



**HAL**  
open science

# The Manufacturing Stages of the Old French Barlaam and Ioasaph in the Library of the Iviron Monastery from Mount Athos. Preliminary Investigations

Vladimir Agrigoroaei

► **To cite this version:**

Vladimir Agrigoroaei. The Manufacturing Stages of the Old French Barlaam and Ioasaph in the Library of the Iviron Monastery from Mount Athos. Preliminary Investigations. *Medioevo Romano*, 2022, 46 (2), pp.424-438. hal-03511197v1

**HAL Id: hal-03511197**

**<https://hal.science/hal-03511197v1>**

Submitted on 5 Jan 2022 (v1), last revised 24 Jan 2023 (v2)

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Public Domain

## The Manufacturing Stages of the Old French *Barlaam and Ioasaph* in the Library of the Iviron Monastery from Mount Athos. Preliminary Investigations\*

Mount Athos is often imagined as the cradle of the Byzantine Commonwealth, a place where Greek, Georgian, Russian, Serbian, Bulgarian, and Romanian monks lived, prayed, laboured, and read together. Yet in the old times there were many other monastic communities, nowadays lost. There were the Italians from Amalfi, Sicily, and Calabria. And for a brief period of time, French could have been spoken on the Holy Mountain. This happened at the beginning of the *Frankokratia*, the French occupation of Byzantine territories after 1204, a time and place too difficult to comprehend.

Although the dissemination of French cultural patterns to the Byzantine Commonwealth was characterized by partial unintelligibility—lack of linguistic and confessional exchanges, this unintelligibility did not reflect in the same way throughout the entire Greek world. In mainland Greece, the two cultures clashed. Their meeting was prepared, on the Western side, by a fascination for the Greek East, previous to the Fourth Crusade. On the Orthodox side, it had a confessional aspect.<sup>1</sup> Decidedly, the French-speaking West and the Byzantine world had difficulty in understanding each other. The Athonite French translation of the life of *Barlaam and Ioasaph* appears in this (only apparent) cultural void, being one of the most astonishing witnesses of a reciprocal discovery.

It is preserved in a single codex, one of the treasures of Mount Athos.<sup>2</sup> The disposition of the two texts in the manuscript is unique. The Greek version is the main text, copied in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The French translation occupies its margins, but these margins have been trimmed. Probably copied locally, at the Athonite monastery of Iviron—my previous research allowed me to date it to 1207-1213,<sup>3</sup> this is the only translation from Old Greek into Old French.<sup>4</sup> No other translation of this type exists, as all other medieval French versions of Greek texts were translated via a Latin intermediary. The study of this translation is vital to the understanding of how the East-West cultural exchanges evolved during the Middle Ages. The French translation of Mount Athos was probably made at a time when the monastery of the Georgians (Iviron) accepted the Latin supremacy for a brief period of time. From the look of it (a traductological look in particular), it seems to be the work of a team of translators. I

---

\* This study of the Iviron French version of *Barlaam and Ioasaph* was made possible through the generous *2019 Travel Grant of the Mount Athos Foundation of America*. I also express my wholehearted thanks to Father Theologos, librarian of the Monastery of Iviron on Mount Athos, who kindly took care of me in my Athonite visit and who gave me the permission to take the six photos presented in the current article. This study was also made possible by the kind help and pieces of advice I received from Marina Toumpouri, Chariton Karanasios, Bernard Outtier, and Jost Gippert.

<sup>1</sup> For instance, the only oral version of a multilingual Creed (Latin-French) is preserved in a Greek manuscript. It was copied by a Greek monk who was eager to illustrate a refutation of the *Filioque*. Cf. Egger 1857; Distilo 1990; Aerts 1996.

<sup>2</sup> For the first study of this French translation, see Meyer 1866. For the manuscript, see Lambros 1900. For the images, see Der Nersessian 1937. A colour reproduction of the images has been published by Πελεκανίδης, Χρήστου, Μαυροπούλου-Τσιούμη, Καδάς, Σκιαδαρέσης 1975, p. 60-91 (fig. 53-132).

<sup>3</sup> Agrigoroaei 2014; Agrigoroaei 2018.

<sup>4</sup> The Greek version of the *Chronicle of the Morea*, with a debatable origin (source or adaptation of the French version) was written in Demotic Greek. See for this Καλονάρος 1990. For the French version, see Longnon 1911.

imagined the possibility of it being made with the help of the Benedictines from the Amalfitan monastery on Mount Athos, as this Iviron *Barlaam* is the only French translation of its time to follow precise translation techniques, such as the ones usually encountered in the translations of sacred texts. The translation respects the Orthodox canon of the translating practices in the Byzantine Commonwealth.

