

THE SLAVONIC TALE OF APHRODITIAN:  
LIMITATIONS OF MANUSCRIPT-CENTRED TEXTOLOGY

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As an accolade to Alexander G. Bobrov and his well-researched study of the Russian tradition of the 9–10th c. Slavonic translation of the *Tale of Aphroditian*<sup>1</sup> (Bobrov 1994), let me do what he could not: print a synthesised text of the oldest Slavonic translation. It is based upon a collation of five of Bobrov's printed versions, made by Tanja Ivanova–Sullivan (Amsterdam, 1995), complemented by the text of the *Meleckij sbornik* (see Veder 1982); underlining marks 59 conjectures not supported by any of the extant witnesses.

СЪКЪЗАНІЕ АФРОДИТИАНА О БЫВЪШИИМЪ БЪ ПЕРЬСЬСЦЪИ  
ЗЕМЛИ ЮУДЄСИ

1 (CPG 6968: 19a/short version 21) Отъ перьсѣ оувѣдѣнѣ въстѣ христосѣ ис прѣва. 2 не оутантѣ во сѣ ниуесоже сѣщинихѣ въ нихѣ кѣнигѣуи. 3 о въсемъ любовьнѣ трѣуждажщинихѣ сѣ. 4 какоже во юстѣ въ златахѣ ковѣуезѣхѣ въываіано. 5 и лежитѣ въ свѣтилѣхѣ цѣсарьскыихѣ. 6 се глаголюж оубо. 7 юже слышахѣ отъ сѣщинихѣ въ нихѣ жрьць.

3 The unanimous reading трѣуждажщинихѣ can be explained as a misreading of Glagolitic ѣ → ѣ (see 3:18 and Veder 2008: 496). 4 An original prefix въ best explains the variation въ : оу : иу : Ѧ. 7 The Slavonic text transmitted does not correspond to the Greek.

2 (19b/22) Коумирница бо юстѣ налкѣнигыи иры. 2 си же юстѣ об онѣ странѣ цѣсарьскыихѣ домовѣ. 3 юже курѣ цѣсарѣ сѣвѣдѣтель въсего благоуѣстина бѣ сѣтворилѣ. 4 и поставилѣ въ неи богы образы златы и сѣребрны. 5 и оутворилѣ ю каменнѣмъ многоцѣннѣмъ. 6 нѣ да не сѣповѣдаж оутвари. прѣдлѣжж слово. 7 въ тѣ дни напысанѣмъ дѣскы сѣказажтѣ. 8

<sup>1</sup> The Greek *Narratio Aphroditiani* (BHG 806, ed. Heyden 2009) is an extract from an imaginary disputation at the Persian court on the relative merits of various religions, chaired by a philosopher named Aphroditian, the *De Gestis in Perside* (CPG 6968, ed. Bratke 1899, Bringel 2007), probably composed in Syria in the 6th century.

вълѣзъшоу же цѣсарю въ коумирьницѣ тѣхъ · 9 раздрѣшениа сънолѣ приимтъ ·  
10 реуе жрьць проупни · 11 порадоуѣж сѣ съ товоѣж владѣко · 12 ира заулаа ѣстѣ  
въ жтровѣ · 13 цѣсарь же осклаблѣ сѣ реуе ѣмоу · 14 оумьршига ли въ жтровѣ  
иматъ · 15 онѣ же реуе · 16 ѣи · и оумьршига ожила ѣстѣ · 17 и жизнь раждаѣтъ ·:

9 The *supine* + *genitive* best fits the archaic grammar of the translation (see 1:2 оутанти сѣ + *genitive*). 13 The *j*-suffix is preserved in 3:35, 13:1.

