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THE ROLE OF THE MISSION OF CYRIL AND METHODIUS IN THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN CENTRAL, SOUTHEASTERN AND EASTERN EUROPE

РОЛЬ МИССИИ КИРИЛЛА И МЕФОДИЯ В РАСПРОСТРАНЕНИИ ХРИСТИАНСТВА В ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ, ЮГО-ВОСТОЧНОЙ И ВОСТОЧНОЙ ЕВРОПЕ

Annotation: *This article discusses the role of the mission of Cyril and Methodius in the spread of Christianity in the region of Central, Southeast and Eastern Europe. Provides information known to science about the origin of the brother, their childhood and youth. The mission of Cyril and Methodius to Great Moravia is described in some detail. The relationship of the Roman Church to the new alphabet created by the Solun brothers is shown. The author describes the activities of Methodius, appointed bishop of Moravia and Pannonia. The author expressed his opinion on the significance of the mission of Cyril and Methodius. The article discusses the activities of the disciples of Cyril and Methodius. One of them is the creator of the Cyrillic alphabet. Based on the facts known to science, the history of the Cyril and Methodius tradition in European countries during the Middle Ages is traced.*

Keywords: *Cyril, Methodius, christian mission, Great Moravia, Glagolitic script, Cyrillic script, slavic liturgy, heritage of Cyril and Methodius*

Cyril and Methodius were born in the 9th century in ancient Thessalonika (modern Salonica, Greece), an important center of commercial and political life in the Byzantine Empire. It played an important role in the intellectual and social life of the Balkans. Being situated on the border with the Slav territories, it also had a Slav name: Solun. Methodius was the elder brother and his baptismal name was probably Michael. He was born between 815 and 820. His younger brother Constantine was born in 827 or 828 [19]. He went down in history under his monastic name Cyril. Their father was a senior official of the imperial

administration. There is a version that they were Greeks, according to another version they were Slavs. Perhaps their mother was a Slav [9; 16, p. 105-106]. Cyril and Methodius knew the Slavic language very well. They were talented young men. For example, Cyril wrote poems in his childhood and studied the works of the Fathers of the Church [4, p. 262; 13, p. 15].

Methodius entered the civil service. He became the ruler of a province in the Byzantine Empire, where many Slavs lived. It is not known exactly where this province was. By 840, he had become a monk in one of the monasteries located near Mount Olympus in Asia Minor [6, p. 302-303; 19]. Mount Olympus was one of the main centers of monasticism of Byzantium in the 9th century. There were many monasteries [13, p. 54; 16, p. 114].

Cyril continued his studies in the capital of Byzantium. He received an excellent education. He studied philosophy, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music in Constantinople. His teachers were the future patriarch Photius and Leo the Mathematician [4, p. 263]. These were intellectuals, representatives of the 9th-century Byzantine revival [16, c. 12, 109]. Cyril gained fame in the capital of Byzantium. He was admitted to the highest social classes, to the palace of the emperor. But he abandoned a brilliant political career and decided to devote himself to academic pursuits and contemplative life. He went to one of the monasteries on the Black Sea coast. He was found six months later and was persuaded to accept the task of teaching philosophy in the School of higher learning in Constantinople. For his rare erudition, he received the nickname “philosopher”, by which he is still known [4, p. 264].

Cyril was 24 years old when the emperor of Byzantium sent him on a mission to the Saracens, to the Arab Caliphate. Al-Muttawakil was the caliph at that time, the capital of the Caliphate was the city of Samarra. Cyril arrived in this city with Byzantine diplomats for negotiations. He debated with the Arabs about Christ, about the Holy Trinity [4, p. 267-270; 13, c. 47]. After returning to Byzantium, Cyril went to the monastery to his brother Methodius. In 860 he, along with Methodius, was included in the Byzantine embassy to the Khazars – as an expert in religious and cultural affairs [4, p. 270-271; 19]. On the way to Khazaria, they visited Crimea, the city of Chersonese. In Crimea, near Chersonesus, they found the relics of holy Clement Pope of Rome which they took with them [4, p. 272]. Cyril wrote hymns to holy Clement [16, p.118-119].

