

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

This issue of ПОДАТА КЪЗНИГОПИСЬНАЯ contains only two papers: Hans van der Tak's proposal to determine the position of the *Apostolus Christinopolitanus* within the tradition of the Old Slavic *Apostolus* and Cynthia Vakareliyska's proposal to restore the text of the lost folia of the Middle Bulgarian *Banica Gospels*, both important enough in their own right to deserve a full presentation.

Both papers are concerned with single MSS at a time when more than once, e.g. in the discussions at the 11th International Congress of Slavists at Bratislava or on the pages of the Austrian review *Die slavischen Sprachen*, voices have been raised to claim that the time to devote this much attention to single MSS is past, and that our attention must be turned to the comparative diachronic and diatopic study of texts, to the establishment of their *original* form and wording, if we wish to provide a solid basis for the development of Old Slavic studies in the 21st century. Especially Biblical texts, so the argument goes, should be freed from such *manuscript fetishism*, which obscures the perspective on their common source: the single Old Slavic translation by St. Method and his disciples.

Yet both authors make it eminently clear that painstaking attention must be paid to the individuality of the single MSS and to the value of the evidence they present if their comparison is to be fruitful, if their variants are to be properly judged as to their significance in the establishment of the *paradosis* of the text. And both make it eminently clear that even such preliminary study is impossible without a broader comparative orientation.

Van der Tak's orientation is on a broad range of witnesses, representing different practical forms of the Old Slavic translation of the *Apostolus*, and his aim is to distill from them the *earliest attainable* text, which might not necessarily be identical with the *original* text of the translation. He admirably succeeds in demonstrating that *antiquiores non meliores*, i.e. that the text presented by the *Apostolus Christinopolitanus* is marred not only by the usual – and unavoidable – corruption, but by evident marks of revision as well. This MS, therefore, cannot assume the position of prime witness to the Old Slavic translation, assigned to it e.g. in the 4th edition of the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament*.

Vakareliyska's orientation is narrower, essentially on one closely related group of *Tetraevangelia* of the 13th and 14th centuries, but she, too, feels the need to check her data against the *canonical* Gospel MSS. As a result, she succeeds admirably in attaining her aim of presenting a highly convincing reconstruction of the lost parts of the *Banica Gospels*, which can well serve for the comprehensive inclusion of the entire group in Slavic New Testament

research.

We sincerely hope that these papers will serve to reaffirm the value of painstaking research into the details and the individuality of the Slavic MS witnesses preserved.