3 (20/23) Цѣсарь же реуе · 2 уѣто сѣ ѣстѣ · съкажи ми · 3 жрьць сѣтъ · 4  
истиноѣж · владѣко · годѣ приспѣлѣ ѣстѣ сѣде · 5 всѣж во ношѣ прѣвѣшл  
образи ликѣ точаше · 6 мжжъскѣ образѣ и женъскѣ · 7 глаголаѣше сами кѣ  
сѣвѣ · 8 ходите да сѣ радоуѣемъ сѣ ироѣж · 9 и рѣшл мьнѣ · 10 пророуе · иди радоуи  
сѣ съ ироѣж · 11 тако възлюблена въстѣ · 12 азѣ же отрѣхъ · 13 кѣто иматъ  
възлюбити несѣщѣж · 14 они же глаголаахъ · 15 ожила ѣстѣ · и по томѣ не  
наречетъ сѣ ира а оуранга · 16 великоѣ во слѣньце възлюбило ѣж ѣстѣ · 17  
женъсцин же образи мжжъскѣимѣ глаголаахъ · 18 тако помалаѣше дѣгание ·  
тако 19 истоуьникѣ ѣстѣ възлюбленѣ · нѣстѣ во ира · 20 за дрѣводѣлѣж овѣцала  
сѣ · 21 и глаголаахъ мжжъсцин · 22 тако истоуьникѣ въ правѣдѣж нареченѣ ѣстѣ ·  
принемлемъ · 23 нѣ имѣ ѣи мурга ѣстѣ · 24 таже въ ложеснѣхъ тако въ мори  
носитъ коравль мѣнога добра плѣнѣ · 25 аще ли истоуьникѣ та ѣстѣ · 26 да сѣ  
сице разоумѣваѣтъ · 27 истоуьникѣ во водѣ истоуьникѣ доуѣа присно  
истауаѣтъ · 28 ѣдинѣж рѣвѣж имѣши · 29 божиѣж ждоѣж ѣмлемѣж · 30 имѣже въсь  
миръ тако въ мори живѣшѣ · своѣж плѣтнѣж крѣмитѣ · 31 доврѣ сѣте · тако  
дрѣводѣлѣж иматъ та · 32 нѣ не во отѣ мжжа ѣгоже раждаѣтъ дрѣводѣлѣж · 33  
тѣ во раждѣи сѣ дрѣводѣла старѣишинѣ дрѣводѣлѣска отрокѣ · 34 трѣгѣвнѣ  
съставленѣ невѣсьнѣи крѣвѣ съдѣла прѣмждрѣини хытросѣли · 35 на троѣ  
въселенѣи въсѣи стропѣ словесемѣ съставлѣ · 36 прѣмждиша же образи пѣрѣше  
сѣ о ирѣ ти о истоуьницѣ · 37 и ѣдиногласнѣ рѣшл · 38 съконьуаваѣшоу сѣ  
дѣни въси и въсѣ оувѣмѣ · 39 и реуе жрьць цѣсарю · 40 нѣнѣ оубо · владѣко ·  
прѣвѣжди проуѣе дѣне · 41 въсѣко во вѣдетъ дѣганию коньунѣи разоумѣ · 42  
тавлѣшиѣ сѣ оубо нѣстѣ просто тако ·:

3 The unanimous reading *реуе* can be a coincidental substitution (see 31). 9, 12, 37 The *s*-  
*aorist* is preserved in 15:1 (Meleckij sbornik 1028 f.113—118, henceforth: M). 18 The  
unanimous reading *похвалаѣше* can be explained as a misreading of Glagolitic *ѡ* → *ѡ*  
(see 1:3). 21 The spelling *сѣ* is preserved in 0, 3:17, 10:6 and 13:26. 23 The unanimous  
reading *марина* can be considered a trivialisation (see also 2:12, 13:6). 31 The unanimous  
reading *реуе* (sg23) is best explained as a mechanical replacement of the recessive *сѣте*  
(pl2). 32 The conjunction *нѣ* is erroneously coalesced with the preceding *та* as *таннѣ*  
NMO, *танно* T or *танна* S. 41 *Въсѣко* may have coalesced with the preceding *дѣне* to  
*дѣнѣсь* NMOT. 42 The *j*-suffix is preserved in 3:35, 9:5, 13:1.

4 (21/24) Прѣвѣвѣшоу же цѣсарю тоу · 2 и видашоу образы кинурьнѣи · 3  
и науашл гѣдѣшии гѣсти въ гѣсли · и пѣсьнивица пѣти · 4 и ѣликоже вѣаше  
вън жтрь ѣтѣверножнѣи хѣ и пѣтицѣ съреврѣнѣ и златѣ · 5 кѣждо

съвършааше въ свои гласъ· 6 цѣсарю же грозноу вѣвѣшоу· 7 и всемоу напльншоу сѧ страха· 8 и хотѧщоу отити· 9 не трѣпѣаше во самозѣраунаѧего матежа· 10 реуе же ѧмоу жрьць· 11 прооувѣждь· цѣсарю· 12 приспѣло во ѧстѣ коньубноѧе гавлениѧе· 13 ѧже во богѣ вѣсѣхъ изволимъ ѧстѣ гавити намъ·:

2 The unanimous reading *коумирьныѧ* can be considered a trivialisation (see also 3:23, 13:6).

5 (22/25) Гелмоу же тако събесѣдованюу· 2 отъкры сѧ стропѣ· 3 и въниде звѣзда свѣтъла· 4 и ста надъ коумиромъ истоуьника· 5 и гласъ вѣстѣ такъ слѣшати· 6 истоуьниче господи· великоѧе слѣньце поустило ма ѧстѣ повѣдати ти коупно и слоужити· 7 бескврьбноуѧмоу пьсанню слоужжъ тебѣ· мати старѣишаѧего вѣсѣхъ униовѣ вѣважши· 8 невѣста триименьноуѧмоу и ѧдиномоу вожьствоу сѧщи· с 9 прозываетъ же сѧ невѣпъсантѧи младеньць зауло и коньць· 10 зауло оубо съпасоу коньць же пагоувѣ· 11 селмоу оубо гласоу вѣзданюу· 12 вси коумири паджъ ниць· 13 ѧдиномоу истоуьникоу стоѧщоу· 14 въ немъже обрѣте сѧ потъуенъ цѣсарьскѧи вѣньць· 15 илгы на себѣ отъ камене нариуемаѧего анѣораѣтъ ти отъ змарагда· 16 и каменъма сима прилѣплѧжъ звѣзда· 17 врѣхоу же истоуьника стоѧаше звѣзда·:

7 The Slavonic text transmitted does not correspond to the Greek. 8 The readings *сѧще* : *сѧщоу* :  $\emptyset$  degrade the text. 12 The unanimous reading *падошѧ* can be a coincidental substitution. 16 The insertion of the preposition *къ* may be secondary.