The religion of the Khazars was Judaism. In Khazaria, Cyril debated on Christianity. Under his influence, about 200 people became Christians [4, p. 273-283]. Perhaps Cyril wrote polemical writings against the Jews and Muslims [16, p.112, 119]. After returning to Byzantium, Methodius returned to his monastery, while Cyril remained in Constantinople. He lived at the church and prayed to God [4, p. 285; 6, p. 303].

In 863 the prince of Great Moravia, Rostislav, asked the emperor of Byzantium to send teachers who could teach his people Christianity in their native language: «Many Christian teachers have reached us from Italy, from Greece and from Germany, who instruct us in different ways. But we Slavs ...

have no one to direct us towards the truth and instruct us in an understandable way» [6, p. 304].

What is the Great Moravia? It was formed in the first half of the IX century and existed on the territory of modern Czechia and Slovakia. In Moravia, there were cities, for example, Velehrad, Mikulčice, Nitra. About three thousand people lived in Mikulčice. Archeologists found 20 temples of that era [13, p. 92; 15, p. 404]. In the 30s of the 9th century, there was the baptism of the inhabitants of Moravia. The first Christian missionaries came to Moravia from Bavaria. The Christians of Great Moravia obeyed the Bishop of Passau (Bavaria) [13, p. 89; 16, p. 125, 127]. In 846 Rostislav became a prince. He wanted the independence of the church of Moravia from the Germans. Moravia was in conflict with the Kingdom of the East Franks and could not stand the clergy obeying Bishop of Passau. This bishop was a subject of Ludwig “the German”. Ludwig “the German” wanted to seize the territory of Moravia. Rostislav also wanted to strengthen relations with Byzantium, wanted to get its support [13, p. 97; 16, p. 127].

Cyril and Methodius were sent to Moravia from Byzantium. They took with them the relics of St. Clement, which they had discovered in the Crimea before. The head of the mission was Cyril.

The Slavs at that time did not have their own writing. Cyril created the Slavic alphabet [4, p. 286-287]. Methodius participated in the process of its creation [13, p. 99]. This alphabet is called the Glagolitic script. It very well conveyed the sounds of the Slavic language. In the Slavic language, there were no abstract concepts and special terms, they were invented by brothers. Many words were taken from the Greek language. Perhaps the Glagolitic script was created in the monastery where Cyril and Methodius lived, near Mount Olympus. Perhaps, the brothers had assistants and the work on creating the alphabet had begun even before Prince Rostislav appealed to Byzantium [13, p. 103-110; 16, p. 127-128]. Cyril and Methodius translated the main liturgical books from Greek into Slavic, for example, the Gospel, the Psalter. They translated the church service – liturgy [4, p. 289; 13, p. 111-114].

Cyril and Methodius spent about three years in Moravia [4, p. 291; 6, p. 304]. They had disciples who were to replace the German clergy and create the basis for an independent church of Moravia. This would strengthen the independence and integrity of Moravia. The most famous student was Gorazd. Cyril and Methodius created the foundation of Slavic education. Archaeological excavations have shown that the church school was on the territory of the modern city of Bratislava in the Devin castle. Their activities provoked tough opposition from the side of German missionaries. The German clergy was against the Slavic liturgy. At the time, the Catholic Church had the idea that the liturgy could be in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. These languages were considered sacral [16, p. 130]. For example, Latin was considered a sign of the unity of the Christian world, united around Rome [17, p. 293]. The clergy from Bavaria favored Latin. Cyril and Methodius were accused of heresy.

In 867, Cyril and Methodius went to Rome. On the way to Rome, they visited Pannonia. At that time, in the territory of Pannonia, in the region of Lake Balaton, the Balaton Principality existed. It was the territory of modern Hungary. The capital of this state was the city of Mosapurc. Now there is a Hungarian village Zalavar. At the time of Cyril and Methodius, Prince Kocel was the head of the Balaton Principality. Most of the inhabitants of this state were Slavs. It already had a church, which subordinated to the bishop of the city of Salzburg. The clergy were Germans [16, c. 134]. Prince Kocel took brothers to the capital. Cyril and Methodius taught Slavic literature to 50 pupils. Kocel wanted Cyril or Methodius to be a bishop in his state. He wrote about this to the Pope [4, p. 291; 6, p. 305; 13, p.118-122, 136-137]. After Pannonia, Cyril and Methodius visited Venice. In Venice, they debated whether it is possible to celebrate a liturgy in the Slavic language [4, p. 291-294; 13, p. 122-124].

