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THE QUEST FOR THE CHURCH SLAVONIC EXEMPLARS OF SOME ROMANIAN HANDWRITTEN TETRAEVANGELIA. A CASE STUDY OF TEXTS CLOSING GOSPEL BOOKS[1]

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Abstract: This paper discusses several succinct paratexts placed at the end of Gospel books, namely, subscriptions and various final numeric notations (stichometric, chapters, and liturgical sections), as significant elements of a preliminary quest for the source texts of some Old Romanian Gospel translations. Variations in their content and wording have made it possible to identify the early printed Cyrillic liturgical Tetraevangelion, issued in Lviv by the Orthodox Confraternity Printing House (in 1670 or rather in 1636), or an edition/manuscript directly related to it, as the presumed exemplar of two Old Romanian Gospel manuscripts kept at the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest (call numbers 1154 and 1327). The textual collation of subscriptions and final numeric notations in these codices revealed their verbatim correspondence, indicating an extremely close alignment.

Keywords: Old Romanian Gospel Translations; manuscripts; subscriptions to the Gospels; stichometric and numeric notations.

The expansion of paratexts, i.e., independent literary text units, in Church Slavonic liturgical Tetraevangelia lasted several centuries. The oldest extant Glagolitic and Cyrillic Gospel manuscripts attest merely a few paratexts, while the youngest, according to calculations by Bulgarian scholar Ekaterina Dogramadžieva, indicate even up to forty (Dogramadžieva 1993, 2-21). Some of them were placed at the beginning of the codices, i.e., the Letter of Eusebius of Caesarea to Carpianus on the Gospel Canons[2] and cross-reference tables, while others were at the end, i.e., an appendix with liturgical rubrics divided into two main parts (synaxarion and menologion). Yet, other paratexts preceded or followed each of the Gospel books. A list of chapter titles and numerous prefaces (most often those ascribed to Bl. Theophylact) as well as depictions of Evangelists and inscriptions[3] were

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[2] It is widely known as *Epistula ad Carpianum*.

[3] This type of paratext in literature is also known as: initial title, beginning-title, opening-title or introductory-title.

located before each Gospel. At the same time, subscriptions[4] and a final stichometric notation were placed after them.

The **newest typology** of **subscriptions** to the Greek Gospels was based on their content and wording. Their three main types, corresponding to their historical development, were identified (Elmelund/Wasserman 2023). The **simple subscription** (type 1) indicated the book's authorship (κατὰ Μᾶρκον) and genre (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον)[5]. The **semi-elaborate subscription** (type 2) additionally had a terminal modifier (ἐτελέσθη or τέλος) marking the end of a book. In the **elaborate subscription** (type 3), chronological and sometimes other modifiers were added to the elements mentioned above. The former conveyed the date (relative to the Ascension of Christ) when a book was composed, while the latter indicated the place or language of the book's origin, etc. Cyrillic and Glagolitic handwritten and early printed Church Slavonic Tetraevangelia attested all three Greek types of subscriptions (Ostapczuk 2025b, 599-603; 2025c) and their positive omission (designated as type 0), as well (Ostapczuk 2025c).

The so-called ***final stichometry*** attested in the Greek tradition provided the total number of verses in various literary works[6]. It was attested in some papyri dated as early as the second century BCE (Harris 1893, 2-3). Greek[7] Tetraevangelia usually indicated 2600 verses in the first Gospel book, 1600 in the second, 2800 in the third, and 2300 in the fourth. Most of the Glagolitic and Cyrillic Gospel manuscripts consulted repeat this stichometric data attested in Greek manuscripts (Ostapczuk 2025a, 126-131; 2025b, 599-603). In Church Slavonic codices, dating back to the 14th century, the *final stichometry* was omitted in most cases and sometimes replaced with other numeric notations, such as one indicating the number of chapter titles[8].