6 (23/26) Повелѣ же цѣсарь съвѣрати всеѧ прѣмждрънѧ раздрѣшаѧщѧ знамениѧа· 2 ѧлико ихъ вѣаше подъ цѣсарьствѧемъ ѧго· 3 зѣвателемъ же трѣбамѧ потъшавѧжщѧмъ· 4 прииджъ вси въ коумирьницѧ· 5 и тако оузѣрѣшѧ звѣзды надъ истоуьникомъ· 6 и вѣньць звѣздѧнѧи съ каменѧемъ и коумирѧ на тѣлѣхъ лежѧшѧ· 7 рѣшѧ· 8 цѣсарю· корень вожьскѧи и цѣсарьскѧи вѣсклонилъ сѧ ѧстѣ· 9 небесѧнаѧего и земьнаѧего цѣсарѧ образъ приносѧ· 10 источникъ во каринѣ вѧрѧнемьскѧи земьла ѧстѣ дѣщи· 11 вѣньць же образъ цѣсарьскѧ ѧстѣ· 12 звѣзда же небесѧноѧе ѧстѣ проповѣданиѧе· на земьли уоудотворимо· 13 изиоды вѣстѧло ѧстѣ цѣсарьствѧе· 14 ѧже жидовьскѧ памѧть отъвержетъ· 15 а ѧже паджъ возѧ на тѣлѣхъ· 16 съконьуаниѧе уѣсти ихъ приспѣло ѧстѣ· 17 пришьдѧи во старѣиши уѣсти достоинъ сы· 18 како оставитъ новы· сѧщѧмъ въ нен не отъвергъ· 19 нѧнѣ оубо· ѡ цѣсарю· поустѧ въ иероусалимъ· 20 обрѧщеши во сынѣ вѣседръжитѧла тѣломъ· 21 тѣлесѧнама дръжимъ рѧжѧма женьсѧма· 22 прѣвѣстѣ же звѣзда та надъ истоуьникомъ· нариуѧтѧимъ небесѧнѧи· 23 донѣдеже пондѧ вѣсѧви· 24 ти тогда съ тѣли понде·:

4 The unanimous reading *придошѧ* can be a coincidental substitution. 7 The *s-aorist* is preserved in 15:1 (M). 15 The unanimous reading *падошѧ* can be a coincidental substitution. 18 The Slavonic text transmitted does not correspond to the Greek. 20 The masculine *nominative-accusative* is preserved in 6:21, 19:2. 24 The unanimous reading *пондошѧ* can be a coincidental substitution.



въпрашаахъ же нгы старѣишингы жидовьсцини о вѣдѣшиимъ · 7 и ѹсо же дѣла юсте пришлы · 8 и отвѣщахомъ · тако 9 югоже въ наричете месниж родилъ сѧ юстѣ · 10 они же пищеваахъ · и противити сѧ не дрѣздаахъ ·

4 The unanimous reading юстѣ can be a coincidental substitution (see 3:31).

11 (27b/31) Ти же рѣша намъ · 2 тако въ небеснаго сѣда · повѣдите нгы · 3 ѹто юсте разоумѣли · 4 мы же отвѣщахомъ имъ · 5 въ невѣрованіемъ волите · 6 и не имете вѣрты ни съ клѣтвож ни бес клѣвты · 7 нъ въслѣждаете весѣвѣтноуемюу своємюу разоумюу · 8 христосъ во сынъ въшнѣаго родилъ сѧ юстѣ · 9 распыаа законъ вашъ и съворты · 10 того дѣла вѣхвованіемъ крѣпкомъ стрѣлаемни · 11 не крѣпѣ послушаете имене сего · 12 иже вънезапж прииде на въ ·:

1 The *s*-aorist is preserved in 15:1 (M). 11 The negation and the verb послушати require the *genitive* of the object.

12 (27c/32) Они же сами въ севѣ съвѣщавъше сѧ · молиша нгы · 2 да въземъше дары отъ нихъ · потаниъ тако · во творѣахъ странамъ · 3 да не вѣдетъ зазора въ нихъ · 4 мы же отвѣщахомъ имъ · 5 мы дары на чьсть юмоу принесли юсамъ · 6 такоже проповѣдати въшнѣне ѹудо въ нашей странѣ и величство · вънегда раждааше сѧ · 7 ти глаголете · 8 възъмъше дары гавленюе намъ небеснъимъ богомъ потанити · 9 и прѣстѣпити своѣго цѣсаря заповѣди · 10 или нѣсте поѹли · 11 колико искоушение приимъше ассуриско · 12 они же оубоавъше сѧ · 13 и зѣло мъного мольше сѧ · поустыша нгы · 14 цѣсарю жидовьскоу приведашюу нгы къ севѣ · 15 и глаголавъшоу къ намъ · и въпрашавъшоу · 16 отвѣщахомъ юмоу · 17 о немъже и възъмъти сѧ зѣло · 18 и отидомъ отъ него · 19 не послушавъше юго ни тако радъника ·:

