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Une nouvelle réplique slavonne du Paris : gr. 74 : seven decades after

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*Une nouvelle réplique slavonne du Paris.
gr. 74: seven decades after*

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Following an initial contact with the Slavonic-Romanian mediaeval manuscripts at the 1925 Paris Exhibition of Romanian art, a visit to Romania few years later and a casual discovery in a late nineteenth-century publication, Sirarpie Der Nersessian was the first scholar to identify a certain group of Wallachian and Moldavian *Tetraevangelia* as parallels of the Byzantine *Paris. gr. 74*.¹ Not very much has been published since to reveal new facts in this respect. Information has been added to specify the great esteem Byzantine illuminated books enjoyed in the Romanian aristocratic society of the late 15th-early 17th century. Famous codices such as *Dionysiou 587* (11th century), *Mount Sinai 208* (12th century), *Chicago University – Rockefeller McCormick 2400* (13th century), *British Museum Add. 39627* (1355-1356) and many others were proved to have been known by princes, nobles or learned theologians in Wallachian and Moldavian lands: the illustrated texts, mostly sacred, either circulated,² received new

¹ S. Der Nersessian, 'Two Slavonic Parallels of the Greek Tetraevangelia: Paris. gr. 74', *The Art Bulletin*, IX, 1927, no. 3, pp. 222-274; Idem, 'Une nouvelle réplique slavonne du Paris. gr. 74 et les manuscrits d'Anastase Crimcovicî', [in:] *Mélanges offerts à M. Nicolas Iorga par ses amis de France et des pays de langue française*, Paris, 1933 pp. 695-725.

² *Br. M. Add. 39627*, according to an inscription on fol. 5v, the chronology of which has been disputed depending on the identification of the Moldavian "prince Alexander" (either 15th or 16th century): N. Iorga, Review of B. Filov, 'Les miniatures de l'Évangile du roi Jean Alexandre à Londres, Br. M. London, Add. 39627, Sofia 1934', *Revue Historique du Sud-Est Européen*, Bucarest 1934, p. 208; E. Turdeanu, *Miniatura bulgăra și începuturile miniaturii românești*, București, 1942 (with a survey of previous opinions), pp. 409-410; C. Costea, 'Referințe literare în pictura murală moldovenească de la sfârșitul secolului XV', *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie 'A. D. Xenopol'*, Iași, XXIX (1992), pp. 277-283 (the connection miniature-fresco as an argument for this Gospel's circulation in late fifteenth-century Moldavia has lately been questioned by certain results regarding the presence in the area, at least after

and sumptuous bindings³ inspired fresco iconography⁴ or were copied in local scriptoria as shown by Der Nersessian.

The unprecedented interest raised between the mid-16th and early 17th centuries by the strip-type illustration of the Gospel introduced by the eleventh-century Constantinopolitan *Paris. gr. 74* was substantiated to extend to a fourth manuscript, as compared to the three previously revealed, late versions of the Byzantine prototype. The Slavonic-Romanian branch of the family has already been known to include a Wallachian copy commissioned by the prince Alexandru II (1568-1577), brought to Moldavia *ante* 1605, (monastery of *Sucevița 23*⁵) and two Moldavian versions ordered, one by the prince Ieremia Movila (1595-1606) (*Bucharest, National Museum of History 11340*, former *Sucevița 24*)⁶ another by Anastasie Crimca the Metropolitan of Moldavia (1608-1617; 1619-1629), decorated in 1616/1617 by the painter Stefan from the town of Suceava and probably meant for the monastery of Krehiv in Ruthenia which it never reached (*Warsaw, National Library Akc. 10778*, former Lviv, Library of the University, I AZ).⁷

mid-16th century "if not much earlier", of a previous parallel of *Br. M. Add. 39627*, an illuminated eleventh-century Gospel [see below].

