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FRANTIŠEK HEJL

THE SALONICAN BROTHERS CONSTANTINE AND METHODIUS AND THEIR ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN UNIVERSE

The Byzantine Mission, headed by two individuals whose ability amounted to genius — the Salonican brothers Constantine and Methodius — was carried out because of the requirements and at the suggestion and request of the Great-Moravian Prince Rostislav and his princes, war-dukes and nobles. A unique literary relic, the Old Slavonic work *The Life of Constantine* (further LC), composed under the editorial care of Methodius in the milieu of Great Moravia in the first half of the seventies (probably later than 873) gives us, with regard to the decision of the Great-Moravian prince and his associates: "Rostislav... Prince of Moravia... consulted with his princes and the Moravians (and) sent to the Emperor Michael (a message), saying: Although our people have rejected paganism and hold to the Christian law, we have no such teacher as would expound to us *in our own language* the true Christian faith, so that *other lands*, too, observing this, *might follow our example*. Therefore, Lord, send *such a Bishop and such a teacher to us*. For from you is always sent forth into other lands *a worthy law*."¹ Another treasure of the Great-Moravian Old Slovenian literary tradition, the *Žitije Metodija* (*The Life of Methodius* — further LM) comments on this event as follows: "It happened in those days that Rostislav, the Slavic Prince (along) with Svatopluk sent from Moravia to the Emperor Michael (a message), saying: By the grace of God we are in good health. Behold there came to us many Christian teachers from Vlachia and also from Greece and from Germany, teaching us different ways. But we Slavs (are) a simple people nor have we (anyone) that would teach us the truth and inform (us) truly. Wherefore, worthy Lord, send such a man as would *regulate all the law* (v'sjakoju prav'du)..."²

The quoted fragments from these Old Slavonic hagiographical texts

¹ Cf. *The Life of Constantine* (LC), c. XIV, in: *Magnae Moraviae Fontes Historici* (MMFH) II, Brno 1967, p. 98—99.

² *The Life of Methodius* (LM), c. V, *ibidem*, p. 143—144.

of Great Moravia provide irrefutable evidence of the following facts: the Byzantine Mission was carried out on the initiative and at the request of the ruling stratum of the Great Moravia under the leadership of Rostislav, futher, Rostislav and his supporters requested the sending of a priest in higher orders — a Bishop and teacher, who would, it goes without saying, place himself at the head of an independent Great-Moravian church. Finally it shows the mature states — manlike judgment of the ruling stratum, which, finding no favourable hearing to be had from Pope Nicholas I, applied to the second centre of the Christian world, to Byzantium. The whole enterprise was a well-thought-out and purposeful step, arising from the struggle of many years for the sovereignty of Great Moravia and its independence of the Kingdom of the Eastern Franks, whose Bavarian clergy and presbyters were the vanguard of the expansionist policy of King Louis the German. From the beginning of the fifties the relations between Great Moravia and the Eastern Franks became more strained as a result of the aggressive nature of Louis the German and on the other hand thanks to the consistently applied complete independence of Great Moravia from the Empire. Rostislav, by his skilful and decisive power policy, escaped from the sovereignty of the Empire, and defended the independence of Great Moravia against repeated attacks.³ At the same time in the field of church government Great Moravia was still dependent on the Bishop of Passau, while "Latin and Frankish priests" were still active (LC, c. XV), who failed to limit their activity in Great Moravia solely to clerical affairs, but quite logically supported the Frankish influence and furthered the interests of the Passau diocese, which in its turn allied and linked it to the interests of the Frankish Empire. Thus Rostislav was not concerned with acquiring missionaries, for Great Moravia already was considerably christianized, but with founding his own ecclesiastical establishment under the patronage of the highest authority of the Christian world — the Pope of Rome, and after that, the Byzantine Patriarch and the Emperor.⁴ Only an in-

³ *Annales Bertiniani ad a. 853, 855, 856*, in: *MMFH I*, p. 73. *Annales Fuldenses ad a. 855, 857, 858, 863*, in: *MMFH I*, p. 93—97. — *Annales Xantenses ad a. 863, 864*, *ibidem*, p. 67.