2 The Slavonic text transmitted does not correspond to the Greek. 13 The *j*-suffix is preserved in 3:35, 9:5, 13:1. 18 The unanimous reading ѡидохомъ can be a coincidental substitution.

13 (28/33) Приидомъ же гоможе поущени · и видѣхомъ рождѣшжж и рожденаго · 2 звѣзда оуказажши владѣуынъи млaddenъць · 3 рѣхомъ же матери · 4 како сѧ прозываети · прѣславнага матери · 5 она же отрече · 6 маританъ · 7 мы же рѣхомъ · 8 отъ кыа ѹади · 9 она же рече · 10 отъ сѣа · сѧтъ · видленемъскыа земля · 11 мы же · 12 не имѣ ли оубо никогоже мжжа · 13 она же рече · 14 тѣчиж овѣщана вѣахъ · 15 прѣждеврауынъимъ въвѣшемъ знаменіемъ · 16 размышлѣаши же ми о сихъ · 17 сѣвотѣ освѣтъши · и слънцоу въшъдъшоу · 18 прииде анъгелъ · 19 благовѣстоуа ми прѣдивно рождение нѣкою · 20 въспищевавъши възъпихъ · 21 никакоже да вѣдетъ мнѣ се · господи · 22 мжжа во не имамъ · 23 и извѣща мѧ · 24 тако изволениемъ вожиимъ се рождение имѣти · 25 мы же рѣхомъ · 26 матери матеремъ · вси божи перьсѣцини блажиша тѧ · 27 хвала твога велиа · 28 прѣвъзнесла во сѧ юси паѹе въсѣхъ славынъихъ ·:

1 The unanimous reading *приидохомъ* can be a coincidental substitution. 3,7 The *s*-*aurist* is preserved in 15:1 (M). 10 The variation *вси* :  $\emptyset$  suggests substitution for a *crux* (see 3:31). 13 The unanimous reading *реуе* can be a coincidental substitution (see 3:31). 16,28 The Slavonic text transmitted does not correspond to the Greek. 23 The unanimous reading *ми* should be considered secondary to the original *accusative*. 27 The unanimous reading *велика* should be considered secondary to the unsuffixed adjective.

14 (29a/34) Отроуа же сѣдѣаше на земли. 2 въторое лѣто илгы. такоже сама глаголаше. 3 малъ прикладъ илгы образъ рождъшамъ и. 4 сама же вѣлаше въсока тѣломъ. смагла вѣкскъ имѣщи. 5 кржговатомъ лицемъ и власти имѣщи оувѣсты.

3 The readings *самъ* :  $\emptyset$  are erroneous. 4 The *j*-suffix is preserved in 3:35, 9:5, 13:1. 4 The Slavonic text transmitted does not correspond to the Greek.

15 (29b/35) Имаже овою обличію написано имѣше въ странѣ своѣхъ занѣсолмъ. 2 и въстѣ положено нашими ржками. 3 идеже вѣ проречено. 4 пьсано сице. 5 въ диопетовѣ коумирьници слънъце когоу великоуіемоу цѣсарю перьска дръжава въпъса.

1 The Slavonic text transmitted does not correspond to the Greek.

16 (29c/36) И възмъ отроуа къждо насъ. подръжа ю на ржкоу. 2 и цѣловавъше и поклонше сѣ юмоу. 3 дахомъ юмоу злато и ливанъ и змирнѣ. рекъше юмоу. 4 тѣвѣ твориатъ любовьзъмъ усть. невесънъи исосуе. 5 инако не виша оустроена была неоустроенага. 6 аще ви ты не пришълъ. 7 инако не сълѣсила сѣ виша въшънѣга съ нижъними. 8 аще ви ты не съшълъ. 9 не тольма во сѣ спѣетъ слоужьба. 10 аще кѣто раба поуѣтитъ. 11 юльмаже аще кѣто самъ приидетъ. 12 лѣпо се естъ твоюи рѣждѣи хытрости сѣпостатъ тако рѣхытрити. 13 отроуа же сѣлаше сѣ. 14 и плескалаше хвалениемъ и словесемъ нашимъ.

7 The unanimous reading *вты* should be considered secondary to the *plural*. 4,11 The Slavonic text transmitted does not correspond to the Greek.