Brothers brought the relics of St. Clement in Rome, where they were greeted very solemnly by the Pope and the inhabitants of the city. Pope Adrian II allowed the church service in the Slavic language and approved their activity. The Pope also took part in the Slavic liturgy in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. Methodius became a priest in Rome. Some disciples of the brothers became priests. On February 14, 869 Cyril died in Rome. He was 42 years old. Before his death, he took monasticism and the name of Cyril. He was buried in Rome in the church of St. Clement [4, p. 294-297; 13, p. 125-135].

Methodius was appointed the bishop of Pannonia and Moravia, and a papal legate. Its chair was the city of Sirmium [6, p. 305-307; 19; 21] (the modern city of Sremska Karlovitsa in Serbia). Diocese of Methodius covered the territory of Moravia, part of Croatia, Serbia, Hungary, Slovakia. In 870, Methodius, together with the disciples who had become priests, came to Pannonia, and then to Moravia. The situation in Moravia had changed. Rostislav was defeated by Ludwig “the German” and was blinded in 870. The head of Moravia was Prince Svyatopluk. He supported the German clergy, there were many German priests in the country. Svyatopluk was against the Slavic liturgy. The German clergy was against it as well. The Germans believed that the church in Great Moravia was under the jurisdiction of the Bavarian bishop. Methodius was in a difficult situation. The German clergy in every way prevented the spread of the Slavic language as the language of the church. There was a trial where Methodius wanted to whip the bishop of Passau. Methodius was imprisoned in a monastery for three years [6, p. 307-308; 13, p. 140-143]. This prison was in Swabia or Bavaria. Perhaps it is the monastery Ellwangen or Reichenau [6, p. 307-308; 13, p. 342; 16, p. 157-158]. After finding this out, Pope John VIII forbade German bishops to perform liturgy until Methodius was released. He was released in 873 and returned to believers. The German clergy intrigued against Methodius afterward. Why? They believed that Great Moravia was their jurisdiction. Methodius demanded to observe moral principles. Not everyone liked that either. The German clergy was against the liturgy in the Slavic language and Byzantine traditional fasts [16, p.171; 17, p. 307].

In 880 Methodius went to Rome again, where he met Pope John VIII. John VIII made a bulla "Idustriae Tua" allowing worship in the Slavic language [22]. In 881 or 882 Methodius visited Constantinople. The Byzantine Emperor and Patriarch Photius recognized the legality and canonicity of his actions. In the last period of his life, Methodius translated the Slavic Bible and writings of the Fathers of the Church, as well as a set of Byzantine church and civil laws, called "Nomocanon" [6, p. 310-311; 19]. The translation of the Bible by Methodius has not survived to the present day.

Methodius baptized the prince of Bohemia, whose name was Borzhivoy, and his wife Lyudmila. Moravian Prince Svyatopluk invited Borzhivoy to the feast. There was Methodius, who convinced Borzhivoy to convert to Christianity. Borzhivoy probably was baptized according to the Slavic rite. He returned to his homeland, where his wife Lyudmila was baptized. Together with Christianity, Slavic worship and Slavic books came to Bohemia from Moravia, and priests arrived. Methodius sent a priest whose name was Kaih. He founded the first Christian church of St. Clement, who was the Pope of Rome. It was in the eighties of the 9th century [17, p. 6; 19].

In Vita Methodii, the Wisliana tribe is mentioned, which lived in the area of modern Krakow. This is the southern part of Poland. Methodius carried out missionary activity there [6, p. 308-309; 13, p. 144-145]. Scientists believe that there was a liturgy in the Slavic language [18, p. 125].