⁴ Hejl, F.: *Vizantijskoje posol'stvo v Velikuje Moraviju na političeskom fone togdašnej Jevropy*, in: *Magna Moravia*, Praha 1965, p. 85—119. — Vavřínek, V., *Die Christiansierung und Kirchenorganisation des Großmährens*, in: *Historica VII*, Praha 1963, p. 5 sq. — *Idem*, *Církevní mise v dějních Velké Moravy*, Praha 1963. — *Idem*, *Die historische Bedeutung der tschechoslowakischen Staatlichkeit*, Praha 1966, p. 245—299. — Havlík, L. E., *Velká Morava a středoevropské Slované*, Praha 1964, p. 205 sq. — *Idem*, *Constantine and Methodius in Moravia. The Role Played by the Byzantine Mission in the Political Relations of Great Moravia to the Franconian Empire, Byzantium and to the Roman Curia*, in: *Sborník prací filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity (SPFFBU) C 11*, 1964, 27—50. — *Idem*, *Roman Universalism and the 9th Century Moravia*, in: *Cyrrilomethodianum II*, 1972—1973, p. 14—22. — *Idem*, *Großmähren im Kontext der europäischen und der allgemeinen Geschichte*, in: *Großmähren und die Anfänge ...*, Praha 1966, p. 212—244. — Dittrich, Z. R., *Christianity in Great Moravia*, Groningen 1962. — Alexander, P. J., *The Papacy, the Bavarian Clergy and the Slavonic Apostles*, in: *The Slavonic Yearbook*, 1941. — Dvorník, F., *Les*

dependent church establishment headed by a Bishop would complete the work of acquiring independence and sovereignty in the early feudal period. Of this fact the Great Moravia of the time was well aware, along with its ruling stratum headed by Rostislav. For this reason the embassy addressed to Michael III, emperor of Byzantium, word for word stresses the point, "Therefore send, O Lord, *such a Bishop and teacher to us.*"⁵ Thus the issue at stake was not that of the christianization of Great Moravia, but the establishment of an independent bishopric, since Moravia was basically already christianized. What was however exceptional was that Rostislav requested *a bishop and teacher, knowing the Slavonic tongue.*

The process of conversion to Christianity was dependent on the revolution in society, the process of transformation of the social character of social relationships. In the course of the period during which the Slavs penetrated from the Trans — carpathian region to the Danube basin, from the end of the fifth century, the social distinctions within the agricultural population were still slight. From the mid-6th century, however, we already encounter fortified strongholds. During this period handicrafts already begin to be distinguished from agricultural production, and alongside working with bone and leather we also find metal findings (finds of crucibles), along with gold, silver and bronze jewellery. Finds of numerous bronze and iron spurs with pricks, belt ends and portions of horse harness testify to the existence of groups of mounted associates of the kindred chief and the development of a ruling stratum. The rise of Samo and the formation of the realm as a military kindred association with an elected king (Samo) at the head is irrefutable evidence of a profounder process of kindred integration.⁶ It was for this reason that the realm of Samo was able to resist the pressure of the Frankish kings and the Avars. The realm of Samo was the culmination of a stage in a process which had already begun to be evident before his appearance: for after the death of the Avar Khan Bajan (603) the Slavs settled on the north of the Danube began to free themselves from the overlordship of the Avars. The integration of the Slav inhabitants was already so far advanced that — as we are informed by the Chronicler known as Fredegarius Scholasticus — they were no longer willing

Légendes de Constantine et de Méthode vue de Byzance, Praha 1933. — Idem, *Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome au IX^e siècle*, Paris 1926. — Idem, *The Slavs, their Early History and Civilisation*, Boston 1956. — Havlík, L. E., *Geneze feudální společnosti ve slovanském prostředí*, Praha 1987. — Idem, *Slovanské státní útvary raného středověku*, Praha 1987. — Poulík, J., *Starí Moravané budují svůj stát*, Gottwaldov 1960. — Idem, *Mikulčice. Sídlo a pevnost knížat velkomoravských*, Praha 1975. — Poulík, J., Chropovský, B., *Velká Morava a počátky československé státnosti*. Praha—Bratislava 1985. — Idem, *Großmähren und die Anfänge der tschechoslowakischen Staatlichkeit*, Praha 1986. — Dekán, J., *Velká Morava*, Bratislava 1979 et sq.