In the ancient Greek tradition, several segmentations of the Gospel texts were created (Gregory 1909, 860; von Soden 1911, 403.405-411; Metzger 1991, 41; Parker 2008, 316; Goswell 2009, 138, 142-146, 153-156, 169-172). They were attested in the oldest Greek codices, but were eventually abandoned in favour of later systems. The **current** chapter **division of the New Testament** commonly used today was developed in the 13th century by Archbishop Stephen

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4 This type of paratext in literature is also known as: final title, end-title or postscript.

5 It may also sometimes have a reverential modifier (ἅγιον).

6 The stichometric notation was used for book production purposes. It helped to verify proper length of a copied literary work and calculate the scribe's salary.

7 The Greek manuscripts attest to various numbers of verses in the respective Gospels. For instance, in the second book, the following number of verses were found: 1020, 1506, 1550, 1590, 1600, 1616, 1700 1829 (Harris 1893, 49-51).

8 The number of forty-eight chapters (the so-called number of *Kephalaia*) in the Gospel of Mark, instead of a stichometric notation, is indicated in one 12th-century Cyrillic Tetraevangelion (Tprg-1), i.e., гл҃а мѝ.

Langton of Canterbury. The sixteenth-century printer and scholar Robert Estienne (Robertus Stephanus) introduced the modern verse number system into his Greek-Latin New Testament, published in 1551.

Adapting the Four Gospel codices for liturgical purposes resulted in another text segmentation. The Good News text was divided into pericopes, i.e., sections recited during various religious services. Thus, the first Gospel was split into 116 **liturgical sections**, the second into 71, the third into 114, and the fourth into 67.

The Church Slavonic tradition inherited *final stichometry* from Greek codices and continued to transmit it for several centuries. In the second half of the **16th century**, in the Western territories of Modern Ukraine, **final stichometry started to be substituted with more up-to-date numeric notation**(s). In some manuscripts and all early printed editions of the Bible and the New Testament, as well as in all Tetraevangelia from Lviv and the fourth from Vilnius, the numbers of modern chapters and liturgical sections are provided at the end of each Gospel book (Ostapczuk 2025b, 602-603; 2025d). These two numerical notations were likely treated by copyists and publishers as directly related to the then-common tradition, prevalent in the second half of the 16th and 17th centuries, of segmenting the Gospels.

Church Slavonic liturgical Tetraevangelia featured liturgical rubrics. They indicated the beginning and end of Gospel pericopes and the occasion on which they were to be recited as well. Some liturgical rubrics, especially those at the end of each Gospel book, preceded subscriptions and final numeric notations. Differences in religious traditions, which varied from territory to territory, were also recorded in the consulted Church Slavonic Tetraevangelia.

The content and wording of subscriptions, various numeric notations, and liturgical rubrics placed before them attested in numerous manuscripts (Ostapczuk 2025c) and in all, i.e., one hundred and ten, early printed Cyrillic Tetraevangelia (Ostapczuk/Dzierżanowska 2023, 465-514) served as the basis for classifying certain Gospel editions into separate groups divided into several subgroups. Two early printed Cyrillic Bibles[9] and seven New Testaments[10], issued in the 16th and 17th centuries, were also examined and classified.

[9] Two Bible editions were consulted, the Ostrog one issued in 1581 and Moscow from 1663. No other Bible editions were published in the 16th and 17th centuries.

[10] The seven following New Testament editions were consulted: one from Ostrog issued in 1580, one from Vevis issued in 1611, two from Vilnius published in 1623 and 1641 (or Vevis), one from Kutein issued in 1652 and two from Kyiv published in 1658 and 1692. There was only one edition of the New Testament from the 16th and 17th centuries not consulted in this study. It was published in Vilnius in 1596 (or c. 1600).

All early printed Cyrillic liturgical Tetraevangelia issued in Lviv (in the 17th and 18th centuries)[11], the fourth Gospel edition from Vilnius published in 1644, which is a copy of the first Lviv Tetraevangelion (Ostapczuk 2017, 291-297; 2019a, 271-282; 2020, 87-97; 2024b, 62-77), and the first two Gospels from Kyiv (from 1697 and 1712) feature elaborate subscription (type 3), with some textual variants, and double numeric notations.