³ Old information on Romanian donations connected to Byzantine codices has been completed with new details about the date and the current mark of the manuscripts, in certain cases the libraries in which they are kept. *Dionysiou 587*: V. Candea, *Marturii romanesti peste hotare*, I, București 1991, pp. 450-451 (including most of the earlier bibliography); P. S. Nasturel, *Le Mont Athos et les Roumains [= Orientalia Christiana Analecta, CCXXVII]*, Roma 1986, p. 149; Ch. Walter, 'The Date and Content of the Dionysiou Lectionary', *Deltion tis Hristianikis Arheologhikis Eterias*, XIII, (1985-1986). *Mount Sinai 208*: V. Candea, *op. cit.*, p. 244 (including former bibliography); K. Weitzmann, G. Galavaris, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai. The Illuminated Greek Manuscripts*, I, Princeton 1990, p. 166-170. *Chicago University-Rockefeller McCormick 2400*: M. Golescu, 'Colophon of Voivode Alexander II of Wallachia on a Byzantine Miniatured Manuscript at the Library of Chicago University', *Revue des Etudes Roumaines*, XV(1975), pp. 194-198; E. J. Goodspeed, D. W. Riddle, H. R. Willoughby (eds), *The Rockefeller McCormick New Testament*, Chicago 1932.

⁴ *Br. M. Add. 39627*: C. Costea, 'Nartexul Dobrovatului', *Revista Monumentelor Istorice*, LX (1991), no. 1, pp. 10-22; Eadem, 'Referinte livresti...', pp. 277-283. Recent researches have shown that the manuscript followed by the Moldavian mural painters could have been an eleventh-century version of *Paris. gr. 74* mentioned in note 1.

⁵ Gh. Popescu-Valcea, *Un manuscris al voievodului Alexandru al II-lea*, București 1984.

⁶ Idem, *Un manuscris al voievodului Ieremia Movila*, București 1984.

⁷ E. Turdeanu, 'Métropolitane Anastase Crimca et son oeuvre littéraire et artistique (1608-1629)', *Etudes de littérature roumaine et d'écrits slaves et grecs des Principautés Roumaines*, Leiden 1985, p. 232 (first published in 1952); apparently the first source to mention the monastery of Krehiv as the destination of the codex, M. Sokołowski, 'Sztuka cerkiewna na Rusi i na Bukowinie', *Kwartalnik historyczny*, III, 1889, pp. 629-630.

The *Tetraevangelia* known since the end of the 19th century as *Elisavetgrad*, a fourteenth-fifteenth-century manuscript,⁸ has been reconsidered by Russian scholars as an early seventeenth-century Moldavian work (*Moscow, State Russian Library, Muz. Sobr. 9500*).⁹ In view of the history of Romanian painting it seems to be properly datable to the last decades of the 16th century.

Publication of new data has been preceded or attended by different opinions regarding the relationship between the members of the family dependent on the Byzantine prototype *Paris. gr. 74* which finally include: the version commissioned by the Bulgarian tsar Ivan Alexander *Br. M. Add. 39627, Sucevița 23, Moscow S. L. 9500, Bucharest N. M. H. 11340, Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778*. Some authors disputed Der Nersessian's stemma of these manuscripts, formulated in her first 1927 study of the subject, later completed with the codex kept in Poland. When Der Nersessian published, in 1933, illustrations of the Warsaw *Tetraevangelia* (at the time known to be kept in Lviv), the basic source of information was Count Uvarov's 1884 description¹⁰ associated with his personal investigation of the manuscript collection at Dragomirna monastery in Moldavia. The codex in question has been identified as „une nouvelle réplique slavonne du Paris. gr. 74”, allusion being made to the two formerly published *Slavonic parallels* of the same prototype, *Sucevița 23* and *Bucharest N. M. H. 11340* (at the time *Sucevița 24*). In terms of reference to the model, Sirarpie Der Nersessian argued in favour of a slightly different approach to *Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778* as compared to the earlier *Bucharest N. M. H. 11340*: evidence found in the published material pointed to the fact that some miniatures of the former were closer to *Paris. gr. 74*, thus severely questioning a direct connection between the two Moldavian replicas. Two lines of dependence resulted from Der Nersessian's analysis: *Paris. gr. 74* – *Br. M. Add. 39627* – *Sucevița 23* and *Variant of Paris. gr. 74* (supposed) – *Moscow S. L. 9500* – *Bucharest N. M. H. 11340* – *Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778*, the last two following the same model separately. Supplementary – not included in the prototype – illuminations or iconographic details of *Warsaw* have been properly connected by the author to the miniatures decorating the group of manu-