⁵ LC, c. XIV, MMFH I, p. 98 sq.

⁶ *Fredegari Chronikon* IV 48, IV, 68, IV 72, in: MMFH I, 1966, p. 20—26. — *Gesta Dagoberti I., regis Francorum*, in: MMFH II, p. 16—18.

to bear the cruel thralldom of the Avars or serve in the auxiliary forces of their warriors and were beginning to rebel. The chronicler describes the "common life" of the Avars and the Slavs as follows: "The Huns arriving every year to winter with the Slavs, took the wives and daughters of the Slavs for their bed-companions. Apart from humiliation, the Slavs paid the Avars many taxes. The sons of Avars (Huns) born to the wives and daughters of the Venedi were no longer willing to bear their and wrongs oppression and, rejecting the overlords of the Avars, began — as I mentioned above — to rebel . . ."⁷ Thus the realm of Samo resulted from the internal integrational process of the increasingly rapid defeat of the Avars, along with the repulsion of the attacks of the Franks. Written sources tell us nothing of the organization of the realm. The fact that in the following years the Venedi-Slavs made a successful attack on Thuringia is sufficiently convincing. It would seem that to as late as the end of the 7th century the units tending to form a Slav state to the north of the Danube remained independent, and in 743 free Slavs even fought alongside the Bavarian war duke Odilo against the Franks. The frontier of the Avar lordship to the west reached as far as the mouth of the river Chůba and the northern verge of the Vienna forest.⁸ For this reason we suppose that the Slav principality north of the Dyje and in western Slovakia continued the process of integration. Written sources for this period are exceedingly scanty, whereas archeological finds testify to a further development of agriculture and crafts, a particularly evident expansion being shown in smelting and foundry work.⁹ The consistent development of agriculture is shown by the invention of the slanting iron ploughshare.¹⁰ In view of the almost total lack of written sources regarding the development at the end of the 7th and in the course of the 8th century the results of archeological scholarship in our country, which, thanks to the unprecedented support provided by the state in the course of the last forty years, has been enabled to carry out complex research programmes, has successfully withdrawn the veil of mystery for historical scholarship and provided evidence of the gradual and consistent development of the highly mature culture of Old Moravia. The continuous economic, social and cultural development offered the requisite conditions for the appearance of a concentrated settlement of urban type surrounding the fortress of Mikulčice, where as early as the 8th century there already worked iron founders, smiths and carvers as well as jewellers. This testifies to a highly developed and profoundly structured society. The social, economic and cultural progress was encouraged by the process of integration in the regions to the north of the Danube on the both sides of the White and Little Carpathians — in Old Moravia and in the

⁷ *Fredagari Chronikon IV 48, ibidem, p. 20.*

⁸ Zástěrová, B., *Avaři a Slované*, in: *Vznik a počátky Slovanů II*, Praha 1958, p. 19 sq. — Brankač, J., *Poměr mezi Slovanami a Avarami v světle němsko-slovjanských slédženjow*, *Ljetopis II/2 B*, 1958, p. 364 sq.

⁹ Pouлік, J., *Brány poznania*, in: *Veľká Morava*, Bratislava 1970, p. 15 sq.

¹⁰ *Ibidem.*

Nitra (Nitrava) region. It was in this region that the struggles of the Pannonian Slavs against the Avars found its support, struggles which reached its climax in the nineties of the 8th century and which was fully exploited by the Emperor Charlemagne in his fight against the Avars. The constitutional organic growth to the north of the middle Danube area proceeded during the 8th century so far that principalities here merged and formed larger political wholes. The process of integration and state-formation which was taking place on the land north of the Danube was part of the general development proceeding among the West Slavs — the Serbs, Obodrites and Valetians — to a striking degree from the 7th century onwards, and we are informed about their rulers and their struggles with the Franks by the Frankish chroniclers,¹¹ in particular as regards the period when written sources are silent about the regions of Old Moravia (perhaps with the exception of the year 743). It was not until the expansion of the Frankish Empire into the Danube region and Pannonia, along with Charlemagne's campaigns against the Avars in 791 and 796, that the chroniclers of the time of that Emperor began to show interest in the region of Old Moravia and Nitrava. The territory conquered was established as the Eastern Mark and the secular rule of the Frankish prefects was from the very beginning followed by the ecclesiastical establishment of the Frankish bishops.