All Cyrillic early printed Bibles and seven New Testaments issued in the second half of the 16th and the 17th centuries feature semi-elaborate subscription (type 2), with some textual variants, and double numeric notations.

While describing the differences in religious services in the consulted editions, it is worth noting that all[12] Tetraevangelia from Lviv (issued in the 17th and 18th centuries), the fourth from Vilnius, and the New Testament from Kutein, published in 1652, feature expanded liturgical rubrics at the end of the Gospel of Matthew and John. Matthew 28:20 is not only the final verse of the readings for the Liturgy on the Holy Saturday (сѵ҃бботѣ великои на литоургии) and the First Sunday Matins Gospel (а҃. мѵ҃ въскресномѵ҃) but also for the baptism of children (крещению отрочатъ). John 21:25 closes not only the readings for the Seventh Saturday after Easter (сѵ҃бботѣ) and the Eleventh Sunday Matins Gospel (а҃і въскресномѵ҃) but also[13] the pericope for Matins on the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul (сѣ҃тымъ апостоломъ). The latter liturgical rubric was also attested in the New Testament issued in 1692 in Kyiv.

The features presented above are typical for the first seven[14] Gospel editions from Lviv. They were not attested in any other of the early printed Cyrillic liturgical Tetraevangelia consulted, neither in the Bibles nor in the New Testaments issued in the second half of the 16th or the 17th centuries. Thus, the presence of these features in any consulted manuscript can tentatively prove its close relation to the Tetraevangelia printed in Lviv.

One Cyrillic handwritten Tetraevangelion from the Lviv Historical Museum, no. 36, dated to 1660, is a copy of the first Tetraevangelion issued in Lviv in 1636. This statement was based on textual analysis of several fragments from the Gospels of Matthew and Mark and some paratexts (i.e., the editor's Preface, Prefaces to the Gospels by Bl. Theophylact of Bulgaria, and lists of Chapter Titles) and specific unique liturgical rubrics. A comparison of the subscriptions, numeric notations and liturgical rubrics closing respective books in early

[11] With the exception of the last one, issued in Lviv in 1743, that attests only semi-elaborate subscription. Any numeric notation is absent from this Lviv edition.

[12] With the exception of the last one, issued in Lviv in 1743.

[13] Some manuscripts mention the commemoration of St. John the Theologian (іѡаннѵ҃ богословѵ҃).

[14] The eighth Gospel edition from Lviv does not attest these elements.

printed Cyrillic Tetraevangelia from Lviv and this Gospel manuscript affirms the above-presented claim. These paratexts in Tetraevangelion from the Lviv Historical Museum (manuscript no. 36) precisely follow the ones in the Lviv edition, even in terms of the colours used.

Studies of numerous Cyrillic Gospel manuscripts housed at the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, along with an analysis of early printed Cyrillic liturgical Tetraevangelia issued in the 16th century in the territories of contemporary Romania, drew the author's attention to the Romanian Gospel manuscripts in this rich collection. According to Gabriel Ştrempel's *Catalogue of Romanian Manuscripts* (in four volumes), five codices are kept at this repository. They bear the following shelf numbers:

- 296 – mid-17th century, 164 f. (Strempel 1978, 83 {no 296})[15];
- **497** – 1677, 502 f. (Strempel 1978, 127 {no 497});
- **1154** – 1702-1703, 283 f. (Strempel 1978, 241 {no 1154}),
- **1327** – 1686, 266 f. (Ştrempel 1959, 163; Strempel 1978, 294 {no 1327}),
- 1891 – 1821, 135 f. (Strempel 1983, 127 {no 1891}).

Consulting these five Romanian Gospel manuscripts revealed the presence of subscriptions and numeric notations in three of them, i.e., in codices nos. 497, 1154, and 1327.