17 (29d/37) И поклонше сѣ матери юго. 2 и та же нъ поуѣвши. 3 и лгы ѣхъ прославше. 4 придохомъ на лѣсто идеже вѣдохомъ обитали.

3-5 The *j*-suffix is preserved in 3:35, 9:5, 13:1. Its presence in 17:4 is suggested by the variation *поутова* : *поуитова* : *поутивше* : *поуѣтивши* : *поуѣтвовавши*.

18 (30a/38) 1 въвъшоу оубо кеуероу. 2 прииде къ намъ страшнъ и оужастнъ ангелъ. глагола намъ. 3 скоро изидѣте. 4 да не подѣимете сего съвѣта на сѣ. 5 лгы же оужастнѣ рѣхомъ. 6 кѣто естъ творанъ съвѣтъ на насъ великнѣ сълты. ѡ воюводо вокин. 7 онъ же реуе. 8 иродъ. нъ въставше авиѣ. идѣте съ миромъ съпасаеми. 9 лгы же оускорше и въсѣдше на сильны конѣ. 10 отидомъ отѣтждоу съ въсѣмъ потѣщаниемъ. 17 и съповѣдохомъ въста. таже видѣхомъ въ иероусалимѣ.

5 The *s*-*aurist* is preserved in 15:1 (M). 9 The *j*-suffix is preserved in 3:35, 9:5, 13:1. 10 The unanimous reading *ѡидохомъ* can be a coincidental substitution.



19 (30b/39) Се оубо толико о христѣ съповѣдадохмъ ваимъ · 2 вѣмъ же оубо христосъ съпасъ намъ бѣвѣвъшъ · 3 томоу слава и держава въ вѣкы вѣкомъ · 4 аминъ ·:

Why do we need a synthesised source text? The reasons are four: i. It abstracts the text from the witnesses and gives it a status separate from them, no matter how debatable some proposed readings may be (bear in mind that, in the text above, not only the underlined conjectures are open to debate, but all choices from conflicting readings as well). It provides a map to guide the discussion of readings and variants with reference to the *work* and its *text* as a whole, not to the witnesses, whose readings are always potentially flawed. ii. It establishes a frame of reference (i.e. *chapter:verse*), which enables us to refer to the text as such without recourse to the manuscripts (which potentially requires 58 different references for almost every occurrence of a form). This is useful not only for indexing the text and relating the variant readings to readily retrievable addresses, but for comparing other texts to it as well.<sup>2</sup> iii. It functions as a unique sieve to retrieve all variant readings (down to the levels of morphophonology and orthography), to evaluate and, eventually, interpret them. The tighter the mesh of the sieve, the slighter the chance that any variant will fall through (see above the two instances each of the masculine *nominative-accusative* and the *j*-suffix in *i*-conjugation participles, as well as the single instance of an *s*-*aorist*). iv. It provides a template for establishing the original text, which requires discussion by and, ultimately, consensus of as many informed readers as possible.<sup>3</sup> Once established and given an

<sup>2</sup> To the Slavonic *Tale* must be compared the *Oracle on Christ in the Temple of Apollo*, which invariably follows it (ed. Bobrov 1994: 137–138) and which presents *De Gestis in Perside* 13:14–15 in a different context; the apocryphal *Ladder of Jacob* (see Marina A. Salmina in SKK I: 230–231), the *coda* to which is compiled from the *Tale's* ch. 5, 7 and 8; and the *Dream of King Jehoash* (Kuev 1981: 383–385; Wątróbska 1986: nr. 1–20; Krutova 2003: 95–97; M 1761–1763 f.199v–201). The three texts may belong to one translator.

<sup>3</sup> The discussion on the establishment of a text can take time: for Homer's *Odyssee* and *Ilias*, it was opened by Ptolemy IV Soter ca. 220 BC and lasted over two millennia until the editions of van Thiel 1991 and West 2000. And consensus on establishment does not imply that the discussion cannot be reopened: for the *New Testament*, it was opened by St Jerome in 382, rekindled by Erasmus of Rotterdam in 1516, and found consensus almost five centuries later in the edition of Aland 1993; but the discovery, in 1945, of the apocryphal *Gospel of Thomas* compelled Robinson 2000 to reopen the discussion on the text of the *Gospels of Matthew, Luke and Mark* with new questions about their sources. Discussions on the establishment of texts more often than not feature progressive excoriation of the witnesses. The old adage *testes caveas* 'beware of the witnesses' is most impressively visualised by Elia Kazan in his film *Boomerang* (1947).

unambiguous siglum, e.g. *Aphr*, the text can be used for input into a *Thesaurus linguae slavonicae*.