The aggression of the Franks against the Saxons and Friesians under the predecessors of Charlemagne, and the latter's further campaigns to set up his Empire were marked by a cruel brutality, which did not even hesitate before the mass slaughter of the conquered Saxons and Friesians. The brutality of the wars aroused disgust even at the court of Charlemagne. The theologian Alcuin in his epistles and writings worked out a more effective recipe for pacification with a theory which was intended to justify and rationalize the conquest of the neighbouring pagan ethnic groups by the Frankish Empire. Alongside the sword it offered Charlemagne a missionary programme — the Cross, arising from the theory of creation of St. Augustine and pronouncing the spread of Christianity to be the proper mission of the rulers of the Franks. An intensive missionary activity with the aim of christianizing their pagan neighbours, combined with attention to the intellectual life of the ruling stratum, was intended to provide a trustworthy instrument and a lasting bond between the new territories and the Empire. Charlemagne's Sword and Cross were to overcome the Slavs along the Elbe and the growing strength of the independent Slav societies to the north-east and east of the Frankish Empire. The idea of a single Christian Frankish Empire and its conquest and christianization of the pagans was the leading thought of all the literature of the time in the Frankish milieu of the

¹¹ *Annales Mettenses priores*, in: *MMFH* I, p. 53 sq. — *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegari Scholastici libri IV*, *MMFH* I, p. 19 sq. — *Annales Fuldenses*, *MMFH* I, p. 85 sq. — *Annales regni Francorum*, *MMFH* I, p. 35 sq.

succeeding centuries. Imperium Christianorum was identified with the imperium Francorum.¹²

After the destruction of the Avar Empire Charlemagne ordered missionary activity in the whole of this field to be expanded. The result of this activity soon appeared. As early as 795 the Tudun, ruler of the Avars, approached Charlemagne (768—814) with the request: "that... he and his land and his people desire to submit to the King and to accept the Christian faith according to his command..."¹³ The chronicler Saxo stresses for the year 796 that the Tudun, whom Pippin in the course of his campaign in Pannonia had brought before the Frankish King, bound himself to observe loyalty and with whole retinue was baptized and swore fealty to Charlemagne.¹⁴ The task of Christianization of the Danube area was entrusted to the Bavarian bishopric headed by Bishop Arno.¹⁵ In the task of christianization of the Pannonian region forces were joined by the Bavarian clergy and the Patriarch of Aquileia, Paulinus, who participated in the Synod "on the banks of the Danube," held in the year 796.¹⁶ The *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* as a whole is an exceedingly tendentious work, but provides very valuable informations in details. In 798 when Arno returned from Rome with the archiepiscopal pallium, he received on the way, even after crossing the Po, the command of Charlemagne to go to the lands of the Slavs' ... and there preach the Word of God, ... so that his sermons would strengthen the people in their faith and Christianity."¹⁷ Arno carried out the order, preached to the people and ordained priests.¹⁸

The mission of the Bavarian bishops was clearly not limited to Carinthia, but included the whole of Pannonia and even penetrated north of the Danube. We may conclude this from that fact that at the end of the 8th and beginning of the 9th centuries we encounter in Old Moravia a change in the burial rite, namely the revolutionary transformation of the existing custom of burning the dead, which was replaced by burial, testifying to a fundamental change in the conception of the future life. The qualitative changes resulted from the acceptance of Christianity by

¹² *Poetae Saxo Annalium de gestis Caroli Magni imperatoris Libri V.* in: MGH SS I, p. 227.279; MMFH II, p. 34 sq. — *Monachi Sangallensis de gestis Caroli Imperatoris Libri II.* in: MGH SS II, p. 726—763. — *Annales Alamannici.* in: MMFH I, p. 31 sq. — *Annales regni Francorum.* in: MMFH I, p. 35 sq. — *Annales Fuldenses.* in: MGH SS II, p. 337—416, MMFH I, p. 85 sq. — *Annales Mettenses priores.* MMFH I, p. 53 sq. etc.