The Gospel manuscript, under call number **497**, dated to 1677, attests the following first three[16] subscriptions with incorporated stichometric notations and one additional text:

- коне҇ц̑ еже ѿ маᵀѳеа сг҃го еѵ҆ᶠ҃лїа.
  стиˣ ≠в҃х.
  еже ѿ маᵀѳеа сг҃ое еѵ҆ᶠ҃лїе иⷓдаᶜ҃ сѧ по лѣтѣˣ ѡсмиˣ хвᵃ҃ вⷴнесенїа (f. 133),
- ко҇ц̑ вьсѣᴹ и коне҇ц̑ еже ѿ мᴿака еѵ҆ᶠ҃лїю.
  стиˣ ≠а҃х.
  еже ѿ мᴿака сг҃ое еѵ҆ᶠ҃лїе иⷓдаᶜ҃ сѧ по лѣтѣˣ хв҃а вⷴнеᶜ҃енїа (f. 221),
- ко҇ц̑ еже ѿ лꙋкы сг҃мꙋ еѵ҆ᶠ҃лїꙋ.
  стиˣ ≠в҃ѡ.
  еже ѿ лꙋкы сг҃ое еѵ҆ᶠ҃лїе иⷓдастъ сѧ по лѣтѣˣ еі҃ хв҃а тиˣ вⷴнесенїа.
  вѣдомо да е҃. ꙗкоже ѿ лоуќ сг҃ое еѵ҆ᶠ҃лїе. речено быᶜ҃ павлоᴹ въ рімѣ. ѿ сщ҃енничъскаго же ѡбраⷓа сыи ѿ ⷓахаріж сщ҃енника кадѧща начаᵀ (f. 378*v*).

An analysis of these paratexts in this codex pointed to:

[15] This manuscript was also studied by G. Chivu (Chivu 2012, 285-294).

[16] The subscriptions and numeric notations to the Gospel of John were omitted.

- the presence of two various types of subscriptions, i.e., type 2 and 3, blended into one, i.e., a compound subscription,
- the separation of these two types of subscriptions by final stichometric notations,
- the presence of a succinct preface only to the Gospel of Luke[17] at its end.

Thus, it can be stated that these three paratexts in this Slavo-Romanian Tetraevangelion do not resemble analogous units attested in the Lviv Gospel editions. They follow the tradition attested in most of the Church Slavonic Gospel manuscripts dated to the 14th-16th centuries. Based on the presented evidence, it is not possible to point to any codex or group of manuscripts that could have served as its exemplar(s).

The second Gospel codex, under call number **1154**, dated to 1702-1703, is not preserved in its entirety. Only two endings of the Gospel books are extant, i.e., of the first and the third. The following paratexts, closing respective books, read as follows:

- конеⷰ еже ѿ матѳеѧ сⷯто evⷬлїа, имаᵀ в себѣ глаᴮ кⷣи, а ꙁачаль цр҃ковныˣ pⷭi. издастъ сѧ самѣмъ тѣмъ по лѣтехъ ѡсмыхъ хв҃а воᶻнесенїѧ (f. 54), is preceded by the following liturgical rubric: конеⷰ сꙋбѡтѣ великои на лvтꙋргїи и а҃ мꙋ воскрⷦномꙋ, и крщенїю ѿрочатъ,
- конецъ еже ѿ лꙋки сⷯто evⷬлїа, имаᵀ в себѣ глаᴮ кⷣд, а ꙁачаⷯ цр҃коᵛныˣ рⷣi. издаде сѧ по лѣтеˣ пѧᵀ на десѧтиˣ хв҃а вознесенїѧ (f. 147*v*).

These paratexts differ significantly from the ones attested in the previous Romanian Gospel manuscript, i.e., 497, as they attest to:

- the presence of type 3 subscriptions,
- the absence of final stichometric notations,
- the presence of the double numeric notation conveying information on the numbers of modern chapters and liturgical sections.

The third Romanian Gospel manuscript, under call number **1327**, dated to 1686, has all Gospel endings extant. Two of them, i.e., the Matthew (f. 70) and the Luke (f. 185), precisely follow the ones attested in codex no. 1154. Two other paratexts closing respective books read as follows:

[17] The presence of the short Preface solely to the third Gospel book seems unusual within Cyrillic manuscript and early printed traditions. The addition of two succinct Prefaces, i.e., to the second and the third Gospel books, or just one, i.e., to the second, was attested in Cyrillic handwritten codices and early printed books. None of the consulted sources attested the presence of such Preface only to the third Gospel book. This pattern suggests a complex codicological structure, potentially resulting from the scribe's use of two distinct textual exemplars during the compilation of the codex.

