

# The Legacy of Cyril and Methodius and the Development of the First Slavic Literary Language in the Bulgarian Empire: A European Perspective

## The Cyrillo-Methodian Sources

In the last two centuries, rivers of ink have been written about the mission of Cyril and Methodius and the birth of the first Slavic literary language, but the interpretation of their work and of their legacy remains open<sup>1</sup>. Both the nature of the sources and the quality of the scientific editions certainly play a role. The available Slavic, Latin and Greek sources mostly have a late manuscript tradition, starting with the Life of Constantine-Cyril, whose first witnesses date back to the fifteenth century and whose reliability is still discussed despite the extraordinary efforts made in the last century<sup>2</sup>. Its complex manuscript tradition continues to be the subject of research, but we still do not have a totally reliable, critical edition<sup>3</sup>.

In Slavonic literature, there are also writings that are attributed directly to Cyril, such as the Prologue (*Proglas*), which would therefore be the first poetic composition in Slavic, but the scientific community does not unanimously recognise its paternity and its textual reconstruction remains very difficult<sup>4</sup>. To orientate ourselves in this complex picture, in addition to the traditional collections of sources<sup>5</sup>, at least with regard to the »Slavonic sources on Cyril and Methodius and their disciples«, we now have a fundamental map available<sup>6</sup>. However, already at first glance, it must be recognised that they are largely liturgical texts that do not offer reliable material for historical reconstruction.

A great contribution is provided by Latin sources, especially the papal correspondence of the period, as recently demonstrated by M. Betti's scrupulous study<sup>7</sup>, although attention is generally focused on Moravia and Pannonia, to which the Slavic mission of the Thessalonian brothers was directed. It

should be remembered that Rome claimed the entire ancient province of Illyricum, including the Bulgarian Khanate<sup>8</sup>. In defence of its rights, the Roman curia was confronted with a resurgent Eastern Roman Empire that was taking on the characteristics of the Byzantine tradition in cultural, social and religious dimensions. It was also confronted with the expansion of the East Frankish kingdom, which sought control over the Danube basin, while its eastern territories were occupied by Slavic peoples who converted to Christianity of the Latin tradition in the form adopted in the Germanic-Celtic world.

## The Christianisation of the Slavs and the New Geopolitics of the Middle Age Era

The legacy of Cyril and Methodius and the development of the first Slavic literary language have their initial starting point in the Slavic mission, prepared in Constantinople at the time of Patriarch Photius (863) and then passed under the aegis of Pope Adrian II (869). The Cyrillo-Methodian mission took place in the heart of the European continent, where the interests of the Carolingian and Byzantine Empires and the different religious authorities clashed, while the Mediterranean basin appeared increasingly dominated by Islamic power, especially with the gradual conquest of Sicily (827-902). Often, the focus is on papal politics and the East Frankish Kingdom, but one should consider the extensive Byzantine influence and in particular the comprehensive design of a Constantinopolitan project from the Khazar and Arabic east to the Danube basin. There, the conversion of the Slavs to Christianity would have had an important weight and would have had to

1 Along with the weighty Cyrillo-Methodian bibliographies published in the past, the Kirilo-Metodievaska enciklopedija (KME) should be consulted in order to realise the vastness of the scientific literature on the subject. Of course, the extensive bibliography of the past two decades must be added.

2 Reference should be made to the classic study by F. Dvornik (Dvornik), a work written in Paris inspired by the Byzantinist C. Diehl (Garzaniti, *The Cyrillo-Methodian Mission*).

3 See Ivanova, *Konstantin-Kiril 7-62*. Italian Slavists have contributed to the debate by studying the complexity of the reconstruction of the different branches of the manuscript tradition, see Diddi, *Vita Constantini*.

4 See Garzaniti, »Proglas k svetemu Evangeliju«.

5 The most recent collection of the Cyrillo-Methodian sources remains the *Magna Moraviae fontes historici*, which is now available in a comprehensive new edition (a third is in preparation), but in general it still refers to Grivec/Tomšič, *Constantinus et Methodius*.

6 See Mirčeva, *Kiril i Metodij*.

7 See Betti, *Christian Moravia*. For a more traditional approach see Vavřínek, *Cyryl a Metoděj*. In addition to the papal correspondences, we must first add the so-called »Italic Legend«, the most important Latin source on the activity of the Thessalonian brothers (Grivec/Tomšič, *Constantinus et Methodius 59-64*).