¹³ *Annales regni Francorum ad a. 795.* in: MMFH I, p. 40.

¹⁴ *Poetae Saxomis Annalium de gestis Caroli Magni imperatoris.* in: MGH SS I, 252 sq. — MMFH II, Brno 1967, p. 35—37.

¹⁵ *Libellus de conversione Bagoariorum et Carantanorum.* ed. K. o. s. M., in: *Rozprava znanstvenega društva v Ljubljani II.* Historični odsek 3, Ljubljana 1936. — MMFH III, Brno 1969, p. 292 sq.

¹⁶ Vavřínek, V., *Die historische Bedeutung der byzantinischen Mission in Großmähren.* in: *Großmähren und die Anfänge der tschechoslowakischen Staatlichkeit.* Praha 1986, p. 245 sq.

¹⁷ *Conversio c. 8.* in: MMFH III, p. 306—307.

¹⁸ *Ibidem.*

the ruling stratum of Old Moravia. The Christian mission, participated most probably in the first place by the Bavarian clergy, although the simultaneous participation of Aquileia cannot be ruled out, was accomplished skilfully and was directed not only to the Slavs of Carinthia, but also to the Slavs of Pannonia and the general neighbourhood to the north. Here a condition or success was probably the agreement of the rulers of Old Moravia and the Nitra (Nitrava) region to christianization as well as the equipment and experience of the missionaries, who for the requirements of their task produced at the beginning of the 9th century Slavonic translations of the liturgical texts from Latin and Old High German, namely of the fundamental texts: The Confession of Faith, The Paternoster, the Baptismal Oath and the Ten Commandments, preserved in Friesian remains from the turn of the 10th and 11th centuries. Christianization carried on its task too with regard to state policy: the *Annales regni Francorum* for the year 803 tell of the return of the military expedition from Pannonia, "with whom came also many Slavs and Avars and these paid homage along with all their possessions to the lordship of the Emperor.¹⁹ Whether among them were also princes from Old Moravia and Nitrava, we can neither deny or assert. We incline to the belief that Old Moravia and the Nitrava region remained independent, for two years later, when the Khan, ruler of the Avars, approached Charlemagne with a request for delimitation of new settlements, for the Slavs were thrusting them out of their previous territories, Charlemagne did not intervene against the Slavs in favour of the Avars although their ruler, Theodore, was a Christian. The Moravians jealously guarded their independence. The process of internal integration at the end of the 8th century had advanced considerably and the Franko-Bavarian description of the Regions and the ethnic units north of the Danube of the year 817 documents the existence of two states, termed these of the Merehani and of the Marharii. These statements are confirmed by the *Conversio* as regards the stronghold of Mojmir and Pribina. The disappearance of the kindreds is shown too by the first written source of 822, which knows only the "ambassador of the Moravians."²⁰

A new stage in the constitutionalizing process appears in the thirties of the 9th century, the rise of Great Moravia — by the unification of Old Moravia and the Nitrava region. This probably took place in 833. In 828 (most probably on his way to Pannonia), the Archbishop of Salzburg, Adalram, consecrated in Nitrava region a church on the land of the pagan Prince Pribina and considerably strengthened there the influence of the Frankish power. In the two state units — in Old Moravia and in the Nitrava region — there increased simultaneously a tendency towards integration and opposition to the expansionism of the Bavarian clergy. For this reason the first historic Moravian and later Great-Moravian prince, the Christian Mojmir I, expelled Pribina. Although the latter

¹⁹ *Annales regni Francorum*, MMFH I, p. 42.

²⁰ *Ibidem ad a. 822*, p. 48—50.

fled to Ratbodus, Duke of the Eastern Province, who presented him to King Louis the German, with whom Pribina and his retinue secured a refuge, Louis the German hesitated to take action on his behalf.²¹ We may surmise that the expulsion of Pribina was considered to be an interior affair of Great Moravia, which now, united as it was, had become sufficiently strong for the East Frankish Empire, convulsed with inner strife as it was, to be able to assert its power with any hope of success.