- конец еже ѿ марка сѵ҃го ев҃лїа. иматъ въ себѣ главъ ѕ҃ї (sic!) а зачалъ цр҃ковныхъ ба. издаде сѧ по лѣтѣхъ десѧтихь хв҃а вознесенїѧ (f. 116*v*),
- коне҇ц еже ѿ іѡа҃на сѵ҃го ев҃лїѧ, има҃т в себѣ гла҃в к҃а, а ꙁача҆л цр҃ковны҃х ѕ҃ѕ҃. издаде сѧ по лате҃х тридесѧти҃х и двохь хв҃а възнесенїѧ (f. 241), is preceded by the following liturgical rubric: коне҇ц а҃ї въскр҃ном҄. и сѵ҆҃штѣ и сѵ҃тымь ап҃слѡмь.

These paratexts closing the Gospels of Mark and John attest to the very same structure, i.e.:

- the presence of type 3 subscriptions,
- the absence of final stichometric notations,
- the presence of the double numeric notation conveying information on the numbers of modern chapters and liturgical sections.

Textual collation of subscriptions and numeric notations extant in two Romanian manuscripts, nos. 1154 and 1327, with analogous units found in all early printed Cyrillic Liturgical Tetraevangelia, demonstrate their close correspondence to the Gospel editions issued by the Lviv Dormition Confraternity in 1670[18] or 1636, and its reprint issued in Vilnius in 1644. The verbatim correspondence of the paratexts in question in the two Romanian Tetraevangelia and the two Lviv and one Vilnius Gospel editions is indisputable. This suggests that the translator could have used one of the two Lviv Gospel editions (or its Vilnius derivative) or their printed/handwritten[19] copy for his project. It is not possible to affirm whether the translation of the Good News was also performed directly from one of these Tetraevangelia or not[20]. To answer this

[18] The oldest Romanian Gospel manuscript consulted is dated to 1686. Prior to this date, liturgical Tetraevangelia were issued twice by Lviv Dormition Confraternity.

Two Gospel editions issued by Mikhailo Slozka in Lviv in 1644 and 1665 in the subscription to the Gospel of Matthew instead of verb изꙁдастъ сѧ attest написано бысть with noun ев҃листомъ added after самѣмъ темъ. The second textual variant was also present in the subscription to the Gospel of Luke.

[19] There are only several handwritten Church Slavonic Tetraevangelia kept at Romanian repositories with similar paratexts closing all or some Gospel books. The following Gospel manuscripts, consulted by the author of this publication, can serve as examples: BARm-17, BARm-328, BARm-504, BARm-674, ClUB-4102 and Ptna-35. The dating of these codices is limited to the 16th century.

This publication does not address textual relationship between these six codices and the two Romanian Gospels, i.e. 1154 and 1327.

[20] It is worth to note that menologion (f. 243-254) in Romanian Gospel manuscript no 1327 follows the Lviv editions from September 1st until May 2nd (f. 243-252*v*) and then, i.e. from May 7th (from the f. 253 forward) to the end of August, Moscow and Mamonich Tetraevangelia issued in the 2nd half of the 16th century.

question further textual study involving extensive Gospel fragments and other paratexts (i.e., prefaces and liturgical rubrics) has to be conducted.