⁸ N. Pokrovskij, *Evangelie v pamjatnikah ikonografii, preimučestvenno vizantijskih i ruskih*, St. Peterburg 1892, pp. XXII-XXVI.

⁹ M. V. Ščepkina, *Bolgarskaja miniatjura XIV veka. Issledovanie psaltyri Tomiča*, Moskva 1963, pp. 84-100.

¹⁰ A. S. Uvarov, *Šhornik melkih trudov*, II, Moskva 1910, pp. 38-44.

scripts commissioned by the metropolitan Anastasie Crimca for the monastery of Dragomirna.

Members of the *Paris. Gr. 74* family have been afterwards described and commented on by B. Filov,¹¹ M. V. Ščepkina,¹² Gh. Popescu-Valcea¹³ or V. Liháčeva.¹⁴ Each study contains a different scheme of analogy, based on partial examination of the parallels. Filov's disagreement with Der Nersessian's conclusions was resumed decades later by Popescu-Valcea whose mention of the manuscript in Poland is purely formalistic, as he was unable to see it.¹⁵

As the Warsaw *Tetraevangelia* has not been "revisited" since the 1933 study, clarifications regarding the relationship of the images might be provided by the results of research performed during the last decade dedicated to close comparison of the whole range of illustrations decorating the five manuscripts. The investigation involved examination of originals (*Sucevița 23*, *Moscow S. L. 9500*, *Bucharest N. M. H. 11340*), of microfilms (*Paris. gr. 74*, *Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778*), and of the facsimile publication of *Br. M. 39627*.¹⁶ Although an examination of the sources may seem out-of-date, modern research had to carry this out in order to reach a fresh conclusion, since earlier scholarship had concentrated so intensely on the genealogy of manuscripts.

¹¹ Filov considered all the four Slavonic Gospels – *Br. M. Add. 39627* and *Sucevița 23* on one side, *Elisavetgrad (Moscow S. L. 9500)* and *Sucevița 24 (Bucharest N. M. H. 11340)* on the other – as pertaining to a single group, "une rédaction slave distincte, respectivement bulgare, du cycle iconographique de l'Évangile", dependent on a parallel of *Paris. gr. 74*: B. Filov, 'Les miniatures...', pp. 33-34.

¹² Grounded on Filov's conclusions, Ščepkina stressed the quality of the prototype of the Gospel in London for the other three, Wallachian and Moldavian copies, mentioned by the Bulgarian scholar: *Bolgarskaja miniatjura...*, p. 100. None of the authors referred to the manuscript in Poland.

¹³ A different arrangement put all the members – Lviv (Warsaw) comprised – under *Paris. gr. 74*, preference being given to the "Romanian redaction" linking *Sucevița 23* to *Sucevița 24*; *Elisavetgrad* was classified as Bulgarian; no further comment on Lviv: Gh. Popescu-Valcea, *Un manuscris al voievodului Ieremia Movila*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁴ V. Liháčeva confirmed Der Nersessian's direct connection *Paris. gr. 74* – *Br. M. Add. 39627*: 'Roli vizantijskoj rukopisi XI v. kak obrazta dlja bolgarskoto tak nazivaemogo Londonskogo evangelia Ivana Aleksandra XIV v.', *Vizantiiskij Vremennik*, vol. XLVI, 1986, pp. 174-180; in respect to *Moscow S. L. 9500* Liháčeva thought of two models acting at the time on it: the Gospel in London and a Byzantine version, could be *Paris. gr. 74* itself: 'Saotnosenie meždu miniatjurate na "Londonskoto" i "Elisavetgradskoto" evangelie', [in:] *Etiudi po srednovekovno izkustvo*, Sofia 1986, pp. 148-160.