8 See Dvornik 249-283.

rebalance the adherence to the Western Christianity of the Germanic peoples<sup>9</sup>. The Cyrillo-Methodian mission in Moravia and Pannonia and the adherence to Christianity of Khan Boris, not only coincide temporally in the mid-860s, but must also be considered within this complex political and ecclesiastical framework to understand subsequent developments<sup>10</sup>.

In the restoration of the geopolitical and religious balance, before the new upheaval produced by the invasion of the Hungarians in the tenth century, the Pannonian and Moravian area submitted, with alternating vicissitudes, to the hegemony of the East Frankish Kingdom and episcopate; Dalmatia strengthened its ties to the Roman papacy. The Bulgarian Khanate began a process of Christianisation that was increasingly orientated towards Constantinople, which, after the reception of the disciples of Methodius (885), would have had unexpected cultural, social and political consequences, not only for the Balkans, but also for Eastern Europe as a whole in the following centuries.

For these reasons, at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when the Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Ottoman Empires were in deep crisis and the new Slavic national states were born on their ashes, the study of the mission of Cyril and Methodius and their legacy took on a fundamental role in the construction of various national identities. The different ideological orientations, both national and religious, have naturally influenced scientific research, even that which seems to focus on philological and literary questions<sup>11</sup>. In this way, a complex »Cyrillo-Methodian question« has been created in which contemporary problems are intertwined with the construction of different national and religious memories, while scientific research often tends to confine itself within the limits of a rigorous, but often reductive, factual analysis<sup>12</sup>.

## The Slavic Mission and its Developments

To orientate ourselves in the complexity of the Cyrillo-Methodian question and its Bulgarian heritage, we should start from certain fixed points that are indispensable for the interpretation of the mission of the Thessalonian brothers, which are widely reflected in the sources. The first is that the mission was conceived in Constantinople in the early 860s and produced a special alphabet for the Slavs, the Glagolitic, and some proofs of translation. The second is that the mission took place in Great Moravia, an area considered to be under the jurisdiction of Rome, where Latin and Germanic mission-

aries were already active, even if it seems difficult to define its precise boundaries. The third factor concerns the transformation of the Byzantine mission into a Roman mission after the death of Cyril (869) and the consecration of Methodius as archbishop of Moravia on the initiative of Pope Hadrian II<sup>13</sup>. In any case, it must be emphasised that Cyril belonged to the circle of the Patriarch Photius, who has gone down in history largely because of his schism with Rome, and that he, like his elder brother Methodius, had received the best education of the Byzantine imperial bureaucracy. Both remained faithful to the Constantinopolitan tradition in their missionary activity<sup>14</sup>.

The Paleo-Slavic Lives of Cyril and Methodius (abbreviated VC, VM), written by their disciples, remain the most important testimonies to this very complex history. Despite the fact that they are hagiographic narratives, contemporary research has increasingly demonstrated their historical reliability. These testimonies, however, do not tell us what happened after the death of Methodius (885), when most of the Slavic clergy were sold as slaves and the closest disciples found refuge in the First Bulgarian Empire, as witnessed by the *Extended Life of Clement* (written in Greek by Theophylact (d. 1107/1108)) and the *Life of Naum*, another of his disciples<sup>15</sup>. With their expulsion, the Germanic Latin clergy, dependent on the episcopal seats of the East Frankish Kingdom, imposed themselves on Moravia, as they had previously done in Pannonia, and the religious and cultural orientation of the Western Slavic populations was determined, as it would later be for the Hungarians, although the Cyrillo-Methodian memory does not seem to have been completely erased.

The mission of Cyril and Methodius would have been one of the many failures in the work of Christianising the Slavic populations had it not been for a new factor that brought about a decisive turning point in the history of the Balkans. The disciples of Methodius found refuge in the First Bulgarian Empire, where Proto-Bulgarian and Slavic peoples coexisted. Here, they were able to continue their activities and realise an ecclesiastical structure similar to that created by Methodius in Moravia. This time, the archbishopric was no longer dependent on Rome, but in close connection with Byzantium, even if it was in fact becoming increasingly autonomous.