The unique character of the manuscript and its French translation need to be evaluated from many points of view. My chief interest here lies in the direct consultation of the manuscript and in identifying the various stages in the transcription of the Old French text, that is, in its internal chronology. The Greek text will be of less importance (only when it will explain an odd situation in the French text).<sup>5</sup> Last but not least, the current analysis provides more arguments for the refutation of another interpretation which argues that the French translation was made more or less about the same time as the Greek text (11<sup>th</sup> century) in the Byzantine capital: Constantinople.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, I will have to focus only on the internal chronology of the French text and ignore the codicological study of the manuscript, for several good reasons. During an undated but fairly recent restoration, the gatherings were opened, the bifolios were cut in half, and their inner margins also trimmed. Each folio was then individually inserted into a modern support peg, in turn fitted to the new spine. This leaves no clues as to how the original manuscript was assembled (or reassembled, as the use of the manuscript during the transcription of the French translation could involve a reassembly of the original quires).

Add to this the fragmentary state of the French translation. The outer margins of the manuscript were trimmed at an earlier but unknown date (probably during the modern era, in order to fit different covers),<sup>7</sup> leading to the loss of marginal letters from the vernacular text and even entire words. Since both the inner and outer margins of each folio have been already cut, it is simply impossible to conduct a codicological study.

This leaves me with an emergency option replacing the codicological study: a study of the internal chronology of the French text transcribed on the margins of the Greek one. Further studies concerning other aspects of the manuscript will be made in a collaborative framework. Understanding the process through which this translation was achieved will provide the basis for a wider project involving the collaboration of colleagues from several countries and several disciplines. The present study does not strive to achieve an exhaustive analysis of the manuscript. It is based only on a selection of notes taken during its direct consultation in May 2019, with the kind authorisation of Father Theologos, librarian of the Monastery of Iviron, whom I thank wholeheartedly for his patience and generosity.

\*\*\*

In spite of these challenges, several conclusions can be reached very quickly. There are no traces of prickling and the marginal ruling of the French text is often chaotic, unaligned, as if it was done in an *ad hoc* manner.<sup>8</sup> This chaotic ruling (in unparalleled lines) must have been made from one page to the next, as the translator(s) advanced in their reading, according to an average estimation of the space necessary for the number of words and letters of the projected

---

<sup>5</sup> This Greek text was already studied and edited along with all the other manuscripts of the Greek version of *Barlaam and Ioasaph*. Volk 2006-2009.

<sup>6</sup> For my previous refutation of this hypothesis, see Agrigoroaei 2016.

<sup>7</sup> I hereby thank Chariton Karanasios, who pointed to me that such amputations were common in the modern era. For other Athonite manuscripts trimmed in order to fit modern covers (during the 17<sup>th</sup> century or later, see *e. g.* Matejic, Thomas 1992, vol. 2, p. 797, 798, 928.

<sup>8</sup> To give but one example, one such situation is evident in the margin of the folios 28v-29r, the folio presenting a Judgement Day iconography.

French text. This suggests that the ruling was probably done on the bound manuscript and not on open quires. It must have been hard to keep the manuscript leaves flat during the process, thus the oscillation in the drawing of the lines. This shows that the French translation was transcribed at a later date, since it was grafted on the folios of an already well-achieved Greek manuscript.

This being said, there are three separate issues that need to be addressed in the following pages: A) the corrections and revisions of the initial translation, which are linked with the use of colours; and: B) the occasional overlapping of French and Greek, which also goes to show that the French text was transcribed at a later date; as well as: C) that the author of the French text was not alone, as he was assisted by a person who probably understood the Greek language better than the translator (whose knowledge of Greek is questionable).

#### *A) The use of colours at various revision stages in the French translation.*

Two other colours (red and green) appear in the French vernacular text. Green is rarely used, for certain majuscules, while red is used in the transcription of majuscules, corrections, and most of all in the transcription of chapter titles. Even though they also function as image descriptions, these titles are actual titles for the chapter. They coincide with the images in most cases (the images were probably used as a manner of segmenting the text), but there are also situations in which the French copyist transcribed a title in the absence of an image. Such is the case of f. 129r (*olim* 128r), where a title in red ink (“† *coment uesq'rent ensemble*”) was inserted in the absence of an image. It is evident that the choice was consciously done at a later stage, when the French translation was revised, for this title was transcribed on the lower margin of the folio and the insertion cross that precedes it redirects it to an upper segment of the text from the same folio, before a phrase starting with “*Ioasaf*”.

The French scribe had not prepared a careful strategy when he started transcribing his translation on the margins of the Greek text. He perfected it in stages. This is also evident from the number of corrections that he made (and from their gradual alleviation towards the end of the text). The more the French scribe advanced in his translation, the fewer the corrections he made. It is true that this may be explained in two ways. On the one hand, the method of translation was perfected in a gradual manner, therefore the translation got better towards the end. On the other hand, scribes generally tend to fatigue when correcting their copies and become more tolerant (or sloppy) toward the end. However, the first interpretation (a gradual definition of a method) is also in accord with the (more or less) three or four stages that can be identified in the evolution of the vernacular text:

- 1) initial transcription of the text, with corrections made during the translation process;
- 2) corrections made at a later date with a paler or darker type of ink;
- 3) corrections and additions in red ink, probably made during the transcription of the titles and red majuscules (and/or the red strokes for the green majuscules).
- 4) no corrections in green ink; only green letters (probably transcribed at the same time as the red ones).

