The Old Slavic Apostolos. The Lessons of the Short Lectionary from Pentecost to Great Lent and the Abstracts of the Epistles

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Chapter 1

Prologue
The History of this Book

This book finds its origin in a present given me by my friend dr Peter Schmitz in 1986. This gift, a bundle of papers from the library of his grandfather, written in Russian-looking characters, gave me enormous pleasure, since I had taken up the study of Russian language a few years earlier. It turned out to be a Slavic Apostolos Manuscript, which I have described in the next chapter of this book as the *Apostolus Amstelodamensis*.¹

I first considered describing the 'Amsterdam' manuscript and ranging it in the system of existing manuscripts of the Slavic New Testament as a MA-thesis, possibly with a transcription of the text and a few notes. Subsequently, when I was looking round for the system—in my rash moments even for the *stemma*—of Slavic Apostolos MSS to find a place for 'my' manuscript, I came to realize that such a system did not exist. At that moment, William Veder came to the University of Amsterdam and suggested that I should cooperate with Hette Bakker, who had found an unknown Apostolos MS in the library of Karakallou monastery on Mount Athos, in the course of his research for his newly-completed MA thesis. Instead of both publishing an *editio unius libri*, as was usual in Slavic studies, we would together be able to lay the foundation for a really critical edition of the Slavic version of the Apostolos and eventually the complete New Testament. We had to abandon the original plan for a joint dissertation, because my own work on this project was delayed by obligations to teach Ancient Greek and Latin languages in school. Two years ago, Hette's “Towards a Critical Edition of the Old Slavic New Testament” (Bakker 1996) appeared, offering a theoretical framework for the critical edition we had in mind. As can be read in the prologue to that book, much of the theoretical framework that is laid down there was achieved in the past years of our cooperation at the Institute for Slavic Studies in the University of Amsterdam. Our

¹ In order to avoid misunderstandings from the outset: by “Apostolos” I do not mean a person, but a book, as it is used in the Christian Church of the East, containing the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, Catholic and Pauline, from the New Testament. As a refinement, by “Apostolus” I denote individual manuscripts, because traditionally manuscripts receive Latin names.
preliminary results have been published in several articles, of which our combined pu­
publication in *Palaeobulgarica* remains the most fundamental. The present book offers
an elaboration of the principles laid down in all our previous publications.

The first part of this book contains the critical edition of the text of the Slavic
version of the Short Pentecost Apostolus Lectionary, based on computer collations of
twenty manuscripts of various ages and from various repositories. The Preface ex­
plains the choice of the pericopes, the number of weeks, the details of the choice and
the types of the manuscripts. The way the computer collations have been made is also
explained. I have added some conclusions about the grouping of the manuscripts in­
volved and an attempt at evaluating them. In addition, the principles applied in making
an intermediate text and an operational edition as a precursor of the critical edition are
briefly restated. One third of this part of the present book has already been published
in a more modest version as “The Apostolus Christinopolitanus and the Text of the Old
Slavic Apostolus” (Van der Tak 1996).

The second part deals with the abstracts by which all Epistles are preceded in the
commented and continuous Apostolos manuscripts. (On this terminology, see below:
“The Manuscripts and their Description”). These abstracts (Greek: ὄρκοοειης, Latin:
*argumenta*, Slavic: *вєкзєнмір* ) are believed to have been originally composed
in Greek by an anonymous author and they have been ascribed to Euthalius Diaconus,
who probably lived in the IVth century A.D, but also to Oecumenius, whose life vari­
ously has been dated between the IVth and the Xth century. These texts are mentioned
occasionally by other editors of the Apostolos text—or rather of singular Apostolos
manuscripts—but they have not yet been studied, let alone published elsewhere. Ge­
genrally speaking, in the abstracts, the patterns of resemblance and variation between
the textual witnesses are clearly evident after a few pages of text. The most striking
feature, however, is that, whereas the main text allows the constitution of a single in­
termediate text for all twenty manuscripts with variants attested in various groups or
manuscripts, a common text for the nine witnesses of the text of the abstracts cannot
be constituted for the major part of these texts.