It is an event of extraordinary importance in Church history because it gave birth to the first true medieval autocephaly, which led to the erection of the Bulgarian Patriarchate in the course of just thirty years (925)<sup>16</sup>. It was even more fundamental in the eventual development of the Slavic literary language, the first European vernacular, which asserted itself

9 See Garzaniti, *The Constantinopolitan Project*, and Garzaniti, *Byzantine Missionary Strategies*.

10 On the sources and historical circumstances of the conversion of the Khan Boris to Christianity see Sullivan, *Khan Boris*, and Gjuzelev, *The Adoption of Christianity*.

11 Consider the role of the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII (1880), dedicated to the Thessalonian brothers, when the unionist tendencies of Catholicism and the action of the Eastern Catholic Churches within Austria-Hungary were renewed (Tamborra, *Riscoperta di Cirillo e Metodio*).

12 On the national memories related to Cyril and Methodius in the Balkan area, see Rohdewald, *Götter der Nationen* 233-341. 610-702.

13 According to the *Life of Methodius*, the prelate was consecrated in Rome as archbishop for the Slavs in the chair of Saint Andronicus, a disciple of Paul, generally identified with ancient Sirmium. This is one of the more obscure and debated points of our question (see Betti, *Christian Moravia* 192-203).

14 See Garzaniti, *Byzantine Missionary Strategies*.

15 For the *Extended Life of Clement* see Tunickij, *Materialy dlja istorii* and Milev, *Kliment Ochridski*.

16 See Gjuzelev, *Beležki vărču*.

at the same level as Latin and Greek in religious use and cultural formation. In comparison to the Moravian period, these processes involved a series of transformations, which had as their protagonists the disciples of Methodius. First of all, we must remember Clement of Ohrid and Constantine of Preslav, who produced, not only new translations, but also original works<sup>17</sup>. Among the most remarkable developments, the most important was the creation of the Cyrillic alphabet, which was modelled on the Greek capital letters, abandoning the symbolic and graphic complexity of the Glagolitic alphabet, but using it to be able to write typically Slavic sounds. The transmission of manuscripts was thus complicated by the transcription from Glagolitic to Cyrillic<sup>18</sup>.

## The Preparatory Phases of the Slavic Acculturation Process

At the level of European cultural, religious and philosophical history, the importance of the project conceived in Constantinople in the years of the Patriarch Photius, in the environment of the Magnaura, the great Roman-Eastern academy, cannot be overlooked<sup>19</sup>. It was not a purely linguistic operation, which was in itself extraordinary for the time, in other words it was also the invention of an alphabet, with the creation of a linguistic standard based on speech, which was capable of becoming a written language for the translation of complex texts. By far the most important fact is that this instrument, which was intended to facilitate the adherence of the Slavic populations to Christianity, gradually became a powerful tool for the transmission of Hellenistic-Christian culture, providing the essential tools for understanding the tradition of the Christian East.

The first round of Cyrillian translations, begun in Constantinople and carried out in Great Moravia, ended in Rome, not only with the Slavic celebrations in the Roman basilicas, but also with the deposition of the books in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, mentioned in both the Life of Constantine-Cyril (VC XVII, 5) and the Life of Clement (III, 10)<sup>20</sup>. The veneration of Jesus' manger in this Roman basilica highlights the symbolic recognition of the sacredness of Slavic books, which, not by chance, goes completely without mention in Latin sources. This is an elaboration that follows the controversy with the Latin clergy concerning the so-called »trilingualist heresy« when Cyril, on the basis of scriptural

exegesis, demonstrated, first in Venice and then in Rome, the legitimacy of the use of the Slavic language in liturgy. His teaching was based on the concept that man, beyond all race, language and culture, was a creature made in the »image« and »likeness« of God« (see Gen 1:26)<sup>21</sup> and on the idea of the universality of the Christian message, which was closely connected to the Greek concept of »knowledge of the truth«<sup>22</sup>.

Thus began, already in the time of Cyril, a process of sacralisation of the alphabet and books, inseparable realities between them, which was fulfilled with the brief treatise *On the Letters* of the monk Chrabr, written in Bulgaria at the beginning of the tenth century, when the memory of the disciples of the Thessalonian brothers was still alive<sup>23</sup>. This season, therefore, contained within itself the fruits of subsequent developments, not only for the obvious purpose of translations for public worship, but also for the cultural operation, unprecedented for the Latin West, which finds a fundamental manifesto in the aforementioned *Prologue*, attributed to Cyril<sup>24</sup>. Beyond any pedagogical realism and with absolute confidence in man's rational abilities, the Byzantine intellectual had composed a poem in verses similar to those of Greek tragedy (iambic tetrameter), in which the most daring metaphors of the Hellenistic tradition alternate to the forms of the evangelical parable to proclaim that »without the letters all peoples are naked«<sup>25</sup>. This reflection could help us, for example, to understand whether the definition of διδάσκαλος, with which the Vita Clemente designates Cyril, can be interpreted with the concept of διδάσκαλος τῶν ἔθνῶν, from the letters of St Paul (1 Tm 2,7; 2 Tm 1,11)<sup>26</sup>.