In the following pages, red and green letters will be underlined in the quotations, while the additions copied in the interline will be transcribed in superscript.

1) *Corrections in dark ink made during the translation process.* Certain corrections concern words or phrases transcribed in superscript during the initial phase of the translation or immediately after, with the same or with a similar ink. On f. 19v, middle segment, down of the folio, “*merueloses uertus*” was added during the main phase (“[...]os aues dit que | [...] <sup>erueloses uertus</sup> | [...]e a tantes, Bar”). These additions in the same type of ink testify to some fluctuations during the translation, as if the translator reworked certain passages on the spot.

He probably had to change his mind as a result of a re-evaluation of his interpretation of the source text. On f. 21v (middle up), “*de sa corone*” is an addition in superscript. With a similar ink, lower down the same folio, he also added “[...]ement e entel[...]”. On f. 23r (middle up), another addition in superscript was made: “*ne ualoret...*”. On f. 49r (*olim* 50r, upper part of the folio), a superscript correction in the same colour and intensity of the initial ink suggests that the addition was done during the first stage of the translation process: “[...]quil<sup>uolle</sup> enluminer”. On f. 108v (*olim* 109v), there are two corrections in superscript in an identical ink to that of the main text. And on f. 113r (*olim* 114r), another superscript correction in the same type of ink appears in the fifth line from the top. They belong to the same phase as the instant corrections following orthographic hesitations (cf. f. 115v, *olim* 116v: “*seche ~~ene~~ eme*”).

2) *Corrections in normal ink made at a different stage (different ink tint)*. Among the corrections in a darker ink (at a different stage of the process), one should note two on f. 28r (upper part): “~~mostra~~<sup>ensegna</sup> nos[...] | ueres. que<sup>nos</sup> pa[...]”. On f. 31v, after the red title of the miniature, the *I* majuscule in superscript is also written with a different tint of ink. In the last line of f. 22v, an *r* was inserted (“*p<sup>r</sup>ecioses*”), while on the bottom line of f. 50v (*olim* 51v), there is a paler type of ink: “*en uous acompli mon office<sup>e uos ai endoctrine de la conisance de lui</sup> e uous ai ensegne la doctrine els*”. At the passage of f. 54v (*olim* 55v) and f. 55r (*olim* 56r), one can notice a reworking of the French translation at a later stage: “*Or uous rauuies donc en la force de ur’ pensee. enuers celui qui uous a semons. qui est seins e uos aussi seintefies uos en totes bones costum[es]. || ~~fb]eneureus seins parfaitement~~. Soies seint car ie sui seins dit nostres sires*”. The initial translation choice was probably determined by a linguistic automatism, possibly connected to the vernacular translations of the *beatus vir* in the Psalter (thus the choice “*beneureus*”). It is safe to assume that the correction was probably more in line with the Greek text and that it was done at a later stage, when the two versions (French and Greek) were again confronted. Last but not least, on f. 110r (*olim* 111r), there is also an addition in the lower segment of the folio: “*e se meisent en la loial foi*”.

3a) *Red line cancelations and various corrections in red ink*. Some of the corrections mentioned above could be done at the time of the writing of the red-ink majuscules. It is unclear whether all these corrections were done at that stage, but some of those made in a different ink tint appear in connection with red-line cancellations. One such situation occurs on the upper segment of f. 24v, where the strikethrough was done in red ink, perhaps at the time of the writing of a *C* majuscule: “[...]C’est uns de [...]Cis est | [...]ie poeste [...]s persones uns”. On f. 29v, a now faded word from the second line from the bottom up was cancelled with a red-ink line and the word “*hom*” was written above it. On f. 34r, which is already full of red additions and corrections, the last line from the bottom up reads “*ies les iuees Joasaf dist au uellart Toutes ces riehes<sup>chieres</sup> choses unt[...]*”, with red-ink cancellation. Such cancellations in red ink, probably determined by the presence of red-ink majuscules nearby, appear also in the “*Q#*” transcribed towards the middle of f. 36v. They can also occur close to letters in green ink. On f. 123r, there is another superscript correction before a green *E* majuscule (“*nos retrain de mal<sup>einsi disoient</sup> E seroient*”). And there are also entire corrections written in red. On f. 7r, last line, there is a correction in red ink next to a (corrected) majuscule: “*uos agloire e aoneur ~~QLue~~<sup>s biens</sup> uos en*”. On f. 47r (*olim* 48r), a “*de*” in superscript appears above a red-line cancellation of a two-letter word in the upper line of the folio; etc.<sup>9</sup> Red-line cancellations