By this action of Mojmir's there arose a larger and stronger state — Great Moravia which practically for the whole of the 9th century preserved its independence and with its wise policy and high degree of internal development, economic, social and cultural, set up a barrier to the expansion of the East Frankish Empire, and was a support in the fight of the other Slav peoples (especially the Czechs, Serbs and Slavs of the Elbe region) against the expansion or overlordship of the Frankish Empire. The continuing process of christianization was retained in the hands of the ruling stratum. This is shown by the fact that all the hitherto discovered twenty-two consecrated buildings were situated in places either at the seats of princes or in their neighbourhood or on the land of feudal nobles, that is to say of those who were the first to accept Christianity. Most of these consecrated buildings were set up by missions in the first half of the 9th century even before the arrival of Constantine and Methodius. The variety in the ground plan of these ecclesiastical buildings, as we encounter them in Staré Město, Mikulčice and Pohanско,²² confirm the words of the LM c. V, regarding the activity of the preachers from different christianizing centres (with prevalence, of course, of the Bavarian missions). The fact that most of the consecrated buildings were situated in the centres of Great Moravia or on the lands of nobles, along with the activity of the various currents of christianization, leads us to the conclusion that the ruling stratum was not merely supported by the christianization of Great Moravia but that exploited the syncretic nature of the various centres in the interest of a greater independence and self-determination. The attitude and approach of the Great-Moravian ruling stratum and of the princes towards the process of christianization can be evaluated as exceedingly far-sighted. The ideology of the Christian universe, elaborated by Alcuin, and passed on by the literature of the time, presented the Emperor on the one hand as the secular representative of the apostolic clerical power of the Curia and at the same time as the secular head of the Roman universe, which according to the opinions of contemporaries applied to all lands with the exception of Byzantium. Christianization itself diminished the danger of interference by way of power politics on the part of the Emperor or the Kings of the Eastern Franks and at the same time provided this society, now approaching feudalism, with an appropriate culture. And the written sources of the Franks down to the year 846, when Louis the

²¹ *Conversio* c. 10, in: *MMFH* III, p. 308—311.

²² Poulík, J., *Brány poznania*, in: *Veľká Morava*, Bratislava 1979, p. 17—20.

German endeavoured to assert his sovereignty over Great Moravia, helping to instal Rostislav as its ruler, remain silent on the relationships of Great Moravia to the Empire of the Franks.

While it is true that Rostislav was established with the help of Louis the German, nevertheless by 850 he had rid himself of his subordinate position and had even begun himself to take a hand in the disturbed politics of the East Frankish Empire.²³ At this period even the highly tendentious Decrees of the Synod of Mainz are obliged to refer to Christianity in Moravia as "rudem adhuc christianitatem genti Maraensium..."²⁴ The pacificatory activity of Louis the German against Rostislav in 855 was entirely without success. Nor were the repeated campaigns of the Frankish King in the following years any more successful, however destructive they were for Moravia. Rostislav and his mileiu, who thanks to contacts actually brought about by means of priests from the Dalmatian and Aquileian regions, were sufficiently well informed of the conditions in contemporary Europe and had known bitter experiences of the Bavarian mission, already in 853 had sought for allies in their struggle for supremacy. They saw that the most effective for their internal security and an independent international position would be an independent establishment of the Church under the patronage of the Pope, at that time Nicolas I, a consistent advocate of the universal church. For this reason after the end of 861 the representatives of the Moravian ruling stratum under the leadership of Rostislav approached the Pope with a request for a bishop and teacher to be sent to Moravia. The request of the Moravians arrived to Rome at a none too suitable moment and Nicolas I was unable to accede to it.²⁵ As a result of this Rostislav and the Moravians turned to Byzantium, to the ruler of the Eastren Romen Empire, Michael III and the Patriarch Fotius. Here the Moravian request of Prince Rostislav was granted for a number of reasons. Although the request was acceded to only partially, and of the two brothers, exceptionally gifted as they were intelectually and politically, neither was a priest in higher orders, the mission of Constantine the Philosopher, a teacher of the University of Byzantium, and his brother, Abbot Methodius, signified the recognition of Rostislav and of Great Moravia as an independent entity of the Roman universe. The two approached the fulfilment of their task with great energy and responsibility.