The second phase of the writer's work in Moravia developed under the direction of his older brother Methodius, who – although he was an archbishop consecrated in Rome – was nevertheless completely reconciled with the patriarch Photius, who had regained the Constantinopolitan throne (878). The Life of Methodius briefly illustrates this activity, from which we can deduce the existence of a translation school that, according to the Byzantine vision, had to prepare some necessary tools to establish a complex ecclesiastical structure and train monks and clerics who had to learn the indispensable knowledge of the books of the Bible and the major sources of ecclesiastical tradition<sup>27</sup>. We do not have the manuscript testimony of the Bible of Methodius, but only fragments of it in liturgical books or in miscellanies, at least in the earliest phase. Nevertheless, the awareness was clearly

17 On the figure and work of Clement, see Kujumdžijeva et al., Sv. Kliment Ochridski; Stantchev/Calusio, San Clemente di Ocrida.

18 This question emerges clearly in the alphabetic acrostics, among which the best known is the Alphabetical Prayer of Constantine of Preslav (Kuev, Azbučnata molitva).

19 See Garzaniti, The Constantinopolitan Project. Generally, slavishly following the hagiographic sources, the birth of the first Slavic literary language is simply attributed to the personal effort of Cyril.

20 See Garzaniti, La liturgia in slavo 34.

21 See also the disputes of Cyril with Arab Muslims and Khazars narrated in his Life (VC VI, IX-XI; see the English version with commentary in Tachiaos, Original Biographies) and the German version in Bujnoch, Zwischen Rom und Byzanz.

22 This idea is contained in one of the main quotations of the Slavonic lives and of the Cyrillo-Methodian sources: »God wants everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth« (1 Tm 2,4; see Garzaniti, Sacre scrittura). It is only now that we begin the study of the complex Byzantine biblical exegesis that underlies the teaching of Cyril and Methodius. See for example Garzaniti, Parlare in lingue.

23 See Kuev, Černorizec Chrabr.

24 See Garzaniti, »Proglas k svetemu Evangeliju«.

25 See verse 80 in Vaillant, Une poésie vieux-slave 12.

26 See Tunickij, Materialy dlja istorii 76; Hannick, Die byzantinischen Missionen 297; Iliev, Sv. Kliment 54.

27 See VM XV; see Tachiaos, Original Biographies.

maintained of the existence of the book that contained all holy scriptures, and at the same time the necessity that the clergy and monks should possess the biblical and patristic knowledge necessary to access the foundations of the traditional heritage of Eastern Christianity. This was an undertaking that occupied the last years of the Great Moravian archbishop's activity<sup>28</sup>.

## The Formation of a New Cultural Memory

Regarding the question of the language and the production of writing there is no doubt that we can speak of Old Church Slavonic or Old Bulgarian language. Unfortunately, there are very few testimonies showing linguistic characters belonging to the Western Slavic area. In recent decades, attention has been focused not only on the paleographic and linguistic aspects, but above all on the function of the language and the book forms that characterised the first production of writing. It is absolutely evident that this was a language that had a dominant function in worship and was characterised by book forms more or less necessary for the celebration of the liturgy, as well as for monastic life and the formation of the clergy. In any case, it would be anachronistic to project our idea of religious experience in a secularised society into the past.

The introduction of the Slavic language into the Byzantine liturgy had to be gradual, beginning with translations that had mainly a pastoral and catechetical purpose intended to instruct the clergy in the education of Methodius, and later gradually acquiring a full liturgical purpose in Bulgaria. Clement, who assumed the role of bishop in the western regions of the Bulgarian Empire, devoted himself to the translation and composition of Slavonic texts that had a direct liturgical function, especially of a hymnographic nature, or with a paraliturgical function as in the case of the homilies<sup>29</sup>.