<sup>9</sup> For more corrections in red ink, see the fifth line from the bottom up of f. 72v (*olim* 73v); or the middle section of f. 87v (*olim* 88v): “*quil<sup>li rois</sup> lauoi*”. Similarly, another addition in red at f. 44r (*olim* 45r), in the lower part: “*moralites*”. On f. 33r, in red ink, above the 6<sup>th</sup> line from the top, in superscript: “*garder<sup>ne</sup> [...]*”.

accompany red-ink corrections as well, meaning that the scribe was already using a pen for the red ink and he made the correction as he went through the text. See for this the second line of f. 88r (*olim* 89r): “*preecheur. par ses enchantemens. e<sup>car</sup> il li disoit que ses regnes deuoit amender enio[...]/er*”. Some of these red-ink corrections in superscript, made during later stages, were clearly intended to perfect the fluency of the French text, as the initial translation choice had been much too influenced by the Greek language. This is the case of a correction in the bottom line of f. 17r (“*de seu*”, in “*demonstra la uoie par unt<sup>de seu</sup> il dist aler*”). However, other corrections are the result of continuous changes of heart during the translation process (probably discussions), such as the replacing of adjectives in the fifth line from the bottom up of f. 131v (“*[...sp]irituex<sup>[p]rofitables</sup> paroles*”). Finally, some of these red lines and marks must have been made after the initial corrections, in order to signal them. An interesting case occurs in the second bottom line up on f. 131r, where the superscript is in normal ink but the strikethrough is in a red line: “*Receues ~~uolentiers~~<sup>liement</sup> li miens amis les ensegnemens deu car qui puet desturner ce q[...]/Entedes ce que il nos garde par sa grace. Einsi parla cis uellars eniot digne*”. This last case could also be a consequence of the use of several types of ink (in “*Entedes*”, for instance, the majuscule is green, while the *hastae* are red). It is therefore evident that there were at least three correction stages and that the scribe used all types of ink, in various contexts, in order to achieve them. Perhaps this is why he used so many cancellations, in order to eliminate any ambiguities. Other type of corrections are quite rare. Exponctuation, for instance, appears only on the last line of f. 22v (“*emplis*”).

3b) *Additions in red ink*. There are situations in which it is difficult to ascertain at what precise stage of the translation process the red ink was used. In a sequence from f. 24v, several letters are written in red “*Le ciel e la terre e la mer. Le ciel*”). These situations multiply on f. 34r, which is full of red additions and corrections, even though there are no visible traces of erasures (“*na consuirunt. □ Li fruis del esprit siest. Charites pais Joie Longuanimites. douce[...]| cuer. b[...]| tes fois [...]| tes. absti[...]| Seintee d[...]| e de cors. h[...]| tes cusen[...]| er enlagi[...]| sor Aum[...]| ence Amis[...]| les ferme[...]| ce des meffa[...]| fais Lerm[...]| conisance. d[...]| ses peches. E[...]| qui ces semb[...]| Ausi cum de[...]*”). Perhaps some of them are the result of corrections and additions, transcribed in a similar manner to a situation from f. 49v (*olim* 50v), where the scribe added one more letter, in red, when he transcribed the red initial (“*Jeo neu*”). The perfect example for these various types of correction is the f. 112v (*olim* 113v). It has a red superscript correction on the seventh line from the top, which arrives after another superscript addition in normal ink on the third line from the top. And in the last line of the folio, a part of the initial translation was erased: “[...]*lasi cum cil qui [---] E le doneur qui li auoit la poeste done*”.

4) *Green letters*. There are also cases in which the additions have been made in a sloppy manner, as the attention of the scribe was concentrated on the interplay of colours. On f. 50v (*olim* 51v), for instance, the initial of Ioasaph’s name was doubled: “*/J/ioasaf*”, with the bars in red and the *J* majuscule in green. This probably means that the scribe had the intention to erase the minuscule *i* at a later date and forgot to do it, or simply that he did not pay attention to that fact, hurrying up toward the rest of the text. This interplay of red and green is a consequence of an alternation of red and green majuscules which starts at f. 37v, the green ones being marked by two red ink bars. However, this does not imply that the green majuscules were written at a later date and that the red bars marked the spot where they were supposed to be transcribed. They were probably transcribed at more or less the same time, because from f. 43r (*olim* 44r) onwards, the scribe did not use red strokes for green majuscules anymore (see “*Barlaam*”; as well as “*Quant*” on f. 43v (*olim* 44v)). Nevertheless, he reused them once on f. 45r (*olim* 46r). Further proof of this simultaneous alternate use of

