The study of the Cyrillo-Methodian sources is fraught with problems so varied and complex that over time one fact has become patently clear: none of the numerous questions which are still open – from those of the tradition of the texts down to those particular to historical and philological, i.e. literary and linguistic, studies – can be answered in any way until the manuscript sources have been analysed exhaustively and reliable critical editions established. Their lack is felt most acutely in works such as the *Vita Constantini* (VC), which together with the *Vita Methodii* (as well as the treatise *O pismenêch*)\(^1\) represents an invaluable source on the dawn of the literary culture of the Slavs and on the initial phases of their conversion. The rich manuscript tradition of the VC and the lingering uncertainty as to the relationships between the (groups of) witnesses that transmit it (not to mention the issue of the unattested initial phase of the circulation of the text in the Balkans and in Rus\(^1\)) have led my colleague Mario Capaldo and me to prepare a critical edition of the text, preceded by a series of preliminary studies and editions of the individual groupings of manuscripts. The methodology and criteria applied in these studies are set forth in the preceding paper; this paper aims to present as concisely as possible the results of the analysis of the South Slavonic tradition (groups D and E) and the Russian copies of the Menologium for February (B) and those in miscellanies (*sborniki*) of variable content (C)\(^2\).

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2 For the history of the text edition, the list of witnesses and the *sigla* of the manuscripts and their groupings see the preceding paper by M. Capaldo; for the
The South Slavonic Tradition

The South Slavonic tradition (groups D and E) comprises eight full witnesses (nos. 23, 32, 26 29, 13 22, 16 24) from the second half of the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth century, to which must be added seven descripti, copied in the mid nineteenth century\(^3\). The witnesses are transmitted in Festal Homilies (panegiriki), viz. the Hopovo codex and the two codices of Vladislav Gramatik, in a Menologium for February and in miscellanies.

Apparently independent of this tradition is a group of excerpts (ch. 14:2–15:4 and 18:7–13) transmitted by some Croatian Glagolitic breviaries of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (group G)\(^4\). Also uncertain is the stemmatic relationship of several Cyrillic fragments (more or less extensive excerpts from single episodes of the *Vita*), among them an early Middle Bulgarian one of the mid fourteenth century; almost of them are published, but still await systematic study\(^5\).

Circulating for a long time in the Serbian dialect area, the text became adapted to the local usage of Church Slavonic. Nevertheless the witnesses retain ancient traces such as alternation of the original nasal vowels (\(\varkappa/\alpha\)), which fits the hypothesis of their descent from older Bulgarian models (see e.g. 5:4 \(\varkappa V\varkappa X\varkappa T\varkappa C\varkappa N\varkappa T\varkappa O\varepsilon\) \(\varkappa X\varkappa T\varkappa O\varkappa S\varkappa G\varkappa D\varkappa T\varkappa E\), which can be explained by the Middle Bulgarian graphic substitution \(\varkappa \rightarrow \alpha\) and its subsequent Ser-

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\(^4\) These excerpts show no textual affinity either to the Serbian witnesses or the East Slavonic tradition; opinions as to their origin vary; see the study and edition by N. Radovich, *Le pericopi glagolitiche della Vita Constantini e la tradizione manoscritta cirillica* (Napoli, 1968); V. Tkadlčík, “K datování hlaholských Služeb o sv. Cyrulu a Metoději”, *Slovo*, 17 (1977), pp. 85–128; V. Kyas, “Problém původního textu Života Konstantinova a Metodějova”, *Slavia*, 54 (1985), pp. 174–176.