Why could not Bobrov himself print a synthesised source text of the *Tale*'s oldest translation? The answer to this question lies in the scholarly environment in which he conducted his research. In contrast to *text-centred textology*, which aims 'to restore the texts as closely as possible to the form which they originally had' (Reynolds—Wilson 1974: 186) and explain the variation to which they were exposed in transmission, this environment does not recognise the existence of a text not transmitted in a single manuscript; we may well label it *manuscript-centred textology*. It allows neither extrapolation from the extant manuscript witnesses into the realm of textual palæontology, nor examination of substance, i.e. the *work* (i.c. a translation from Greek) as a system of intentions (i.c. of translational decisions) and its *text* as a system of signs (i.c. the lexical and morphosyntactic means applied to realise the translational decisions).<sup>4</sup> It studies accidents, i.e. the readings of the manuscript witnesses, ignoring the one universal textology has to offer: *transmission traumatises texts*.

The stricture on extrapolation into the realm of textual palæontology constrained Bobrov to present separately all branches of his stemma (1994: 37), none of them synthesised, but each represented by a single manuscript:<sup>5</sup> 1. a 'Serbian redaction' (henceforth: S) represented by cod. Beograd NBS Djakovica (lost in 1941, ed. Makušev 1878) + Athens Sem.Byz.Phil. 39(41) with variants of another witness, which also fills a lacuna in the former; 2. a 'Novgorod redaction' (henceforth: N) represented by cod. S.—Pb. RNB F.I.202 without variants from any of the other 10 witnesses assigned to this 'redaction';<sup>6</sup> 3. an 'Interpolated redaction' (henceforth: I) represented by cod. Kiev CNB Mel.m./p.116 and two more witnesses;<sup>7</sup> 4. a 'Second group of manuscripts'

<sup>4</sup> The sole exception to these strictures is the *Lay of Igor's Host*, the single ms of which apparently perished in the Moscow conflagration of 1813. As a consequence, the *Lay* is the only Slavonic text, which enjoys (besides a lively debate of its authenticity) a lively — and productive — debate of its readings. For other Slavonic texts, the *editio princeps*, normally the starting—point of such debate, seems to mark their obsequies rather than their renaissance, as if there were no point in debating what is testified by a manuscript.

<sup>5</sup> This stricture entails that an apparatus inevitably contains readings more original than those in the ms printed.

<sup>6</sup> The apparatus to N seems to be omitted on the assumption that cod. S.—Pb. RNB F.I.202 represents, if not the autograph of the 'redaction', then at least its direct apograph.

<sup>7</sup> I is derived from N by a lengthy interpolation between 9:3 and 9:4. For variants to the readings of the ms, Bobrov 1994: 105 refers to a 1961 publication by Varvara P. Adrianova—Peretc.



(henceforth: O) represented by cod. S.—Pb. CGIA F.834 op. 2 nr. 1504, with variants from the 6 other witnesses assigned to this ‘redaction’; 5. the oldest manuscript, cod. S.—Pb. RNB F.p.I.39.(henceforth: T);<sup>8</sup> 6. a 17th c. translation of I into *prosta mova* preserved in autograph; 7. a 19th c. Old Believer reworking of O, also preserved in autograph. An 8th ‘Čudov redaction’ (15 witnesses, henceforth: Č) is not printed separately, apparently because of the paucity of features distinguishing it from O and T, save a lengthy addition at the end (see Bobrov 1994: 29–31).<sup>9</sup>

Fragmentation of the evidence, of course, entails fragmentation of the text—critical apparatus, which significantly complicates comparison and evaluation of readings. Yet there is more. The lack of a concept of the source text leads to scholarly myopia: it preempts the question how the ‘redactions’ came into being. They are taken at face value, and the accidents they contain are considered an integral part of their text. In the *Tale of Aphroditian*, some 20 verses show unanimous disturbances in syntax and diminished correspondence to the Greek original which require explanation. Most of them remain undetected, precisely because the fragmentation of the evidence and the lack of a concept of the source text seriously limit the scope of criticism.

The fundamental lack of criticism is exacerbated by an injunction to give priority above all others to intentional changes in text. This inevitably leads to flawed interpretation of relations.<sup>10</sup> It prevented Bobrov from recognising that neither NI (save for the interpolation in I), nor TOČ (save for the addition at the end of Č) show any signs of purposeful editorial intervention and that the four ‘editorial’ changes he identified in Č (1994: 29–30) can more reliably be identified as unintentional corruptions of an otherwise already corrupt text. S, in contrast, is derived from NI by identifiable editorial intervention (abridgement, paraphrase, transposition), covering the entire length of the text. S shares with TOČ the lack of clauses in 5:16, 6:17–18, 8:5 14–15, 13:16,<sup>11</sup> and Bobrov interpreted these as conjunctive errors: *ergo*, he reasoned, these clauses were lacking in the archetype and N restituted them by recollection with a Greek manuscript;<sup>12</sup> this recollection, he argued, took place in

<sup>8</sup> T is, in fact, not a ‘redaction’ at all, but merely a faulty copy of OČ.

<sup>9</sup> Bringel 2007: 125–126 signals one more reworking of our *Tale*, the *Discourse on the Star Irania* (ed. Begunov 1983), found in a ms of the 15th c.

<sup>10</sup> One of these flaws, as the attentive reader will notice at the end of the paragraph, is that interpretations can be swayed in the direction of ‘political correctness’.