The sacralisation of the Slavic language through worship deeply affected the aristocracy, as well as the population, and presupposed the formation of a literate clergy who became the upholders of a new social memory. They, whether Slavs or Proto-Bulgarians, no longer referred to ancestral cults and the memory of their ancestors, who had led the conquest of the new lands, but entered a Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern culture with a complex and stratified philosophical, historical and geographical vision. In this perspective, the effort to create a specialised lexicon or to create linguistic registers that belonged to the complex cultural synthesis of Christian Hellenism appears astonishing<sup>30</sup>.

In the Latin-Germanic world, to which a significant portion of the Slavic peoples belonged, forming the so-called »Slavia Latina«, a unique linguistic medium was imposed on different peoples and ethnic groups. In the First Bulgarian Empire, a form of communication was established, similar to the Slavic vernacular, which was perceived as a sacred language and as an expression of ethnicity, and which aspired to rise to the same level as Greek. From this perspective, the most complex aspect of education was not to learn a foreign language, as in the case of Latin in the West, but to acquire the ability to translate from Greek into Slavic. In this way, a symbiosis was created between the two languages and cultures that did not weaken over the centuries, but rather deepened. This cultural elite, composed essentially of monks, had the task of selecting books and texts of various contents and forms, which were indispensable for bringing the liturgical and monastic life ever closer to the Eastern tradition. Although the Byzantine monastic culture is clearly dominant, the First Bulgarian Empire inherited the main foundations of classical culture through patristic elaboration<sup>31</sup>.

## The First Bulgarian Empire and Bulgarian Written Production

This extraordinary period of ancient Bulgarian written production was possible because the Bulgarian khanate was transformed into the first Bulgarian Empire by adopting Constantinople as a model. The chief architect of these transformations was the son of the Khan Boris, Simeon, who grew up in Constantinople in Photius's time. Here he received an excellent education and ascended the throne at the behest of his father against the legitimate heir (893)<sup>32</sup>. The work of translating the texts from Greek into Slavonic increased thanks to the contribution of Clement, who became the first Slavic bishop of the Bulgarian Church in the eparchy of Velica<sup>33</sup>, but also of Constantine, who was active in the new capital of Preslav in continuity with the Moravian experience. At that time, a veritable Byzantine-Slavonic liturgical tradition came into being, accompanied by the creation of original texts in the fields of hymnography and homiletics, but also hagiography and exegetics<sup>34</sup>. Among these are the work of translating and adapting the Hexameron or the Slavonic version of the theological treatises of John of Damascus<sup>35</sup>. In the light of these processes, and taking into account the territorial expansion of the first Bulgarian Empire, which stretched from the Black Sea to the Adriatic Sea, it is easy to understand how, in the tenth

28 See Garzaniti, *Die slavische Bibel*, and Garzaniti, *Methodius between Rome and Constantinople*.

29 On the liturgy in Slavonic at the time of Clement of Ohrid see Garzaniti, *Biblija i bogosluženie*.

30 See Garzaniti, »Cerkovna pamjat«.

31 On the different cultural dynamics between »Slavia Latina« and »Slavia Orthodoxa« see Garzaniti, *Slavia latina e Slavia ortodossa*. About the acculturation process, our vision differs at least in part from Živov, *Osobnosti recepcii vizantijskoj kul'tury*.

32 See Gjuzeev, *Beležki vărchu*.

33 See Peri, *Velika (Dragvišta)*. – Delikari, Hl. Klemens.

34 On the Slavic liturgy at the time of Clement of Ohrid see Garzaniti, *Biblija i bogosluženie*.

35 For an introduction in a Western language to Old Bulgarian literature and its legacy in the Balkans, see Podskalsky, *Theologische Literatur des Mittelalters*.

century, the foundations were laid for a Byzantine-Slavic world orientated to the Constantinopolitan model, a turning point in the history of the Balkans (and not only there).

Consequently, the preservation and development of the Methodian legacy in the first Bulgarian Empire experienced an extraordinarily productive period under the protection of Tsar Simeon, who sought to reproduce the Byzantine model. At the same time, however, this extraordinary cultural effort ended up anchoring this legacy in a precise ethnic and confessional affiliation. This is clearly shown by the reaction of the Latin bishops of Dalmatia, starting with the archiepiscopal see of Split, who, with the support of the Holy See, convened two councils in the Adriatic city (925, 927) to sanction the condemnation of the memory of Methodius and to try to limit the use of the Slavonic language in the liturgy as much as possible<sup>36</sup>. In order to survive in the Dalmatian area, Glagolitic and its literature were reinterpreted in the light of the pious lie that transferred the invention of Glagolitic to St Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate<sup>37</sup>.