The demonstration that these two Romanian Gospel manuscripts, i.e., nos. 1154 and 1327, could have been translated from one of the Lviv editions issued by the Orthodox Confraternity Printing House, or an edition/manuscript directly related to it, gives rise to a new Slavonic source for Romanian translations of the Holy Writ. So far, only the Ostrog Bible, published in 1581, has been treated as the only Slavic main or supplementary source for Romanian translations recorded in some manuscripts, that underlies the text of the 1688 Bucharest Bible (Cândea 1979, 118.132.136.223; Munteanu 2012, 31-35; Ungureanu 2015, 2; Ungureanu/Gînsac 2019, 1-2). It is worth noting that the Romanian Tetraevangelion with call number 1327 was copied by Nikola Grammatic in 1686 in Câmpulung[21] (also known in old Romanian as Dlăgopole). This centre, known for its translation initiatives, had close relations with Kyiv and Lviv. Timotei Alexandrovich Verbitsky established in Câmpulung printing press and became its leading printer. In 1636, the Prayer Book was published there (Bianu/Hodoș 1903, 103-104 (no 35)). He had previously carried out the same activity at Kyiv Pechersk Lavra, where he gained experience in printing techniques. His successor in Câmpulung was Ivan Kunotovich, a former member of the Orthodox Dormition Brotherhood in Lviv. The Anthologion issued in 1643 in Câmpulung (Bianu/Hodoș 1903, 126-136 (no 44)), besides Hieromonk Stefan (стефанъ іеромонах, типографъ срб), mentions him also, as дрѵкаръ рѵс. The first liturgical Tetraevangelion in Kyiv was published in 1697, whereas in Lviv, it was published more than half a century earlier, in 1636. Thus, having the Lviv Gospel edition as a pattern in the translation centres with close relations to Kyiv and Lviv is reasonable. In the 17th century, Ukrainian early printed liturgical books were widely disseminated in Romanian lands and left their influence also on the Romanian printed editions (Tatay/Tatai-Baltă 2024, 440).

The absence of subscriptions and numeric notation(s) in the other two Romanian Gospel manuscripts, i.e., 296 and 1891, does not disqualify them from being studied. On the contrary, in one of them, another paratext with an unusual textual reading was attested. In manuscript no. 296, dated to the middle of the 17th century, the Preface to the Gospel of Matthew was found. It is preceded by the following title: ѳеѡфилакта архїепс҃копа ѡхриꙗска прѣдисловїе еже ѿ маѳеа сн҃го евг҃лїа (f. 49). The presence of the term "of Ohrid" defining Bl. Theophylact does not seem to be surprising or unusual. However, in this context, this adjective was attested only in three early printed Slavonic liturgical Tetraevangelia issued in Braşov in 1562, and twice in

[21] Descriptions of some manuscripts copied by Nikola Grammatic and other copyists from Câmpulung see in Simonescu 1926, 51ff.

Bucharest in 1582 and after 1582. The indicated textual reading and some other variants were also found in several Slavonic Gospel manuscripts (Ostapczuk 2019b, 315-329). The textual affinity of this Romanian Gospel to the three early printed and almost thirty Slavonic manuscript Gospels warrants further investigation through extensive textual study, including Gospel fragments and other paratexts.

The evidence presented above, based on the subscriptions and final numeric notations, proves that even the most succinct paratexts can serve as a tentative indication in the quest for exemplars of translations of the Holy Writ into Romanian and presumably into other languages as well.

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b) Romanian Manuscripts

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1154 = Romanian Gospel manuscript, Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, no 1154, 1702-1703, 283 f.

1327 = Romanian Gospel manuscript, Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, no 1327, 1686, 266 f.

1891 = Romanian Gospel manuscript, Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, no 1891, 1821, 135 f.

c) Early Printed Cyrillic Bibles

1581 = Early Printed Cyrillic Bible issued in Ostrog.

1663 = Early Printed Cyrillic Bible issued in Moscow.

d) Early Printed Cyrillic New Testaments

1580 = Early printed Cyrillic New Testament issued in Ostrog.
1611 = Early printed Cyrillic New Testament issued in Vevis.
1623 = Early printed Cyrillic New Testament issued in Vilnius.
1641 = Early printed Cyrillic New Testament issued in Vilnius or Vevis.
1652 = Early printed Cyrillic New Testament issued in Kutein.
1658 = Early printed Cyrillic New Testament issued in Kyiv.
1692 = Early printed Cyrillic New Testament issued in Kyiv.

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