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## A NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS IN SOME NON-GREEK TETRAEVANGELA MANUSCRIPTS

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Narrative Gospel illustration from the middle Byzantine period (from the ninth to the twelfth century) can be best studied in the pictorial cycles which illustrate the two principal Tetraevangela, the one in Paris, Bibl. Nat., cod. gr. 74 from the end of the eleventh century, and the other in Florence, Bibl. Laur., Plut. VI 23 from the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century. Both cycles are apparently executed in the metropolitan style. They first attracted scholars' attention for their unique miniature style, which was christened by N. Kondakov, "le style mignon." Later they came to be regarded by G. Millet as the most important witnesses of the so-called "two independent recensions" of Byzantine Gospel iconography (G. Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'évangile*, Paris, 1916.). This is not the place to discuss the validity of Millet's theory of the "two recensions," nor to review subsequent studies on this critical issue of the history of Byzantine art. Rather I would like to report on a small archivistic incident concerning the Gospel illustrations developed by non-Greek artists.

It is well known that the two Byzantine Gospel illustrations just quoted above were copied later several times into non-Greek Tetraevangela manuscripts. To my present knowledge there are at least five illustrated Gospels that are more or less dependent on the two Byzantine predecessors. They may be listed chronologically as follows:

- 1) The Gelati Gosepl (Georgian), Tiflis, K. Kekelidze Institute of Manuscripts, Academy of Sciences of the Georgian SSR, A 908, Early or mid-twelfth century.
- 2) The Second Gospel of Jruchi (Georgian), Tiflis, the same institute above, H 1667, late twelfth century.
- 3) The Manuscript of the Six (Eight?) Painters (Armenian), Erivan, Library of Matenadaran, No. 7651, begun at the middle of the thir-

teenth century and completed in 1320.

- 4) The Tetraevangela of Tzar Ivan Alexandar of Bulgaria (Slavonic), London, British Museum, Add. 39627 (Formerly Curzon 153), 1356.
- 5) Tetraevangela (Slavonic), Moscow, Lenin Library, Muz. 9500, beginning of the seventeenth century.

According to Lazarev, the last manuscript in Moscow is, at least iconographically, an exact copy of the Curzon Gospel above.

While the Curzon Gospelbook has recently been published by L. Shivkova (1977) with the beautiful facsimile, only a few miniatures from the first and the third manuscript have been reproduced since World War II, and none of the scenes in the Second Gospel of Jruchi has been made accessible for students familiar only with Western languages, except for a few drawings published in Millet's *Recherches*. So far, there has been little systematic study of the first three cycles, whereas the Curzon Gospel has been thoroughly discussed by Miss Sirapie Der Nersessian in 1927, and more recently by Shivkova in the publication cited above.

Several years ago, while engaged in a study of the illustration of Paris, gr. 74 at Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, I happened to find a much mutilated microfilm-roll of one of the two Georgian manuscripts in the microfilm-drawer, which was then located in the very hot attic-floor. At a glance I noticed the close iconographical relationships of the illustration to the Paris and Florentine Byzantine illustrations, but at that time I had no chance to examine the film carefully. Last year, in 1979, I returned to Dumbarton Oaks, and found the film now placed in much better condition in a new drawer. Moreover, there was also a microfilm-roll of another Georgian manuscript. This time, I was able to spend a little more time to study the two rolls, and ascertained that they were the Gelati and the Jruchi II.

Unfortunately, however, the condition of the two microfilm-rolls was so miserable that I became very sceptical as to whether it might be possible to investigate any iconographical detail. The films had apparently been left unchecked for a long time, and the scholar who probably ordered them from Tiflis and studied them, —might it perhaps have been Miss Der Nersessian?— used an old-fashioned micro-reader so that the surface of the film has been scratched all over from the beginning to the end. Therefore, I brought the rolls to Ms. Judith A. O'Neil, the custodian of the photograph collection of Dumbarton Oaks, and asked her to reproduce them if there might be any

method to repair the mutilated surface.

Half a year later, I received a heavy package from Dumbarton Oaks which contained the complete print-set of the Gelati Gospel, and not long after this, another package, this time much lighter, containing the film-strips of the Jruchi II. The result of the overhaul was beyond my expectation, and I thanked from my heart and admired modern phototechnology. There was no trace at all of the scratches, and except for a slightly exaggerated tone of the black and white, which is inevitable with micro-reproduction, I found no difficulty in studying the details even from the negative film-strips.

When I found the rolls for the first time at Dumbarton Oaks, I supposed that they had been made from the photographs which were once deposited at the Hautes-Etudes in Paris. G. Millet reported that he had studied the two Georgian manuscripts by "*quelques photographies d'Ermakov*," and continued, "*Nous ne citerons que pour mémoire celui de Martivili*," whom I do not know of at all. But after examining the newly delivered prints and films, I realized that the microfilm of the Jruchi II was made in 1959, and I believe that of the Gelati was probably prepared at about the same time. Naturally I could have ordered such microfilms directly from K. K. Institute of Manuscripts in Tiflis. But, even libraries in the West are often reluctant to prepare complete micro-reproductions of their precious manuscripts, and one should expect more difficulty in soliciting from a library in the East. Thus, I thought that I was very lucky to have obtained these reproductions in such good condition and in a relatively short time. For their very special efforts, I am much obliged to the DO staffs as well as to the phototechnician whom I had no chance to meet.