<sup>11</sup> By comparison with NI, S and TOČ also share the lack of clauses in 8:17 and 9:5.

<sup>12</sup> Why should a recollection with a Greek manuscript yield inadequate text in 8:17? Why should it be limited to single points in the text? Why was none of the other corruptions eliminated while recollating?

Novgorod because its earliest manuscript was written there (1994: 26). And since N restituted this clause, all other mss that contain it are dependent upon N.

The fact that omissions in an edited text and in a non—edited text may not be conjunctive, but coincidental, should have been a cause for caution. And a systematic examination of the readings in the 10 manuscripts of N not deemed worthy of inclusion into an apparatus would have reversed the rash conclusion. M, written in L'viv before 1596, has its share of Ukrainisms (e.g. 3:8 *ХОДИТЕ* → *ХОДѢТЕ*), but they are superimposed on a solidly Middle—Bulgarian version of the text, systematically spelling *жд*, *лъ* and *ръ* (e.g. 1:3 *трьждлюцимѣ*, 1:1 *прѣва*), massively reflecting Middle—Bulgarian confusion of nasals (e.g. 1:6 *гѣла*, 2:6 *продѣлѣжа*, 2:12 *гѣтровѣ*, 6:6 *лежюца*) and the conjunction *нѣ* in the spelling *нѣ* → *нѣ*; in 4:11, M reads *прорѣвѣждѣ* instead of N's ludicrous *прорѣвѣжѣ*; finally, the texts surrounding ours in M show incidental signs of a Moldavian accent (e.g. 1788 *рѣвѣициѣ* → *рѣвѣициѣ* f.213v). These features inexorably lead to the conclusion that our text in M did not descend to L'viv from Novgorod, but came up from the Balkans, and that the clauses 5:16, 6:17—18, 8:5 14—15, 13:16 (plus the two signalled in note 11), which M contains, cannot possibly have been added in Novgorod.

The most significant shortcoming of manuscript—centred textology, the source of its concentration on accidents and its predilection for intentional changes in text, is the underlying assumption that any manuscript is the product of autonomous linguistic activity. While this is certainly true for autographs of texts composed or edited, it does not apply to texts copied and compiled.<sup>13</sup> In the synthesised text above, five readings (1:3, 3:16, 5:6, 8:5 28) are identified as having their probable origin in the misreading of a text written originally in Glagolitic: their retention in all copies is only the result of visual and manual activity. And they are not the only readings that can be related to a Glagolitic original: the variation *Ѡ* *Ѡфродитиана* SNT : *Ѡфродитиана* O reflects *Ѡ* → *Ѡ* (additional abbreviations *дѣти* → *дѣ* N or → *тѣ* O reflect the well—known confusion *Ѡ* → *Ѡ*); 3:18 *Ѡко* TO : *Ѡкѣ* SN, 3:24 *Ѡкѣ* all, 3:30 *Ѡко* N : *Ѡкѣ* STO, 12:19 *Ѡкѣ* all, 13:1 *Ѡлюже* SNI : *Ѡлюже* TO reflect the problem whether or not to introduce a Cyrillic prenotation—mark; 7:8 *вѣпѣсанѣ* S : *вѣписанѣ* NI : *писанѣ* TO, 13:4 *прѣзѣвѣиши* NITO : *прѣзѣвѣиши* S, 13:8 *Ѡди* S : *Ѡда/Ѡдо* NITO, 13:24

<sup>13</sup> The assumption underlying the association of copying and composing is that, in copying, texts were adapted to the dialect of the local scriptorium, as was the practice on the lower Rhine (Schützeichel 1974). The Low German model was applied to Slavonic texts by van Wijk 1918 and thereafter, but its transposition to the *Slavia slavonica* (see note 18) remains totally unsubstantiated. In the case of the *Tale of Aphroditian*, only the translation of I into *prosta mova* and — to a minimal extent — the Old—Believer reworking of O testify to linguistic adaptation; the witnesses to the transmitted text themselves do not.



рождѣніе NITO : рождѣноѣ S reflect Ф/Ѣ ⇔ ѡ 5:15 анѣдракъсъ S : анѣдраѣтъ N : анѣфракътъ TO reflects the three problems (1) whether or not to insert Slavonic half—vowels into the greccising spelling +Ѣ+Ѣ+Ѣ+Ѣ+Ѣ+Ѣ, (2) how to render Ѣ, and (3) whether or not to introduce Cyrillic ѣ (see in greater detail Veder 2008a).

