

The Bible is often represented in church services by more manageable »lectionaries«. Traditionally they are divided into two volumes: one for the Gospels, the other for the Pauline and Catholic epistles and the Acts of the Apostles. In Greek, this book is known as the »Praxapostolos«. In terms of decoration it is less prominent than the Gospels, but in terms of content the Apostles' Lectionary expands over time into a comprehensive handbook. It provides an incomparable wealth of information on the Scripture readings, chants, feast days, and special ceremonies of the Eucharistic liturgy, as celebrated by the Byzantine churches in the cycle of the year.

In Hagia Sophia, the cathedral of the imperial city of Constantinople, a recension of the liturgical Praxapostolos was produced after the end of the Iconoclastic controversy. This lectionary gradually grew into its full form and spread, not without adaptation, to foreign dioceses.

Within the group of such manuscripts, the best representative of the Constantinopolitan original is a codex from the 11th/12th century, probably made in Palestine, now kept in the State Historical Museum in Moscow. Its liturgical texts are published in full for the first time in this book, enriched with selected material from twelve other manuscripts of the same tradition.

An irreplaceable source of knowledge of Christian worship in one of the most important and liturgically influential centres of Christianity is thus made available to the public.

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