We shall now return to the manuscripts and their illustrations. Of these five non-Greek manuscripts, the Curzon Gospel has been proved to be a literal copy of Paris, gr. 74. The manuscript was made for Tzar Ivan Alexandar in 1355—56 in a monastery in Tărnovo, the capital of Bulgaria until the Osman Invasion in 1393. Later, the manuscript traveled around in the Moldau area and eventually came into the possession of Alexander the Good of Moldau in the early fifteenth century. We do not have to follow the subsequent story of the manuscript.

As far as I have very quickly surveyed these photographs and film-strips, the Jruchi II also remarkably depends on Paris, gr. 74, as Millet has already observed. The manuscript contains 359 (334 by Lazarev) miniatures which are executed by three different artists. The chief illustrator is known by the

name, Mikael. Of the Armenian Gospelbook in Matenadaran, I know very little, and must reserve any conclusion. Judging, however, from the reproductions by Dournovo (1960), the iconography seems to follow quite faithfully that of the Florentine cycle.

Among these non-Greek illustrations, the Gelati is probably the most interesting. The manuscript is said to have been illustrated in the Monastery of Iviron on Mt. Athos, and the four Gospels are followed by a short story of King Abgar of Edessa, which is also illustrated with a narrative cycle. Apparently, most of the miniatures are based on, or directly derived from, either the illustrations in the Paris, or in the Florentine Gospelbook.

Millet once insisted that the narrative cycles in these two Byzantine manuscripts would belong to two different recensions, the Paris cycle to the Syro-Palestinian and the Florentine one to the Constantinopolitan. But, an objection against this theory was raised for the first time in 1966 by Prof. K. Weitzmann. Contrary to Millet's view, he believed that the two cycles should belong to one and the same recension, and the apparent discrepancies between them are not due to the different origins, but are the results of alterations and additions done by later generations, with a particular emphasis upon the mystery of the Great Liturgy. On the basis of Prof. Weitzmann's thesis, I made further observations on the two pictorial cycles in 1968, and my subsequent research on them has increasingly confirmed this point. Namely, the diversities between the two cycles occur more frequently in their Infancy and Passion cycles, whereas the scenes included in the Public Life of Christ show considerable agreement. Since Millet limited his observations mostly to the Infancy and Passion cycles, which are more susceptible to liturgical notions, he inevitably came to conclude that there would be two different recensions. In fact, a pictorial concordance of Tetraevangela illustrations which I am editing with my assisting staff is revealing that the agreement between these two cycles is far more common than it has been generally assumed, and there is no doubt that there existed one and the same model-cycle of Tetraevangelion illustration before those liturgical and regional elements intruded, especially into the Paris cycle.

On the basis of the above observations on the two Byzantine Gospel illustrations, I may briefly summarize a few problems concerning the Gelati Gospel illustration:

1) Apparently the majority of the scenes in the Gelati agree with their counterparts in both the Paris and Florentine cycles, and in these cases it is difficult to determine which one of the two Byzantine cycles actually was used as the model.

2) Nevertheless, there are also a considerable number of scenes which must be regarded as being derived solely from the Paris cycle, for instance the four Passion scenes combined in a quadripartite frame in fol. 272<sup>v</sup> (*fig. 1a*). These scenes have their exact counterparts in fol. 208<sup>v</sup> of the Paris Gospel (*fig. 2a*). Now it has already been proved that this particular set of the Passion scenes in the Paris, gr. 74 does not belong to the original narrative Gospel cycle, but was created as an independent liturgical cycle in accordance with the Gospel lections during the Great Pascha. The illustrator of the Paris Gospel introduced this liturgical illustration into the original narrative cycle in order to visually emphasize the liturgical implications behind the Resurrection story. As the result, the four scenes have no exact correspondence to the text of John's Resurrection story which they practically illustrate. Moreover, the original narrative scene of the Resurrection of Christ, which, in turn, faithfully follows John's text, is found immediately *after* this special set of the Passion scenes (*fig. 2b*). This indeed reveals a particular feature of the Paris cycle. Since the Gelati Gospel exactly repeats the same iconography, the same composition, and the same order of the scenes, according to which the "original" narrative scene is placed after the set (*fig. 1b*), it is beyond doubt that the Georgian illustrator must have had Paris, gr. 74, at hand and consulted it as a model.