Originally, I intended to attach these abstracts to the main Epistle text of the Apos­
tolos Lectionary as a curiosity. Interestingly enough, the Slavic translation of the
abstracts appears to be transmitted in at least two versions of what was probably a
single translation from various Greek originals. The two versions are present in the
two ‘physically’ determined groups of manuscripts in which they appear: one version
accompanies the Apostolos text in the continuous manuscripts, the other version is
present in the commented Apostolos manuscripts. The Preface of Part II of this book
contains all the details of my research in this field up to now. The next chapter of
that part contains the full text of the abstracts in two versions and the Greek original
with all its variations known so far. I have also added an English translation—made by
myself—of the Greek, because translations of these texts are not as easily accessible as
is the case with the main Epistle text. The text of the Slavic translations is established
according to the same principles of textual criticism that I applied to the Lectionary
Epistle text. This implies that I have read all abstract texts in full, fed them into the

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computer and by the process of collating and making choices constructed an intermediate text. Because time limits were pressing, I confined myself to the abstracts of those Epistles that form the sources of the Short Lectionary Apostolos, omitting the abstracts of the Catholic Epistles and the Pauline Epistles to the Philippians, 2nd to the Thessalonians and Titus. In a forthcoming separate study on the abstracts I will certainly include the abstracts currently missing together with the general prologues to the Acts, the Pauline Epistles and the Catholic Epistles, which also form part of the “Euthalian Apparatus” accompanying the Apostolos, and may be even a more genuine one. I have added a Bibliography, a List of Abbreviations, a List of Pericopes and a Subject Index to enhance the usefulness of this book.

It is almost unnecessary to say that I could not have written this book without the help of many people and institutions. I wish to thank all who have contributed something over the past years, including many not mentioned by name. The Dutch Organisation for Scientific Research allowed me several times in the past years to travel to Bulgaria, Greece and Ukraine to check manuscripts in their original form and to keep up contacts with colleagues in the Eastern countries; my gratitude also includes those far-away people who are proud of my interest in ‘their’ written archives. I also have to thank the monks of Hilandar Monastery, Mt. Athos, as well as the Director and staff of the Hilandar Research Center, for the generous access they offered me to their library and microfiche archive in the Hilandar Research Center of Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA. I thank the former Faculty of Arts of the University of Amsterdam for the grant which allowed me the freedom from teaching duties and the facilities to devote myself full-time to the completion of this book for the duration of the past Academic year. The director and faculty colleagues of my school also earn my gratitude for allowing this leave.

I must specifically thank Paul Dillo for holding my hand during my first steps with the computer and designing a Slavonic character set for it; Peter Schmitz for his support in numerous talks and the presenting of the Amsterdam Apostolos Manuscript to me. I should also mention Hans Renkema for his daily support during the last stages before the printing of the manuscript. I thank Hette Bakker for all the years of stimulating cooperation in Amsterdam and elsewhere and for his personal friendship; I hope that we will both be able to progress further down the road we decided to take together in the past.

My last words of gratitude are for those who are closest to my daily life and have endured all the ups and downs of the past decades that brought me to this point. My sons have always been an incentive and a source of inspiration for the work I undertook. For the loving and unlimited support I have enjoyed over the last thirty-five years from my wife, words are inadequate, save perhaps those of the poet of our common ancestry:

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\text{où µέν γὰρ τοῦ ἐν κρείσσον καὶ ἄρειον,}
\text{η ἰδί' ομοφρονέοντε νοήμασιν οἷκον ἐχθην}
\text{ἀνὴρ ηδὲ γ' νή' πόλι' ὄλγεα δυσμενέος,}
\text{χάρματα δ' εὐμενετήσι' μάλιστα δὲ τ' ἐκλυνον αὐτοῖ.}
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(Homer, \textit{Od.} vi, 180–185)

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