Methodius had 200 disciples in Moravia. Concerned by the survival of the work which he had begun, he announced his disciple Gorazd as his successor. Gorazd was from Moravia, he knew Greek and Latin very well [6, p. 312; 5, p. 333]. Methodius died on April 6, 885 [6, p. 312-313]. The place of his burial is unknown [13, p. 154; 16, p. 172]. After his death, his disciples were expelled from Moravia. Some of them were sold into slavery. The emperor of Byzantium, Basil, bought them out and invited to Constantinople [13, p. 156-157; 5, p. 333-336].

In 885, Pope Stephen 5 appointed the head of the Church of Moravia, the German bishop, whose name was Vihing. Vihing was an opponent of Methodius [5, p. 327-332]. He was supported by the ruler of Moravia, Svyatopluk. Also, the Pope banned the liturgy in the Slavic language [23]. Why did he do that? At that time, the relationship between Rome and Byzantium escalated. Rome was afraid of the growing influence of Byzantium, there was a rivalry between two churches, the Roman and Constantinople [17, p. 301].

Some disciples of Methodius, who were expelled from Moravia, went to Bulgaria. They were Clement, Naum, Konstantin, Savva, and Angelarium. What was Bulgaria like? Christianity began to spread over the territory of Bulgaria back in the 1st c. The Bulgarian kingdom arose in the 7th century. In the 9th century in Bulgaria was Tsar Boris (852-889). In 865 there was a baptism of the Bulgarian people according to the Byzantine tradition. For some time the Bulgarian Church was in the jurisdiction of Rome, then in the jurisdiction of Constantinople. Boris expanded the territory of his state. He wanted to spiritually unite the country based on the traditions of Cyril and Methodius. Boris invited

the disciples of Methodius to live in his country [13, p. 161-165]. Boris wanted to replace Byzantine priests with Bulgarian ones [2].

In Bulgaria, a new alphabet - the Cyrillic script was created. The Glagolitic script was harder to write. Bulgarians needed another, more understandable alphabet. It is not known who created the Cyrillic alphabet. Some scientists believe that it was created by Konstantin Preslavsky [13, p. 172-173], other scientists believe that Clement of Ohrid, or Naum [8]. The new alphabet was named after Cyril. Cyrillic alphabet included the Greek alphabet - 24 letters [13, p.172] and was more convenient and simple. The inscription of the Bulgarian tsar Samuil on the grave of his relatives is the oldest inscription in Cyrillic (993). It is located now in the National Historical Museum of Bulgaria. Up to the 12th century, the Glagolitic script had also been used. But then it fell out of active use, the Cyrillic alphabet began to dominate [17, p. 96]. Separate facts of the use of the Glagolitic script were met later. The disciples of Cyril and Methodius created two spiritual and intellectual centers in Bulgaria. One of them was in the city of Preslav (Preslav Literary School), the other in the city of Ohrid (Ohrid Literary School). There they translated the Bible and other holy books into the Slavic language, taught Slavic writing.

The disciple of Methodius, Constantine, was the bishop in the Bulgarian capital, Preslav. Konstantin Preslavsky - the founder of Bulgarian poetry. For example, he wrote a prayer in verse - Alphabet Prayer. The American linguist R. Jacobson called the poetry of Constantin Preslavsky "the Slavic response to Byzantine poetry"[13, p. 193]. The sermons of Constantine Preslavsky are also known. His writings were used during church service. Konstantin Preslavsky also translated Byzantine theological works into Slavic [13, p. 170-175; 17, p. 9-14].

The works of Clement of Ohrid are the golden fund of ancient Bulgarian literature. About 50 of his works survived. He was considered the main successor of the mission of Cyril. He saw the main point in the preaching of Christianity. His sermons are written in clear, understandable language. In the sermons, Clement spoke of church holidays, their meaning. Clement Ohridsky died in 916 [13, p. 165-166; 17, p. 17-20, 163-277]. Naum was the author of prayers, for example, to the holy Apostle Andrew. He founded a monastery on the shore of Lake Ohrid [13, p. 165; 17, p. 12].