colours is evident on f. 49v (*olim* 50v), where there are several green letters with red strokes. These green letters were decorated with inner red dots, meaning that the dots were added after the transcription of the green majuscules. Similarly, on f. 115r (*olim* 116r), apart from the inner dots, the scribe makes more dot decorations around the letters. A green *Q* majuscule has red dots and a red *H* majuscule has green dots. While another red letter has green dots and line ornamentation on f. 120r (“□*J*□*oasaf fist en*”). This suggests that the green ink was used additionally, from time to time, in order to create a pleasant effect, but that the use of this green colour varied and that the scribe changed his mind from one folio to the next. These sudden changes also posed some problems. On f. 44r (*olim* 45r), the scribe made an error when writing the green majuscules. He corrected it rapidly, as soon as he realised that he had made a mistake, but he still left a hole in the parchment, for he erased sloppily.<sup>10</sup> All this shows that his mind was set on different things at the same time. He was, on the one hand, preoccupied with colours. On the other hand, he also had to write titles for the chapters, and there was also the issue of text revision. These corrections do not concern only of the language, but also the initial translation choices. Last but not least, there are also minute interventions in the Greek text, which will be presented in the following pages, and certain pieces of evidence testify to a certain form of teamwork, meaning that the scribe did not work alone.

#### B) *Greek majuscules overlapped by the French text and the issue of corroded metal.*

The following argumentation is necessary in order to eliminate once and for all the hypothesis that the two texts, Greek and French, could have been written in the same time.<sup>11</sup> Contrary to the French text, the Greek one—principal text of the manuscript—has paragraph majuscules written in gold on the left margins of the Greek text. The presence of these gold majuscules in the margins of the folios, where the French text was transcribed, often leads to the overlapping of the two texts. This situation concerns only the versos of the folios. On the rectos, the French text is transcribed on the right margin of the Greek text and does not touch its gold majuscules.

First of all, there are many folios in which the French text avoids the Greek majuscules on purpose.<sup>12</sup> The most interesting example is on f. 44r (*olim* 45r), where a *Π* majuscule from the verso of the folio left an imprint in the parchment and the French text carefully avoids it. In other cases, the French text barely touches the Greek majuscules, avoiding them.<sup>13</sup> However, one can have the false impression that Greek initials painted in gold overlap some letters of the French text on several occasions. The situation is not that frequent, as the French text (in ink) and the Greek gold majuscules rarely come in contact. In the greyscale microfilm copy, these overlappings are unclear, but the direct consultation of the manuscript reveals that

<sup>10</sup> There is a hole at “<.>*dont adont*” in the place of an *A* majuscule. He must have realised that the first word did not need a majuscule and tried to erase it.

<sup>11</sup> Odd as it may seem, even though the French text’s Picardisms reflect a series of early 13<sup>th</sup>-century linguistic traits, this hypothesis is still tolerated in certain academic circles. For a rejection of this hypothesis, see again Agrigoroaei 2016.

<sup>12</sup> See for this the cases on ff. 2v, 4v, 5v, 6v (the last majuscule – *T* – barely touches the margin), 11v, 15v, 16v, 17v, 18v, 22v, 25v, 26v, 27v, 28v, 32v, 33v, 34v, 35v, 36v, 45v (*olim* 46v), 48v (*olim* 49v), 50v (*olim* 51v), 52v (*olim* 53v), 69v (*olim* 70v), 72v (*olim* 73v), 83v (*olim* 84v), 84v (*olim* 85v), 87v (*olim* 88v), 88v (*olim* 89v), 101v (*olim* 102v), f. 122v, 135v.

<sup>13</sup> See for this the cases on ff. 3v, 9v, 40v (*olim* 39v), 44v (*olim* 45v), 46v (*olim* 47v), 68v (*olim* 69v), 73v (*olim* 74v), 80v (*olim* 81v), 82v (*olim* 83v), 85v (*olim* 86v), 85v (*olim* 86v), 89v (*olim* 90v), 90v (*olim* 91v), 95v (*olim* 96v), 110v (*olim* 111v), f. 121v, 125v, 126v, 132v.

the gold paint is not well preserved in many cases. Yet, when it was well preserved, it affected the preservation of the French text. In many cases, the vernacular text had completely vanished. This creates the false impression that the ink of the French could be hidden under the gold of the Greek majuscules, such as in the case of the *Z* majuscule from f. 59v (*olim* 60v), but these impressions are false.<sup>14</sup> In fact, the French text, written in ink, did not dry well on metal and it wore off in many places where it overlapped the gold Greek majuscules. One can observe this in the lower part of f. 43v (*olim* 44v), where a Greek *M* majuscule in gold appears to overwrite the French text. A similar case occurs on f. 56v (*olim* 57v), for the golden majuscules *A* and *T*. The French text's ink stops at the precise limit of the Greek majuscules. It is preserved on the parchment, but not on metal. The same happens on the next folio—f. 57v (*olim* 58v) –, where the *II* majuscule seems to overlap the French word “*guerredon*”; or on ff. 62v (*olim* 63v), 64v (*olim* 65v), 103v (*olim* 104v), 127v (*olim* 126v), or 132v.<sup>15</sup> These overlappings occurred because the vernacular French text had a greater density and the little space available in the margins of the Greek text pushed the vernacular text close to the area where the Greek text had been already transcribed. For instance, the French scribe tried to reduce the size of the French letters on f. 86v (*olim* 87v), possibly in hope of obtaining more space for his vernacular text, but he still did not manage to avoid touching the Greek letters.