¹⁵ The author followed Uvarov's description: 'Scoală miniaturistică de la Dragomirna', in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, LXXXVI (1968), no. 11-12, pp. 1355-1357.

¹⁶ *Sztuka iluminacji i grafiki cerkiewnej*, Warszawa 1996, p. 45, no. 7.

In the *Warsaw* case, elaborate analysis produced multiple evidence to confirm Der Nersessian's observations. With respect to the workshop procedures, the codex belongs to the same stem as the earlier one in Bucharest, but is not directly dependent on it, as it occasionally reproduces details of *Paris. gr. 74* absent in its parallel: to the differences in the *Crucifixion* and the *Last Judgement* already discussed in the 1933 article may be added: the fountain in the *Chief priests conferring on Jesus' arrest* (Matthew 26, 5) (figs. 1-4), the Synagogue without a nimbus in the *Crucifixion* (Matthew 27, 54) (figs. 5-8) the distribution of the figures in the *Custody of the Tomb* (Matthew 27, 61) (figs. 9-12), the reminiscent doors of the bema in the *Presentation of Christ* (Luke 2, 32) (figs. 13-15), the balustrade with the plants in *Jesus announcing Lazarus' Death* (John 11, 14) (figs. 16-19).

As far as the model for the *Warsaw Tetraevangelia* is concerned, Der Nersessian's presumption of *Elisavetgrad* having as model a variant very close to *Paris. gr. 74* is supported in new terms. The results of recent years confirmed a high degree of fidelity to the prototype in the former *Elisavetgrad*, now the Moldavian late sixteenth-century *Moscow S. L. 9500*. The conservatism as compared to the Paris manuscript, emphasized in nearly every miniature is mainly enhanced by the "Byzantine quality" of the headpieces, not to be met with in other late copies (figs. 20-23). The Gospel uniquely includes arguments for the date of the model it followed: certain illuminations which show outstanding exactitude in reproducing stylistic features indicate the late 11th century¹⁷ as the date of the parallel of the *Paris. gr. 74*¹⁸ which circulated in Moldavia by at least the second half of the 16th century. A case in point is the *Crucifixion*, in some variants of which (Matthew 27, 47,54) the transcendental bodies of the crucified reach a refinement directly comparable to the Constantinopolitan recension (figs. 5-8, 24-27). The similarity appears indisputable when contrasted with another illustration of the subject (Luke 23, 33) in the same codex, achieved by a different and less gifted painter (figs. 28-31).

Iconographic data points to the conclusion that *Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778* is dependent either on *Moscow S. L. 9500* or on its Byzantine model, while codicological information undoubtedly documents a direct link between

¹⁷ Chronology confirmed by H. Belting on the basis of photographs.

¹⁸ The prototype of the Moldavian parallels could not have been *Paris. gr. 74* itself, as the *Moscow Gospel* differs in a number of significant instances: to former observations such as increased accuracy (Pokrovskij) or the anonymous emperor's presence (Der Nersessian) could be added the diverse decoration of headpieces, the lack of certain illustrations and others.

Bucharest N. M. H. 11340 and the Moscow version. The variable fidelity of the two early seventeenth-century parallels of the Constantinopolitan Gospel (figs. 32-34) – as compared to the exactitude with which the former *Sucevița 23* reflects the Bulgarian *Br. M. Add. 39627* and *Moscow S. L. 9500*, the eleventh-century variant – unveils a certain sense of liberty, suggesting a modern approach to book illumination. An increased sense of invention governed *Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778*, the latest copy of the group, as expressed in illustrations not to be met with in earlier members of the family, as well as in its modifications of the “common stock” of miniatures. The painter’s independence is the more significant as the model followed was a most conservative one. Part of the new compositions – placed at the beginning or end of the Gospels – are common to the codices commissioned by Anastasie Crimca for the monastery of Dragomirna, as remarked by Sirarpie Der Nersessian: the *Trinity* in the three divine persons form, *St. Elias, Enoch and John the Theologian*, the *Virgin and Child among prophets* or *Deesis with Apostles* in a formula inspired by the Tree of Jesse.