The activity of the disciples of Methodius led to the cultural flourishing of Bulgaria. The policy of Tsar Boris, who helped the disciples of Cyril and Methodius, was continued by his son Simeon (893-927). His government was called the golden age of ancient Bulgarian writing and culture. This was also the time of the greatest prosperity of the Bulgarian kingdom [1, p. 659 13, p. 167].

In the Bulgarian kingdom appeared polemical and theological literature in the Slavic language. Appeared Slavic hymnography. Hymns were dedicated to church holidays and saints. Its creators are Konstantin Preslavsky and Clement of Ohrid. There were talented disciples in Bulgaria from among the locals, for example, John Exarch or Priest Gregory. John Exarch was one of the most

educated people at the time. He wrote a work in which he set forth a Christian view of the structure of the world [16, p. 9, 15]. In Bulgaria, clergy training was conducted in the Slavic language. The introduction of the Slavic language contributed to the gradual replacement of the Greek clergy with the Bulgarian clergy. The development of culture and spirituality led to the fact that in 919 the autocephaly or independence of the Bulgarian Church was proclaimed and the patriarchy was created. In 1018, Bulgaria was conquered by Byzantium [1, p. 659]. After the conquest, Slavic culture and writing lost its former meaning. Some books died during the hostilities. Church service was gradually carried out in Greek [3, p. 123]. Slavic church hierarchs were replaced with Greeks. But the cult of Clement of Ohrid and other disciples of Cyril and Methodius remained in Bulgaria [7].

Why is the mission of Cyril and Methodius significant? Cyril and Methodius created the foundation of the spiritual culture, writing of the Slavic peoples, and literature. Scientists say about the Slavic world, about the linguistic and literary community of the Slavs - Slavia Orthodoxa. This term was proposed by the Italian scientist Ricardo Picchio [11]. From Moravia, Slavic writing spread to other Slavic countries.

The mission in Moravia of Cyril and Methodius was the beginning of the Slavs' acquaintance with the culture and spiritual life of Byzantium. Scientists noticed the influence of Byzantium on the development of Slavic peoples or the transplantation of Byzantine culture in the Slavic world [13, p. 184-187]. Appeared Slavic translations of Byzantine books. The Slavs read the works of ancient and Byzantine historians, literary fiction, for example, about Alexander the Great. Works on philosophy, for example, works of Aristotle, on geography, natural science. They read Christian works from Byzantium, for example, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom. These are the Fathers of the Church [13, p. 194-195]. On this basis, original Slavic literature appears [12, p. 146-432].

Cyril and Methodius were the forerunners of ecumenism because they sought to remove or at least soften any already manifested or only outlined differences between individual communities belonging to the same Christian Church. They acted on the instructions of Constantinople and recognized the authority of the Pope. Their mission was at that time when differences arose between Rome and Constantinople, for example, the question of the church jurisdiction of Bulgaria. The mission of Cyril and Methodius is one of the first evangelizations of the Slavs in their native language. The brothers helped to make Christianity and the Gospel more understandable, more meaningful for the Slavs. It was also a new method of the catechism. They realized that an essential condition of the success of their missionary activity was to transpose correctly Biblical notions and Greek theological concepts into a very different mindset and historical experience. Cyril and Methodius proposed the idea of respecting the dignity of every Slavic people. They advocated the preservation of traditions and the renewal of the lives of those nations to whom the gospel was preached [19] Their role for the Slavic peoples can be compared to the role of Martin Luther for the Germans.

What was the destiny of the heritage of Cyril and Methodius? In Moravia, after the death of Methodius, church services began to be held in Latin. In 905, Moravia was captured and ravaged by the Hungarians. F. Dvornik, the scientist, wrote that if Great Moravia had survived, it would have been the center of the Slavs in Central and Southern Europe, and a great rival to the state of the Franks [3, p. 29-31].

