

stantine, was the youngest of the *droungarios* Leo's children. He made a great career as a philosopher, theologian, and translator. The older Methodius, born Michael, became a monk of the monastery Olympos in Asia Minor. Because of their scholarship and missionary ability, Emperor Michael III and Patriarch Photios I entrusted them with missions among Persians and Khazars before sending them in 862 CE, on behalf of Prince Ratislav of Moravia, to convert the Western Slavs.

Methodius and Cyril were familiar with Slavic culture from their home region around Thessalonica, a major Slav settlement in the Byzantine Empire. Even before 862, Constantine worked on a Slavonic alphabet adapted to the Slav dialect of South Macedonia. He finally created the *Glagolitsa* (OS *glagol*, i.e. 'utterance'). This alphabet, called *Glago-litsa* in the 14th century corresponds, more than the later Cyrillic alphabet, to the Slavic language specifics and includes more special fonts for Slavic phonemes, which cannot be found in Greek.

The brothers reached Moravia in 863 CE and led there a successful mission, establishing an academy and a Slavonic translation center. Constantine's biographer states that the liturgical offices, including the (Byzantine Chrysostom and Basil) Liturgy, were translated there. Methodius and Cyril departed in 867 CE for Rome on Pope Adrian II's invitation. The Pope blessed the Slavonic liturgical translations and ordained Methodius as bishop of Pannonia and Moravia. Constantine entered the monastery under the name Cyril after falling sick. He died shortly after, on February 14, 869. Methodius went back to Moravia. After three years imprisonment under the new Prince, he entered his diocesan office in 873 CE. In 884 CE, he visited Emperor Basil I in Constantinople giving him Slavonic liturgical books, which were supposedly used later for the missions in Bulgaria and Rus. He died on April 6, 885.

Already prior to 862 CE, Methodius and Constantine had translated with the new Glagolitic alphabet disparate gospel *pericopae*. In Moravia, they not only translated Greek Fathers and a Byzantine *Nomocanon*, but also composed original works in Slavonic. They completed the gospel lectionary for liturgical use, and started the systematic translation of the whole Bible. The NT and the Psalms seem to have been the first translated parts. It is not sure whether Methodius and Cyril actually completed their translation of the Bible. However, it is one of the oldest translations in a national language and it became normative for the Slavonic literary culture. In their translation activity, Methodius and Cyril had to fight against the *tres linguae sacrae* heresy, which denied, on the basis of John 19:20, the right to translate the Holy Scriptures and Offices into languages other than Hebrew, Greek, or Latin.

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Methodius and Cyril

Methodius (815–885 CE) and Cyril (826–869 CE) were two brothers from Thessalonica, who distinguished themselves as Christian missionaries, translators, and theologians, as related in *Vita Methodii* and *Vita Constantini*. Because of their major role in the Christianization of the (Western) Slavs and the emergence of a Slavonic high culture, they are known as the *Apostles to the Slavs*. Cyril, born Con-

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