The main aim of the activity of Constantine and Methodius in Great Moravia consisted in the expansion of a strong establishment, that is to say in the education of a young clergy, the compilation of basic liturgical texts which would stabilize the ecclesiastical establishment from within, and the introduction of the Slavonic language and script into the liturgy and literature in general, which must be assessed as a bold

²³ Hejl, F., *Vizantijskoje posolstvo...*, p. 200—201. — Vaněček, V., *Über die Außenpolitik des Großmährischen Staates in den vierziger bis achtziger Jahren des IX. Jhts*, in: *Großmähriches Reich*, Praha 1960.

²⁴ *MMFH* IV, Brno 1971, p. 34.

²⁵ Hejl, F., *op. cit.*

and courageous innovation hitherto unknown to territories under the supremacy of the Papal Curia, an innovation whose inspiration sprang from the background of Byzantium. A remarkable feature in the active participation of the two brothers and their pupils in both translation and original literature in Moravia. The translation of the Bible by Methodius into the national tongue is the first comparable translation of its kind in the Middle Ages.

While Europe down to the middle of the first millenium was characterized by the unity of content of the Helenic-Roman culture, with its rich local differentiations, in the second half of the millenium the role of unification was taken over by the church, entirely dependent on the secular power of the Emperors of Byzantium and of the Franks. Subjected to the historical development of Europe the Vinidian Slavs, in particular the Western branch, had addressed themselves to them from the time of Samo. The syncretic nature of the mature vernacular Slav culture of Great Moravia along with the influences of Byzantium and Rome culture established Great Moravia on a level of the other cultural centres of the time.

The work of the Byzantine Mission at the same time strengthened the native development of an early feudal society: the Slavonic liturgy was confirmed by the Papal Curia, and by the Papal Bull "Industriae tuae" of 880 Methodius was appointed Archbishop of Moravia-Pannonia. Thus the political and cultural endeavours of the Great-Moravian Princes to achieve ecclesiastical, cultural and constitutional independence were crowned with the most significant success. Victory however was not complete. In the same year the Bavarian Wicing was consecrated Bishop of Nitrava, being a sworn enemy of the Slav liturgy, the representative of the Bavarian episcopacy and under the protection of Svatopluk.

The Byzantine mission also fulfilled the third request presented by Rostislav to Michael III and Photius: "worthy Lord, send such a man as would regulate all the law."²⁶ From this work of the mission there has come down to us the code of laws known as Nomokanon, the Zakon sudnyj ljudem and the translation of the Penitential code Zapovedi svętyich ot'c'. The translation of Methodius is an independent work, the patterns of Byzantium are adapted to conditions in Great Moravia, this being particularly reflected in the legal terminology. The Zakon sudnyj ljudem was compiled at the request of the society of Great Moravia as it approached feudalism, in the very first period of the mission's activity (that is to say in the second half of the sixties before the departure of the brothers for Rome). On the basis of this fact the exhortation of Methodius to the prince-judges, known as the "Anonymous homily of the Cloz'manuscript" based on a comparison with the Zakon sudnyj ljudem acquires a new significance.

Whatever may have been the fate of the Slavonic liturgy after the death of Methodius and in the changing internal and international si-

²⁶ LM V, in: *MMFH* II, 1967, p. 144.

tuation of Great Moravia, the significance of the mission lays in its contribution to realizing the efforts of the Great-Moravian pricipality to create an independent Christian Church establishment with its own liturgy and culture, in strengthening the independent position of the state of Rostislav and Svatopluk internally and in the international field and in the extensive translation and original literary activity, which laid the foundations of Slavonic literatures. The idea of an independent national literature in the vernacular language had no predecessor in Europe before that period. The mission supported the progressive forces of the Great-Moravian society of the time. After the expulsion of the pupils of Methodius from Moravia a renewed and unprecedented development took place with the Southern and Eastern Slavs as subjects for further cultural development of Europe.²⁷

The culture of Slav nations based on the work of Constantine and Methodius, became an integral part of European culture, of European cultural universe.

²⁷ Macùrek, J., *La mission byzantine en Moraviae au cours des années 863—885 et la portée de son héritage dans l'histoire de nos pays et de l'Europe*, in: *Magna Moravia*. Praha 1965, p. 17—70.