At the end of the 9th century, Bohemia was incorporated into the diocese of Regensburg. But in Bohemia in the 10-11 centuries, Slavic liturgy and literature in the Slavic language were widespread. For example, biographies of St. Vitus, St. Wenceslas were written in the Slavic language [3, p. 302]. The grandson of Prince Borzhivoy, Vyacheslav, studied Latin and Greek books, as well as Slavic books [9]. In the Czech translated Latin books into the Slavic language, for example, the life of St. Benedict. In Prague, there was a Slavic school. It is known that in the 10-11 centuries, in Czech, there was a tradition of honoring the brothers Cyril and Methodius. In the XI century, the Sazavsky monastery was founded near Prague. It was the center of Slavic liturgy and literature. He maintained contacts with Kiev and Croatia. Liturgy in Slavic was presented there until the end of the eleventh century. Pope Gregory VII banned liturgy in the Slavic language in Bohemia, the monks who adhered to this tradition, were expelled [25, p. 86-87; 12, p. 106]. But in the 14th century, Emperor Charles IV founded the Emmaus Monastery in Prague, there was the Slavic liturgy. The influence of the western church tradition in the Czech increased gradually. In 967, the diocese was founded in Prague. She submitted to the metropolis in the city of Mainz. In the 12th century in the Czech established a Latin tradition [3, p. 315].

Cyril and Methodius tradition persisted for some time in Poland. There is a version in historiography, that the disciple of Cyril and Methodius from Moravia, Gorazd, went to Poland [13, p. 157]. There is a version that Prokhor was the first bishop of Krakow. This is a Slavic name. That was not the name of the Latin missionaries [18, p. 125; 14]. In 966, Meshko I, prince of Poland, was baptized. He turned to Bohemia, they sent priests to him. Why was he baptized by Bohemia? Mieszko I did not want to obey Otto I. The daughter of Bohemian ruler, Boleslav I, Dubravka became Mieszko's wife. In Bohemia, at that time a liturgy was in the Slavic language. It is possible that those priests who prayed in Slavic arrived in Poland [3, p. 92-93]. In the medieval code "Liber officiorum" there is an inscription that at the court of Mieszko the church services were in Greek, Latin, and Slavic. On the island of Ostrow Lednicki, the foundation of the 9th-10th-centuries chapel was discovered. It was built in the shape of a Greek cross. On the territory of Poland, there were found about 40 temples of the Byzantine type. For example, the Church of St. Virgin in Krakow (XI century), the Church of St. Nicholas in Tesin (Silesia). Latin temples were much fewer. Inscriptions in the Cyrillic alphabet are found on the coins of the Polish king Boleslav the Great. This is the second half of the 9th century. Liturgy in the Slavic language was under Boleslav the Great. In Poland, there was the cult of St. Gorazd. There was a cult of saints Clement and Dmitry Solunsky. Saint

Dmitry was worshiped in Thessaloniki, the native city of Cyril and Methodius. Clement is a saint whose relics were found by Cyril and Methodius. The Slavic rite existed in Poland until the end of the 11th century [14].

Was there a Cyrill and Methodius tradition in Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia? Yes, it was. Part of the territory where the Serbs and Croats lived was part of Methodius' diocese. Christians were already there in the first centuries of our era. The activities of Cyril and Methodius largely contributed to the final establishment of Christianity among the Serbs, because the preaching of Christianity was in a language that people could understand. The Cyrillic alphabet was used in Serbia. The Serbian literary tradition was associated with the Ohrid Literary School, which was founded by Clement of Ohrid. Serbia was part of the Bulgarian kingdom in the 10th century and experienced the influence of the Cyril and Methodius tradition. In the Middle Ages, Slavic written language and worship in Serbia remained. Until the 13th century in Serbia, the Glagolitic script was actively used [17, p. 96-97].

We do not know whether Cyril and Methodius preached on the territory of Bosnia. But, in the 10-11 centuries, church service was in the Slavic language. The western Latin church tradition became very strong in Bosnia only in the 13th century, when a separate diocese was established there, subordinated to Rome, and Catholic Franciscan and Benedictine monks appeared. Slavic church tradition and writing remained among the inhabitants of Bosnia, who were Orthodox [10].