The same thing happened with the heads of several figures from the miniatures, as they were painted on a layer of gold and not directly on the parchment. On f. 39r (*olim* 40r), the heads of two figures are missing from the miniature. The head of Ioasaph is also missing in the miniature from f. 59v (*olim* 60v). Other parts disappeared on the miniatures from ff. 65v (*olim* 66v), 67r (*olim* 68r), 111r (*olim* 112r), 119r, and 123v. But the waxing off of the paint in contact with the metal is best seen on ff. 93r (*olim* 94r) and 99r (*olim* 100r), where the heads of various figures worn off because they had been painted directly on gold.<sup>16</sup>

In other cases, the microfilm gives the impression that the vernacular text is overlapped by the Greek majuscules (or text), but they have different causes. One such situation occurs on f. 23v, where a Greek *A* majuscule seems to cover the French text and the

---

<sup>14</sup> See for this the cases on ff. 6v (last majuscule, a *T*), 7v (the first *O* majuscule), 8v (*X*), 29v, 42v (*olim* 43v – *T*), 55v (*olim* 56v – the first *T*), 56v (*olim* 57v – *A*), 57v (*olim* 58v – *II*), 61v (*olim* 62v – *O*), 62v (*olim* 63v – *A*), 75v (*olim* 76v – *C*), 76v (*olim* 77v – *A*, *Y*, and *T*), 78v (*olim* 79v – *Φ*), 81v (*olim* 82v – *A* and *O*), 91v (*olim* 92v – *T*), 92v (*olim* 93v – *H* and *T*), 93v (*olim* 94v – *O*), 97v (*olim* 98v – *A*), 102v (*olim* 103v – *A*), 112v (*olim* 113v – *E*, but the lines line of the French text that could have come in contact with it is erased), 113v (*olim* 114v – *II*), f. 123v, f. 124v, 128v (*olim* 129v – *A*), 130v (*I*), 131v (*A*).

<sup>15</sup> A similar situation occurs on f. 24v. The metal from the majuscule *O* is so stiff and slippery that the French text's ink completely wore off. Similarly, on ff. 12v (*B* majuscule), 13v (*A* majuscule), and f. 64v (*olim* 65v – the *H* and *O* majuscules), the ink of the vernacular text was so diluted that it completely wore off.

<sup>16</sup> There are also miniatures that have been purposely damaged, but for different reasons and at an unknown date. On f. 28v, a large part of the Last Judgement miniature was smothered in its own red ink (from the River of Fire), which covers parts of the gold background too. Another destruction occurs on f. 43r (*olim* 44r), where the group of figures painted close to the boat is completely wiped out. The case of f. 69v (*olim* 70v) accounts for a destruction done with a wet hand. One should not forget the drawing from f. 86r (*olim* 87r), immediately above the miniature, in the upper right corner, where there is a little space left blank by the Greek text. There one may see a bust of a naked man, maybe in connexion with the image below it. Father Theologos kindly indicated to me that these damages (probably on purpose) may be a reaction to the depictions of devils in those miniatures.



upper and lower strokes of a Greek minuscule  $\lambda$  transcribed three lines above that  $\Delta$  appears to cover the French words “uos” and “cil poure”. The problem here is that the ink used for the French text is diluted to the point where the ink from the Greek text, of a better quality, leaves a darker imprint at their intersection.

Variations in ink intensity and colour are a common phenomenon in longer handwritten texts, so one should not be surprised that there are situations in which the French text’s ink was of a better quality, thus proving that it was transcribed at a much later date than the Greek one. One such case is that of the French *E* majuscule in the last line of f. 6r. It intersects with a Greek *T*; the French *E* is worn off, probably because of the same contact with the metal, but there are enough traces arguing in favour of its later dating. Similarly, traces of the ink from the French text are barely visible on the Greek majuscule *M* on f. 10v; or on the *T* and *Z* Greek majuscules of f. 58v (*olim* 59v). On f. 30v, the last majuscule of the Greek text is a *T* whose horizontal stroke deceptively seems to overlap the last letter of the French word group “les gens il”, while the vertical one touches the last letter of the group “...onuertirent de”. Nevertheless, both the *-l* from “il” and the *-e* from “de” were written on the fine edges of the Greek majuscule *T*; traces of their ink, of a darker variety, are still present on the golden Greek majuscule. Two similar situations appear on f. 19v, where traces of French letters overlap the first Greek majuscule of that folio (*T*); and a French word “que” overlaps the breathing mark and accent of the second and last Greek majuscule (*’E*). The breathing mark and accent of a majuscule *O* from the f. 31v are also overlapped by minute traces of French letters. On f. 37v, the Greek *K* preserves traces of French ink from the *-r* of “isuelor”. And on f. 43v (*olim* 44v), an interesting case in the manuscript, the *-i* from the French letter group “homeroi” overlaps a Greek  $\Theta$  (**Fig. 1**), while the *-r* of “il por” and the letters “asar” overlap a Greek *M*. It is worth noting that this latter folio has a rather high density of words in the French translation, thus explaining why all these letters needed to be crammed in together. And there are countless other examples of other Greek majuscules overlapped by vernacular letters.<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting situation occurs on f. 132v (**Fig. 2**). Immediately after the miniature presenting Barlaam’s death and burial, the lower segment of a Greek majuscule *T* intersects with the French text “il ot finee”. The upper parts of the last two French letters (*-ee*) darken the Greek *T*’s lower edge. Nevertheless, several lines below, on the same folio, the intensity of the French text’s ink gradually fades and leaves no trace on another Greek majuscule (*O*). One sees it even better on f. 49v (*olim* 50v), at the Greek majuscule  $\Phi$  painted in gold, a French letter overlaps it and darkens the metal (**Fig. 3**). Probably because the gold paint was not well preserved at the date when the French text was transcribed and the French text’s ink corroded it during the transcription process. This argues in favour of a later dating