Not mentioned before is a variant of the *Trinity* (fig. 23) including God the Father in a mandorla, thus suggesting a recent interest in the theme of *Paternity* as evidenced in a contemporary *Missal* of the Dragomirna group (fig. 35). Uncommon versions re-elaborate earlier formulas. The *Trinity* (fig. 36) – decorating the upper part of a frame meant to contain an inscription which has never been written – has the Virgin and Child instead of Christ; the division of the subject performed in this case is repeated underneath in the “group of the Second Coming”, *Enoch, John the Theologian and Elias*; the “founder’s” family, on the same folio, with Anastasie (?)¹⁹ as a simple monk and his parents, Ioan and Cristina is uniquely represented here though mentioned in the inscriptions of all the decorated codices commissioned by the metropolitan. The *Virgin and Child* (fig. 37) among angels in Paradise – inspired by the illustration of the hymn “In Thee Rejoiceth” – is associated with the three patriarchs. In another version the *Virgin and Child* (fig. 38) is surrounded by heavenly hosts. Finally, a short *Moses cycle* (fig. 39) includes a completely unusual *Vision in the mountain of Horeb* with the Virgin in the flames of the burning bush stemming from a Moldavian church (indicating a possible overlap with the Tabernacle episode and suggesting modern terms of self-representation of the ecclesiastical body in Moldavia).

¹⁹ Inscriptions hardly legible on the photograph.

As far as the version of every picture is concerned, differences in the figures' attitudes, changes in the architectural landscape, omission of iconographic details, alternatively and intermittently separate *Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778* as well as *Bucharest N. M. H. 11340* from their prototype. But a new perception of the sacred event involved in the painter Stefan's art – pathos and unrest – turns small groups into multitudes (figs. 40-42), stillness into movement and indefinite place into spatial depth (figs. 43-46); a constant role is played by invention in landscape treatment inducing an “abstract” sense of nature enhanced by pure golden hatching with strong geometrical emphasis (figs. 47-50). This type of modification tending to disclose a fairly advanced understanding of the physical world, cannot be taken as a modern change in Western terms as no coherent intention in spatial research is manifest. It rather seems to reveal a personal, ingenious way of hinting at the “reality”, meaning the contemporaneity of the sacred history.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.

Chief Priests conferring on Jesus' arrest
 Fig. 1. Paris. gr. 74, fol. 52r.
 Fig. 2. Moscow S. L. 9500, fol. 74r.
 Fig. 3. Bucharest N. M. H. 11340, fol. 74r.
 Fig. 4. Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778, p. 144.

Crucifixion
 Fig. 5. Paris. gr. 74, fol. 59r.
 Fig. 6. Moscow S. L. 9500, fol. 83r.
 Fig. 7. Bucharest N. M. H. 11340, fol. 83r.
 Fig. 8. Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778, p. 163.



10.



9.



11.



12.



13.



14.



15.



Custody of the Tomb

Fig. 9. Paris. gr. 74, fol. 59v-60r.

Fig. 10. Moscow S. L. 9500, fol. 84r.

Fig. 11. Bucharest N. M. H. 11340, fol. 84r.

Fig. 12. Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778, p. 164.

Presentation of Christ

Fig. 13. Paris. gr. 74, fol. 109v.

Fig. 14. Bucharest N. M. H. 11340, fol. 148v.

Fig. 15. Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778, p. 298.



16.



17.



18.



19.



20.



21.



22.



23.

Jesus announcing Lazarus' Death

Fig. 16. *Paris. gr. 74, fol. 190r.*

Fig. 17. *Moscow S. L. 9500, fol. 266v.*

Fig. 18. *Bucharest N. M. H. 11340, fol. 263v.*

Fig. 19. *Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778, p. 519.*

Headpiece of St. Mark's Gospel

Fig. 20. *Paris. gr. 74, fol. 64r.*

Fig. 21. *Moscow S. L. 9500, fol. 88v.*

Fig. 22. *Bucharest N. M. H. 11340, fol. 88v.*

Fig. 23. *Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778, p. 174.*



24.