In the 9th century, the Glagolitic script appeared on the territory of Croatia. The most ancient version of the life of St. Wenceslaus (10th century) in Croatia was written in Slavic. In Croatia, the liturgy was in the Slavic language. The church rite in this language was called the Glagolitic rite. The music that was in the temples was a synthesis of Gregorian singing and local musical tradition. The author of the Glagolitsa in Croatia called St. Jerome, one of the Fathers of the Church, who lived in the fifth century. Why? After all, it was not true. So Rome could not object. The liturgy in Slavic in Croatia was authorized by Pope Innocent 4 in the thirteenth century [24]. It existed in Croatia until the middle of the twentieth century.

Texts in Slavic language were found in Freising (Bavaria). This was a territory without Slavs [13, p.119].

The Cyril and Methodius tradition spread throughout Eastern Europe. Cyrillic alphabet spread over ancient Rus. The Bulgarian educated people, the priests came to Russia in the tenth-twelfth centuries. Books were brought from Bulgaria to Russia. Bible translations, the works of the Fathers of the Church, Greek liturgical texts from Bulgaria were brought to Eastern Europe [3, p. 215-216, 291-294]. Almost all the literature of ancient Russia in the 9-13 centuries was written in the Cyrillic alphabet.

In all countries of Central and Southeast Europe, where was the jurisdiction of the Roman Church, the Slavic writing disappeared. Instead, the Latin language took its place in the life of the church and society. The exception was Croatia.

The Cyrillic alphabet has been preserved in Bulgaria, Serbia, and Eastern Europe, where there were Orthodox churches. Currently, Cyrillic alphabet is used in Orthodox churches, Greek Catholic churches in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. In the historical development of the Eastern rite of the Slavs, the church service in the Slavic language played the same role as the Latin language in Western Europe.

Cyril and Methodius were recognized as saints in the 9th century. The cult of the saints was in Bulgaria, in Ancient Rus. They are called the enlighteners of the Slavs, the teachers of the Slavs, the first apostles of the Slavs. Cyril and Methodius are saints in the Catholic Church. In 1980, the Catholic Church proclaimed them to be the patrons of Europe [20]. There is a cult of the disciples of Cyril and Methodius. This cult was already in the Middle Ages in Bulgaria. Clement of Ohrid was considered saint shortly after his death [17, p. 76-81].

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«THE BLESSED CITY»: EDESSA AND THE ABGAR LEGEND IN THE AGE OF THE CRUSADES

«БЛАГОСЛОВЕННЫЙ ГОРОД»: ЭДЕССА И ЛЕГЕНДА ОБ АВГАРЕ В ЭПОХУ КРЕСТОВЫХ ПОХОДОВ

Summary: *The Abgar legend is included in the corpus of the New Testament apocryphal legends. Its core episodes are the letter exchange between King Abgar of Edessa and Jesus Christ, the healing of Abgar and the conversion of the city of Edessa to Christianity. Having grown up in the third century, the legend widely spread throughout the Near East. Jesus' promise to King Abgar to protect Edessa against enemies had become the main motif of the legend, as reflected in the use of Abgar's and Jesus' letters as apotropaic amulets. On the eve of the First Crusade, the Abgar legend was widely known in Western Europe despite the fact that it was considered apocryphal and, therefore, condemned by the Roman Catholic Church.*

It seems that the first crusaders arrived to Edessa were familiar with Abgar legend. Already at the beginning of the twelfth century the Edessan Franks adapted and actualized the legend. The Christians who lived in the County of Edessa believed that its capital was under divine protection. The protection was ensuring, in their vision, through the pact established between the citizens of Edessa and God. This was forging the common identity of the Franks and their Oriental Christian subjects, mainly the Armenians and the Syrians, as a “chosen people”. Furthermore, by drawing parallels between themselves and the legendary King Abgar, ruler of the first Christian state, the Frankish counts of Edessa could claim that the county was a unique and independent lordship created before the other Crusader states.

Key words: *Abgar legend; Crusades; Crusader states; county of Edessa; Edessa; identity; apotropaic text; Apocrypha; relics; Mandylion; Saints; Cristianization; pact with God.*

The Middle Ages can rightfully be called the age of legends. Legend usually contains a core in the form of the historicized narrative. Some of medieval legends describe the crucial points in the history of society, like founding the state or the city, conversion of the peoples to Christianity, struggle against enemy invasions, while others deal with local events, like the history of a separate family, knightly