The conclusion must be that the differences between the versions are due to individual differences in transcribing a Glagolitic exemplar rather than to editorial intervention. The latter is manifest only in S, which cuts a total of 59 clauses (incl. most of ch. 8—9, 14 and all of ch. 15), deemed irrelevant to the narrative, but adds a summary of them between ch. 18 and 19. Thus the omissions in 8:5 14—15 17, 9:5, 13:16, which are not coextensive in S and in TOČ, cannot be compared. This leaves the concordant omission of 5:16, 6:17—18 to be interpreted as a conjunctive error. In view of the editorial strategy of S to cut irrelevance to the narrative, it is much more plausible that the ancestor of TOČ omitted them coincidentally for lack of understanding of the information (as in so many other cases). So, to all probability, S, NI, TO and maybe even Č represent independent readings of that Glagolitic exemplar. The fact that all versions show unanimous misreadings, together with the unanimous syntactic and semantic disturbances in 1:7, 3:31—32 41, 4:2, 5:7, 10:4, 12:2, 13:10 23 28, 14:3—15:2, 16:7 11, surely indicates that the Glagolitic exemplar was not the translator's autograph.

It should be perfectly clear that what is in question here, is not Bobrov's competence. His surveys of the research (ch.1), of the 'embedding' of the text in books, its attestation in libraries (ch.3) and its reception and treatment in Rus' (ch.4), as well as the identification of the fragment Athens Sem.Byz.Phil. 39(41) with the fragment of the same codex published by Makušev 1882 are examples of fine scholarship, as are his edition of the 14th c. Slavonic translation and its *Denunciation* by Maxim the Greek. What is in question here, is the competence of manuscript—centred textology: is it capable of handling a case like the early history of the Slavonic *Tale of Aphroditianus*, in which the transmission is heavily marked by non—linguistic factors (i.e. copying, complicated by coping with Glagolitic), following Murphy's law *What can go wrong, will?*

The case of the *Tale of Aphroditianus* is far from isolated. To give but two examples, the romantic adulation of the *Izbornik* of 1073 (SK 4) and the *Izbornik* of 1076 (SK 5) during the first 170—200 years of study generated an enormous body of studies predicated on the misconception that the manuscripts were the protographs of the text, all marked by near to complete neglect of the other extant witnesses.<sup>14</sup> The first serious surveys of the witnesses

<sup>14</sup> Of the *Izbornik* of 1073, 19 witnesses + 5 apographs of extant witnesses are now known (Vrooland 2006: 73—74). Of the *Izbornik* of 1076, 7 witnesses are now known (Veder 2008b: 9).

and their relation to each other belong to Kamčatnov 1984 and Veder 1983. The first critical edition of the translation — not its copy — of two questions from the *Izbornik* of 1073 belong to Sieswerda 2004 and Thomson 2006, the first full comparison of its 10th-century and 14th-century translations from Greek to Thomson 2007. The first critical editions of component texts — not their copies — in the *Izbornik* of 1076 belong to Thomson 1986 and Gerd 2003.<sup>15</sup>

The equation of the oldest manuscript with the protograph of the text significantly influences the interpretation of both linguistic and literary features. Rott-Żebrowski 1974ab erroneously identified the language of the *Izbornik* of 1076 as Proto-Ukrainian,<sup>16</sup> and Kopreeva 1979 erroneously claimed that two defective witnesses parallel to the oldest manuscript could not but be descended from it; in 1980, she corrected her claim, but then found herself compelled to argue that the lack of some gnomes in the *Centuria de fide* was archetypal, and that they were restituted in the *Izbornik* of 1076 by recollection with the full text<sup>17</sup> (of course, nowhere but in Rus’).

The catalogue of failures of manuscript-centred textology to grasp essential features of text-transmission in the *Slavia slavonica*<sup>18</sup> can be continued *ad libitum* for almost any item in SK. They all boil down to the failure to dissociate copying and compiling (which involve little or no linguistic activity) and composing and editing (which do), to dissociate manuscript and text.<sup>19</sup> A textology in which *text* is not treated as an autonomous entity, preserved by the manuscript *witnesses* to no more than varying degree, cannot yield reliable results. Manuscript-centred textology is something like an ‘anthropocentric theology’:<sup>20</sup> it misses the point.

<sup>15</sup> Gerd 2003: 122–124 even identified in an 1813–1814 Počaeŭ imprint a text reflecting an earlier (4th) generation of development than in the *Izbornik* of 1076 (5th generation).

<sup>16</sup> Such identification completely disregards the fact that none of its components represents a first-generation (= autograph) text.

<sup>17</sup> The *Centuria de fide* in the *Izbornik* of 1076, later attributed to a Gennadius (patriarch Gennadius I?), is a selective compilation, made by two progressive runs through the full text (Veder 2008b: 13). The structure of this compilation could impossibly have been recreated by recollection with a full text.

<sup>18</sup> The overdue reformulation of the dichotomy *Slavia romana* ~ *Slavia orthodoxa* in non-confessional terms as *Slavia latina* ~ *Slavia slavonica* belongs to Sante Graciotti (see most recently Graciotti 2006).

<sup>19</sup> For ‘the crucial step from manuscripts to text’, see Bakker 1996: 159.

<sup>20</sup> Such a theology was derided by the great Dutch geographer, textologist and novelist Willem Frederik Hermans (1921–1995) in his novel *Among Professors* as the innovative contribution to scholarship of a very provincial university.



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