It was a cultural process that took place in the territories of the ancient Roman Empire, but in which the protagonists were those populations from beyond the Danube that the Mediterranean world considered barbaric. In reality, as we well know, a new Europe was being created, built on the basis of the cultures of the Mediterranean and the Middle East, but also benefiting from the original contribution of new peoples.

The importance of the Old Bulgarian period for the cultural history of Europe, therefore, seems to us to be underestimated, because its role beyond national destiny is not perceived and was limited to a »peripheral area«. Without a solid linguistic and literary cultural model with Byzantine roots, the history of the Balkans and of Europe as a whole would have been different. The transplantation of Bulgarian book culture into the Kievan Rus' at the end of the tenth century would not have taken place, nor would Serbian medieval culture have developed, with all the historical and cultural consequences that these processes have entailed. The echo of the Methodian heritage in the Western Balkans and in Dalmatia, with the Croatian-Glagolitic tradition, would have lost all relevance. The existence of this competitor to the Bulgarian and Serbian traditions made it possible to revive the memory of Great Moravia and the first written Slavic vernacular during Charles IV's reign as King of Bohemia and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, by providing them with a space in the heart of Europe in Prague. Here, the Croatian-Glagolitic tradition made a fundamental contribution to the development of the Czech vernacular and the Czech version of the Bible, a model for other vernacular language versions and further impetus

for the Hussite religious reformism, which is another crucial and often overlooked aspect of European culture.

## A Paradigmatic Example of Byzantine Acculturation in the Bulgarian Empire: the Miscellany of Simeon

During the Patriarchate of Photius, probably in its second phase (878-886), a successful anthology was created in Constantinople, which we know under the name of *Soterios*. This anthology contained the fundamental tools for understanding the Christian message as elaborated by the first councils and for developing an adequate exegesis of the Bible. It is probable that the young Simeon of Bulgaria was familiar with this work during his sojourn in Constantinople, where he was presumably preparing for an ecclesiastical career. After his accession to the Bulgarian throne, the miscellany was translated into Slavonic in the same capital, Preslav<sup>38</sup>. Like other ancient Old Bulgarian works, they survive only in the manuscript copies made in the Rus' during the process of transplanting the Byzantine-Slavonic culture to the East Slavic area. The so-called *Izbornik* of Svjatoslav (1073), which is the first example of a Slavic anthology, is, in fact, the Miscellany of Simeon, a translation of the Greek Florilegium *Soterios*<sup>39</sup>.

The work does not serve as a simple catechesis addressed to the uneducated or to neophytes, nor does it even function as a treatise of Christian erudition in encyclopaedic form, as it is often described. This collection of texts, which date back to the most classical tradition of patristic thought, was intended to offer a series of indispensable tools to illustrate the traditional doctrine of the Christian East through the understanding and exegesis of the Bible, in terms of content and on the level of form, in its aspects both doctrinal and moral. The work appears, therefore, extraordinarily useful for the formation of a clergy occupied in pastoral activity or in missionary work by presenting the fundamental message of Orthodox teaching in the model of Church Fathers<sup>40</sup>.

We have paid particular attention to the *Quaestio* 65 of the miscellany, a precious cento of quotations from the Bible and patristic literature, which constitutes a true apology of the Bible, in which Christian wisdom is set against pagan wisdom, but also a meaningful reflection on its linguistic and oratorical formulation. A precise analysis that examines numerous a themes, beginning with the »speaking in tongues«, rightfully positions the *Soterios* and its Slavonic version between the testimonies of the Cyrillo-Methodian question and its inheritance in Bulgaria<sup>41</sup>.

36 See Garzaniti, Ohrid, Split.

37 See Verkholantsev, Slavic Letters of St. Jerome.

38 The panegyric verse in his honour contained therein helps to understand the reasons that led to the production of the Slavonic version of this anthology in the time of Tsar Simeon. See Garzaniti, The Eulogy of Symeon's Miscellany.