---

<sup>17</sup> On f. 63v (*olim* 64v), the upper part of the final *-s* from “porpens” overlaps the ornamental trait of a Greek majuscule *T*. On f. 71v (*olim* 72v), the Greek gold  $\Delta$  is overlapped two times: first by the final *-e* of “puruearice”; next by an worn out letter at the end of “...us rie[.]”. On f. 74v (*olim* 75v), the upper loop of the final *-e* from “ie uoe” leaves a trace on the lower stroke of a Greek majuscule  $\Phi$ . On f. 77v (*olim* 78v), one may see also a small trace of the French letters which covered part of the Greek majuscule *M*. On f. 79v (*olim* 80v), a tiny trace from the final *-t* of “percoiuent” superposing a Greek golden  $\Pi$  is still visible. On f. 104v (*olim* 105v), the final *-r* from “laspide sur” covers a small part of a golden Greek majuscule  $\Theta$ . Other minute traces are discernable on f. 107v (*olim* 108v – at the *H* overlapped by the *u* in *natu*), on f. 108v (*olim* 109v – at the *K* overlapped by “prometes”). On f. 111v (*olim* 112v), the upper part of a majuscule Greek *Y* is feebly covered by the last letter of the French group “sen pasoit”, while its lower half shows traces of superposition of the final *-t* from an “[l]egierement”.

of the French text. The same situation may be observed on f. 66v (*olim* 67v), where the French word *ne* touches a Greek  $\Phi$  majuscule; nevertheless, the Greek majuscule's metal is already corroded in 5 places and one of them is exactly where the French *e* was intersecting with it. Corroded metal covered by the French text's ink is also visible on f. 109v (*olim* 110v), at the lower *K*. The same on f. 118v, where an *M* corroded gold leaf seems to be touched or covered twice: by a "*proueire*" on the upper part and by a group of letters composing a verbal form whose termination is impossible to reconstruct at this stage ("*sapare*[...]").<sup>18</sup> Or on f. 119v, where two French lines ("*..oi estes uos*" and "*...isoit il b[.]au*") overlaps a Greek *P*, but both the metal and the ink are corroded and discoloured to provide any firm conclusions. The situation is very similar to the overlapping of the French *-ee* and the Greek *T* from the already presented case of f. 132v.

In a number of cases, the red or green ink came into contact with the Greek majuscules' metallic golden paint. On f. 47v (*olim* 48v), the green ink from a French majuscule *D* and the red ink from its strokes touch the edges of a Greek *T*. On f. 60v (*olim* 61v), the red line of a bared "*s..*" (after an "*estes*") slightly touches the majuscule *O* of the Greek text. On the same folio, at the Greek majuscule *I*, the final *n* from an "*een*" overlaps the Greek majuscule (observation in oblique light). On f. 65v (*olim* 66v), the French red-ink majuscule *E* touches the edge of a Greek golden majuscule *E* and leaves a small mark on it. The best example is that of f. 120v, where two Greek majuscules present traces of dark ink superposition (*E* and *X*), while a third one (the lower *T*) is overlapped by the red ink of the French title (**Fig. 4**). The Greek majuscule's metal must have been already corroded (or at least had lost its glitter) by the time the French title was transcribed. This explains why the red ink is so well preserved.