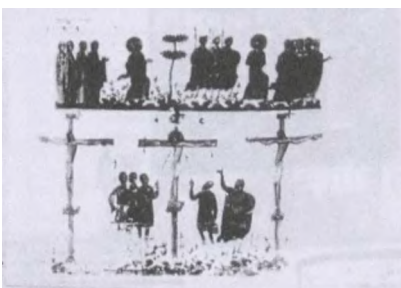
25.



26.



27.



28.



29.



30.



31.

Crucifixion

Fig. 24. *Paris. gr. 74*, fol. 58v.

Fig. 25. *Moscow S. L. 9500*, fol. 82v.

Fig. 26. *Bucharest N. M. H. 11340*, fol. 82v.

Fig. 27. *Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778*, p. 162.

Crucifixion

Fig. 28. *Paris. gr. 74*, fol. 161r.

Fig. 29. *Moscow S. L. 9500*, fol. 224r.

Fig. 30. *Bucharest N. M. H. 11340*, fol. 222r.

Fig. 31. *Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778*, p. 440.



32.



33.



34.



35.



36.



37.



38.

Massacre of the Innocents

Fig. 32. Paris. gr. 74, fol. 5r.

Fig. 33. Bucharest N. M. H. 11340, fol. 9v.

Fig. 34. Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778, p. 17.

Pentecost, Paternity

Fig. 35. Bucharest N. M. H. 9182, fol. 15r.

Trinity

Fig. 36. Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778, p. 453.

Virgin and Child

Fig. 37. Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778, p. 170.

Fig. 38. Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778, p. 280.



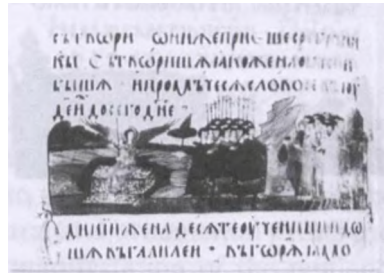
39.



40.



41.



42.



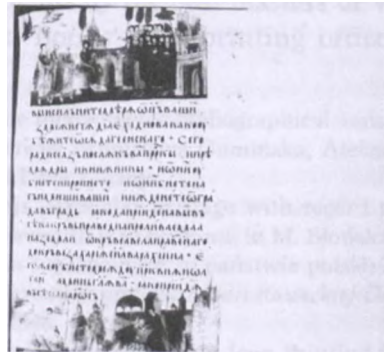
43.



44.



45.



46.

The Moses cycle

Fig. 39. Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778, p. 169.

Resurrection

Fig. 40. Paris. gr. 74, fol. 61r.
 Fig. 41. Bucharest N. M. H. 11340, fol. 85v.
 Fig. 42. Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778, p. 168.

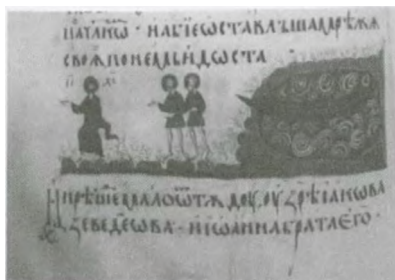
Zacharias' Murder

Fig. 43. Paris. gr. 74, fol. 46v.
 Fig. 44. Moscow S. L. 9500, fol. 66v.
 Fig. 45. Bucharest N. M. H. 11340, fol. 66v.
 Fig. 46. Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778, p. 129.

47.



48.



49.



50.



Calling of Peter and Andrew

Fig. 47. Paris. gr. 74, fol. 65v.

Fig. 48. Moscow S. L. 9500, fol. 90v.

Fig. 49. Bucharest N. M. H. 11340, fol. 90v.

Fig. 50. Warsaw N. L. Akc. 10778, p. 178.