

to an archbishop in the Empire. But this was a long way off. First it was necessary to unify and arrange ecclesiastical instruction and practice in the land and above all acquire a sufficient number of educated priests. Thus Rostislav turned to the Pope in 861 with a request for a teacher to whom these very tasks could be entrusted. Receiving no answer, he then requested a teacher from Byzantium.

Emperor Michael III and Patriarch Photios chose two brothers for this task – Constantine and Methodius. Although Greeks, they were from Salonica where Slavic was in everyday use, so they knew this language well. Constantine carried out the task conscientiously and during his time with Methodius in Moravia in the years 863–867 he trained a large number of priests. Their education was facilitated by the use of their native tongue. There was nothing particularly unusual about this – similar attempts to raise the status of vernacular tongues were under way in the same period in the Empire of Louis the German. Constantine however created a special alphabet to accommodate the speech sounds of the Slavic language, i.e., Glagolitic. Most importantly, the brothers began to use Slavic in the liturgy, that is, during the celebration of mass, in a period when only Latin or Greek was permitted. This led to differences with native clerics who were subordinate to the Bishop of Passau.

The disputes ended when Constantine and Methodius declared their task complete in 867 and set out for Constantinople. With them they brought their disciples who they wished to have ordained. On their way they stopped at Pribina's principality, which at that time was governed by his son Kocel, and there they won his admiration and friendship. While waiting in Venice for the ship that would take them to Constantinople, they heard that Emperor Michael III had been murdered and Patriarch Photios removed, and so in fact they had no-one to return to. This is why they gratefully accepted an invitation to Rome from Pope Nicholas I. Before they reached the city, Nicholas died; however his successor Hadrian II received them with the same favour. Constantine secured the ordination of his students as well as the acceptance of his methods of instruction, i.e., above all his alphabet, if not the liturgy in the Slavic language. Constantine, now ailing, and having fulfilled his task, entered a Greek monastery in Rome, dying on February 14, 869. The brothers' mission was to end there and Methodius awaited the fate of an emigrant.

We are unsure why, but in the spring of 869 Methodius became a key player in the political machinations which the Papacy was engaged in with the Patriarchate in Constantinople concerning claims to the northern Balkans (old Roman Illyria) and in which the Bulgar khan Boris was involved (he was at that time in the process of being received into Christianity and was balancing between Rome and Constantinople). Whether it originated with the Pope, or with Methodius himself (though it was unlikely to have been Kocel, and certainly not Rostislav, who knew nothing of these matters), the idea emerged to renew the old Roman archbishopric in Sirmium (Stemska Mitrovica near Belgrade). However, at this time, it was held by the Bulgars who had not yet decided for ecclesiastical obedience to Rome. The true seat was then to have become Blatnohrad, which however was not located in Illyria, but in Old Pannonia. Methodius thus became Archbishop of Sirmium with its seat in Pannonia.

ated the following year and lands, submitted and swore recognized Frankish formal Avars with surprising ease. victory, but the Slavic princes in the form of people, lives on the Morava river, and the most. It strengthened their take power in the tribe and empire. The princes began to ria, Northern Italy and from (), who not only succeeded in through the "official" baptism san in Bavaria (831).

ed into the Avar territory of th of there. Pribina, probably embrace Christianity and also was expelled from the land d wanderings, he eventually his own principality about his shaken by internal disputes, of the Moravians. However in the Treaty of Verdun in 843, eastern Germanic sector. He among the tribes on the east-Polabian Slavs and there was at fourteen of their princes to ised by this, agreed. However nus attacked Moravia in 846, d Mojmir I, who was replaced insulted Bohemians rejected upon Louis's troops returning an to consolidate his rule and of this, except that he under-; bishoprics were subordinate