Further, it is interesting to note that such direct and obvious borrowings from the Paris cycle take place more frequently in the Gospels of Luke and John in the Gelati, whereas the scenes in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark correspond more often to those in the Florentine cycle. Here, we must be reminded of the fact that the Florentine cycle decreases the number of scenes toward its later part. Hence, we may well assume that, beside Paris, gr. 74, the Georgian artist had another Gospel cycle, which not only contained many scenes very similar to those in the Florentine cycle, but also had fewer scenes in its later part, as it occurs in the Florentine Gospelbook. For this reason, the illustrator had to consult the Paris cycle in order to distribute the scenes as evenly as possible among the four Gospels.

3) The last and the most intriguing aspect of the Gelati cycle is that in several cases the iconography considerably differs from their Byzantine

counterparts, which are found sometimes in both, and sometimes in one or the other of the Paris and Florentine cycles. For example, the scene of the Return of the Holy Family from Egypt which is represented in fol. 20<sup>r</sup> in the Holy Family from Egypt which is represented in fol. 20<sup>r</sup> in the Gelati (fig. 3) has no counterpart in the Florentine, and the iconography in the Paris cycle is noticeably different from that in the Gelati (fig. 4). Another example: the Gelati has three scenes of the Temptation of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew in fols. 22<sup>v</sup> and 22<sup>r</sup> (fig. 5a, b, c), whereas the Florentine cycle completely lacks them and the Paris cycle has only a single scene which is much condensed and abbreviated (fig. 6).

From 2) and 3) above, we may temporarily conclude:

a) The Gelati illustrator possessed the codex, Paris gr. 74, among his model-manuscripts.

b) Further, he had access to another Gospel cycle, which could be either the Florentine cycle itself, or one which would be very similar to it in iconography as well as in the number and selection of scenes.

c) If the *second* model cycle was the Florentine one itself, we must further assume the existence of the *third* model cycle, with which the illustrator supplemented, or modified the iconography based on the Florentine.

It will require a thorough investigation of the Gelati cycle to examine the correctness of our temporary conclusions. Be that as it may, it is our great pleasure that these new materials have been obtained, and that we are now able to add them to our pictorial concordance so that this will be a more accurate and useful research tool for future scholarship.



fig. 1a, Gelati

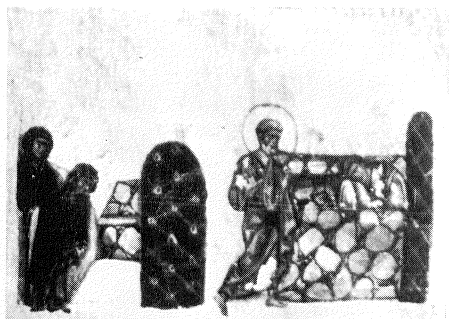


fig. 1b, Gelati



fig. 2a, Paris 74, detail

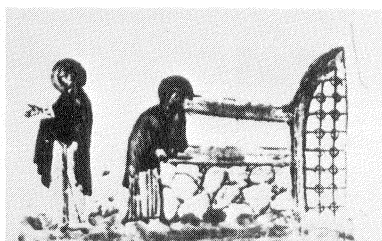


fig. 2b, Paris 74

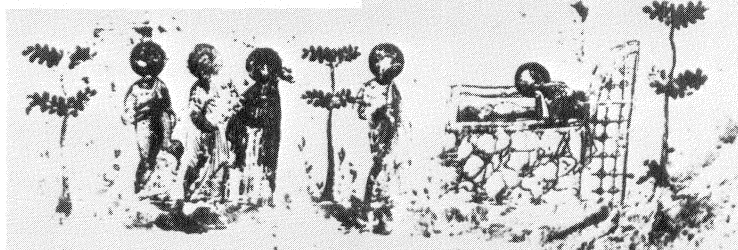






fig. 3, Gelati



fig. 4, Paris 74



fig. 5a, Gelati



fig. 5b, Gelati



fig. 5c, Gelati

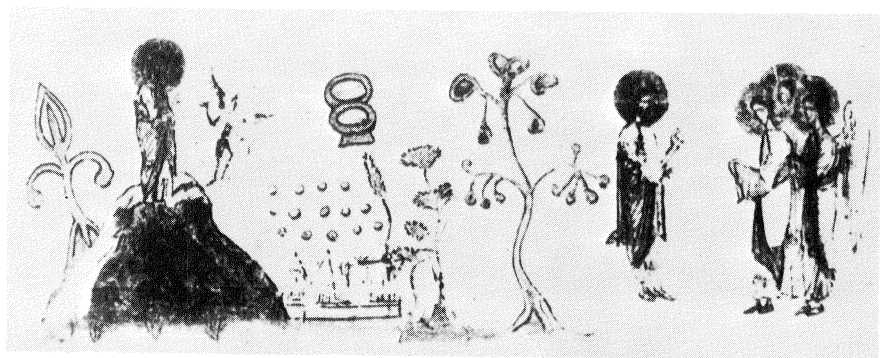


fig. 6, Paris 74