39 See the edition of the Greek and Slavonic texts in Dinekov/Janeva, Simeonov Sbornik. For an introduction to the manuscript tradition of *Soterios*, see Dine-

kov/Janeva, Simeonov Sbornik 9-110. On the project for a new edition of the Greek miscellany, see De Groote, The Soterios.

40 See Garzaniti, Missionerskoe nasledie.

41 See Garzaniti, Parlare in lingue. More generally on the main exegetical issues in Simeon's Miscellany, see Garzaniti, Questions on the Old and New Testaments.

## Conclusion

Unfortunately, the well-known events of the Byzantine-Bulgarian wars in the tenth and eleventh centuries inevitably interrupted a promising cultural development, a warning for the following centuries that only peaceful relations between ethnic groups and religious traditions can allow a positive evolution of our civilisation. The memory of the Old Bulgarian era has been preserved mainly, as we have said, thanks to the transplantation of its manuscript tradition to Kievan Rus'.

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In the overall reconstruction of a European cultural history capable of encompassing both Western and Eastern Europe, many questions remain unanswered and many ideological prejudices still persist.

However, it is an undeniable fact that the presence in the Balkans of a language of worship and cultural use other than Latin and Greek, already in the ninth and tenth centuries, was not only a peripheral phenomenon of medieval Europe, but also a cultural ferment of crucial importance that continues to bear fruit that is still ripening today.

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## Summary / Zusammenfassung / Résumé

### **The Legacy of Cyril and Methodius and the Development of the First Slavic Literary Language in the Bulgarian Empire: A European Perspective**

With broad reference to sources, the author presents the Slavic mission of Cyril and Methodius and its developments in the context of the Christianisation of the Slavs and the complicated geopolitics of the Middle Ages. In particular, the essay focuses on different phases of the Slavic acculturation process, starting with the first Cyrillian translations and original works up until the formation of a new cultural memory in the First Bulgarian Empire. The copious Bulgarian written production, an overlooked page of European cultural history, is examined through the paradigmatic example of the Miscellany of Simeon, a collection of texts with the most classical tradition of patristic thought, which intended to offer a series of indispensable tools to illustrate the traditional doctrine of the Christian East, but at the same time made available the basic elements of classical culture.

### **Das Erbe von Kyrill und Methodius und die Entwicklung der ersten slawischen Literatursprache im Bulgarischen Reich: Eine europäische Perspektive**

Der Autor stellt die Slawenmission von Kyrill und Methodius und ihre Entwicklung im Kontext der Christianisierung der Slawen und der komplizierten geopolitischen Verhältnisse des Mittelalters auf breiter Quellengrundlage dar. Der Aufsatz konzentriert sich insbesondere auf die verschiedenen Phasen des slawischen Akkulturationsprozesses, beginnend mit den ersten kyrillischen Übersetzungen und Originalwerken bis hin zur Herausbildung eines neuen kulturellen Gedächtnisses im Ersten Bulgarischen Reich. Die reiche bulgarische Schriftproduktion, eine übersehene Seite der europäischen Kulturgeschichte, wird am paradigmatischen Beispiel des Simeon-Florilegs betrachtet, einer Textsammlung in der klassischsten Tradition des patristischen Denkens, die eine Reihe unentbehrlicher Hilfsmittel zur Veranschaulichung der traditionellen Lehre des christlichen Ostens bieten sollte, gleichzeitig aber auch die grundlegenden Elemente der klassischen Kultur zur Verfügung stellte.

### **L'héritage de Cyrille et Méthode et le développement de la première langue littéraire slave dans l'empire bulgare: une perspective européenne**

En se référant largement aux sources, l'auteur présente la mission slave de Cyrille et Méthode et ses développements dans le contexte de la christianisation des Slaves et de la géopolitique complexe du Moyen Âge. En particulier, l'article se concentre sur différentes phases de l'acculturation slave, depuis les premières traductions et œuvres originales par Cyrille jusqu'à la formation d'une nouvelle mémoire culturelle dans le Premier Empire bulgare. L'abondante production écrite bulgare, page méconnue de l'histoire culturelle européenne, est examinée à travers l'exemple paradigmatique du Florilège de Siméon, un recueil de textes portant sur la tradition la plus classique de la pensée patristique, qui entendait offrir une série d'outils indispensables pour illustrer la doctrine traditionnelle de l'Orient chrétien, mais qui, en même temps, mettait à disposition les éléments de base de la culture classique.