Gregory of Nazianzus to be in prose.

⁵⁹ Cf., for the opposite view, the hyperbole in R. Jakobson, "The Slavic Response . . .," p. 264. The classic article by P. Maas, "Der byzantinische Zwölfsilbler," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XII (1903), 278-323, should clarify (and make simpler) some of the problems dealt with by students of medieval Slavic poetry.

⁶⁰ Cf., e.g., J. Kurz, "Význam činnosti slovanských apoštolů Cyrila a Metoděje v dějinách slovanské kultury," *Slavia*, XXXII (1963), 309-26, esp. 315-18 (balanced; bibliography); W. Lettenbauer, "Zur Entstehung des glagolitischen Alphabets," *Slovo*, III (1953), 35-48 (Glagolitic earlier than the year 784). Е. Георгиев, *Славянская письменность до Кирилла*

doubts are creative, for one day they may lead to discoveries. As things now stand, however, we have found no solid traces of pre-Cyrrillian attempts to create a Church Slavonic literature among the Slavs either settled on Byzantine territory or elsewhere. Provided we do not quibble too much over defining the terms "invention" and "creation," the view which at present has most to recommend it is that the Glagolitic alphabet was the invention of a single individual,⁶¹ and the first Slavic literary language, the creation of two individuals assisted and followed by a small circle of disciples. If this sounds too simple, it is not because such a feat would be unprecedented (the case of the Armenian alphabet and Gospel translation presents a striking parallel),⁶² but because when we have nothing concrete to say we would rather rely on evolutionary doctrines than just confess to being puzzled in the face of an exceptional achievement.

и Методия (Sofia, 1952); В. А. Истрин, *1100 лет славянской азбуки* (Moscow, 1963) (Cyrillic earlier than Glagolitic; pre-Christian Slavic script) is to be read with extreme caution on account of his faulty methodology.

⁶¹ Such, in the final analysis, is the position of I. Dujčev, «Въпросът за византийско-славянските отношения и византийските опити за създаване на славянска азбука през първата половина на IX век,» *Известия на Института за българска история*, VII (1957), 241-67, although he sees in *Vita Constantini*, § 14, the proof that the Byzantines attempted to create a Slavic alphabet as early as 820, and has Cyril create the Glagolitic as early as 855. The latter date is based on the text of Monk Khrabr. But does Khrabr speak of 855 rather than 863 (using the era of 5500)? Cf., e.g., К. Кувев in *IV Международният съезд славистов, Материали дискуссии*, I (1962), 117-18. The question has not yet been cleared up. A. Dostál, *Byzantinoslavica*, XXIV (1963), 237 and note 6, promises a "convincing" solution, soon to be given by M. Vlašek.

⁶² Cf. P. Peeters, "Pour l'histoire des origines de l'alphabet arménien," reprinted in the same author's *Recherches d'histoire et de philologie orientales*, I (Brussels, 1951), 171-207. Father Peeters' masterful study is indispensable for students of the Cyrillo-Methodian question. Cf. also Karekin Sarkissian, *A Brief Introduction to Armenian Christian Literature* (London, 1960), pp. 16-17. For the latest approach to the origins of the Glagolitic from the comparative point of view, cf. T. Eckhardt, "Theorien über den Ursprung der Glagolica . . .," *Slovo*, XIII (1963), 87-118 (cf. pp. 100-102 for hints that the Glagolitic is an individual's invention).