TOWARDS THE CRITICAL EDITION
OF THE VITA CONSTANTINI

Mario Capaldo

1. SOME BASIC CRITERIA FOR TEXT-CRITICAL WORK ON VC

The aim of these pages, as of those by Cristiano Diddi which follow, is to present in a uniform even if somewhat simplified framework the results of the work which we have undertaken to prepare the critical edition of VC (now in its final phase). Many of these results are already known from a series of eight papers (diverse in nature) held together by the common title Materiali e ricerche per l’edizione critica di ‘Vita Constantini’ (Ricerche slavistiche 2004–2011)1.

It must be pointed out at once that our edition project already acquired its configuration – in almost every aspect – in a series of studies during the fifteen years preceding the Materiali... I–VIII2. In fact,

---


these initial studies, concentrating on the *examinatio* of the manuscript tradition of *VC* and on the genesis of the most ‘innovative’ groups of witnesses (DE, H), had already led to the identification – from within the manuscript tradition of *VC* – of the ecdotic criteria best suited to it, and subsequently they became the guiding criteria of our enterprise.

(I) Firstly, digging below the surface of the *varia lectio* and finding that the manuscript tradition of *VC* can be defined as neither perfectly *closed* nor perfectly *open*, we became convinced that it was necessary in our work to apply both the analytical procedures of *textual criticism*, which aim essentially to rid the text of mechanical error and restitute the archetype, and those of *textology*, which rather highlight innovative facts and document the various stages of the text’s evolution (up to the reproduction of the most significant witness for each of those stages).

(II) Secondly, we found it necessary to contrast the widespread tendency to have a clean slate of the work devoted to the *recensio* of *VC* and so decided (a) to bring to fruition the contributions of our illustrious predecessors (Šafařík, Miklosich, Bodjanskij, Lavrov, van Wijk, etc.); (b) to adopt as reliable starting points the groupings of witnesses proposed (on the basis of the twenty manuscripts then known) by Lavrov, van Wijk and Grivec, and (c) to verify their validity (as was, in fact, confirmed) on the thirty or so manuscripts introduced in later studies.

(III) Thirdly, we had (a) to collate *ex novo* the entire manuscript tradition, (b) to correlate the results of that work with the history of...