



In Search
of a Predecessor
to a Ruthenian
Tetraevangel

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That errors and omissions occur in a text, copied by hand during centuries is a well-known phenomenon. This circumstance was also manifested in a Church Slavonic tetraevangelium, *Evangelium Cyrillicum*, of the end of the 16th century, treasured in the Göteborg University Library. A collation of St Marc, the shortest of the four Gospels, with others, older by centuries, showed hundreds of mistakes. Nevertheless, there seemed to be a kind of kinship with some of them. The provenance and age of *Evangelium Cyrillicum* suggested that similar text tradition could be found in an area, surrounded by the Carpathian mountains. From the 14th century on, many Bulgarian and Serbian priests and monks had to flee the Ottoman invasion here, bringing their scribal traditions with them.

Since some features in *Evangelium Cyrillicum* agreed with those of Balkan provenance, it was decided to choose certain orthographic and textual features and the presence or absence of some saints from the Balkans and study them in manuscripts, kept in the libraries of Warsaw, Krakow, Przemyśl, Lviv and Kiev. The results of 95 manuscripts showed that there is in fact a kinship between them, most often, up to 40 per cent, between the text and the presence of the saints from the Balkans.

Mirja Varpio, born in 1929, has had a professional career as dental surgeon, specialized in pedodontics. At the same time, a life-long interest in Russian, owing to past generations, has led to studies of Church Slavonic and to a doctoral thesis of a tetraevangelium in 2005.

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