### C) *Proof of teamwork and conclusions.*

When the internal chronology of the translation—a process that I call the 'manufacturing' of the said translation—is understood, other isolated accidents from the Athonite manuscript start to make sense. The Greek majuscule *T* from "*Taδτα*" on f. 71v (*olim* 72v) is written in red ink as a correction (**Fig. 5**). This suggests that the Greek text was read at the same time as the French one during the revision process, and explains why some of the corrections in the French text are in red (as they were checking it again, for a second or perhaps a third time). However, this Greek majuscule *T* was transcribed by a different hand, even though the red ink and the size of the quill are the one and the same, meaning that two different persons shared them and those two persons were involved in the revision process. The spacing of the vernacular letters attests to the fact that they were the first ones to be written on the margin. The Greek *T* from *Taδτα* was written after them, being carefully inserted in between two vernacular French letters. The two persons making the revision probably did not pay attention to this detail during the translation process or postponed the correction until later. Real attention was paid only during the checking of the two texts at a later date, that is, when the majuscules were transcribed. Yet this also means that a Greek speaker (different from the French translator) was present during these checks, and this implies the existence of a team, thus confirming the working hypothesis presented in my first study, based on the translational analysis.<sup>19</sup>

It is safe to assume that this Greek speaker was reading the Greek text in the same time as the Francophone read the French one, and they probably compared their readings. Further

<sup>18</sup> The ink from the lower group of French letters is too discoloured and the metal from the Greek initial too damaged to draw any immediate conclusion.

<sup>19</sup> Agrigoroaei 2014, p. 125-133. For a summary of those initial conclusions, see below.

proof of this teamwork is evident at f. 15v, where the French title in red ink was written on an erasure (**Fig. 6**). The scribe probably forgot to leave enough space for this title, so he had to reduce the size of the previous vernacular sentence, but he also erased part of the Greek majuscule *M* in the process. They (or the Greek speaker alone) then proceeded to redraw the Greek majuscule in red. That red has the same colour and intensity as the ink of the French title, thus suggesting that it was done at the same time. A similar situation occurs on f. 28v, where an erasure in the French text had created another problem, leading to the transcription of two initials in order to solve the issue (“*A<sup>B</sup>”*). These isolated incidents suggest that the team of scribe-translators respected a logic that dictated certain priorities in the use of the Greek and French texts.

Both texts were equally important at the time when the revision was made. Nevertheless, the situation had been certainly different during the translation process, as testified by the same overlapping of French and Greek texts. It is now evident that the ink(s) used for the French text probably dried well on the metal in the first stages, but wore off with the passage of time.<sup>20</sup> But this also suggests that the French scribe was not interested in the Greek text or did not pay much attention to the Greek words, since his French words overlap Greek majuscules and sometimes entire parts of the Greek text. The first part of the translation process—the transcription of the French text—was done only with the priority of the French text in mind. This is evident on another folio, in which the marginal French text invades the column of the Greek text, because the translator could not abridge the translation. It is once again evident on the lower half of f. 115v (*olim* 116v), where a Greek golden majuscule *E* is overlapped by a French text whose two last letters are impossible to reconstruct (“*aves sofer[.]*”). Generally, the scribe avoided such situations by condensing the text in the upper and lower margins. However, on this other folio, he had to get very close to the Greek text and this led to an overlapping of “*aigue/μoi*” (9<sup>th</sup> line from the bottom up) and “*enuos enracine/ση*” (4<sup>th</sup> line from the bottom up).

These observations strengthen the conclusions of my 2014 study. From a linguistic and traductological point of view, the analysis of the French translation already showed that it was done in stages, some of them bearing witness to a slavish reading of the Greek text, which affected both the syntax of the vernacular language and the stylistic choices. In light of those initial conclusions, I assumed that a French translator of the early 13<sup>th</sup> century could not be able to understand the subtleties of the Greek text—further proof of this being his traductological reflexes from Latin, which could have been a mediation language of the translation, in between the Greek and the French text. The new data presented in the current study confirm that the French translation of Iviron was made by a French-speaking translator with the help of a local monk, through the mediation of an oral Latin translation, in a historical context which was already well explored in the previous studies.<sup>21</sup>

Vladimir Agrigoroaei  
CÉSCM Poitiers – CNRS  
vladimir.agrigoroaei@gmail.com

## Illustrations

---

<sup>20</sup> If the scribe realised that the ink was wearing off, he would find another solution, certainly avoiding the Greek gold majuscules and transcribing the text only on the parchment segments.

<sup>21</sup> For the historical context, see Agrigoroaei 2014, p. 133-148; Agrigoroaei 2016, *passim*; and Agrigoroaei 2018 (the entire study).

Fig. 1. Detail of f. 43v (*olim* 44v).

Fig. 2. Detail of f. 132v.

Fig. 3. Detail of f. 49v (*olim* 50v), with the French text partly covering the Greek majuscule  $\Phi$ .

Fig. 4. Detail of f. 120v with the Greek *T* majuscule from the lower part of the folio.

Fig. 5. Detail of 71v (*olim* 72v) with the Greek majuscule *T* inserted in the middle of a French word.

Fig. 6. Detail of f. 15v with the erasure and rewriting of the Greek majuscule *M* in red ink.

### Bibliographical Abbreviations

- Aerts 1996 – William J. Aerts, “The ‘Symbolon’ and the ‘Pater Noster’ in Greek, Latin and Old French”, in *East and West in the Crusader States. Context-Contacts-Confrontations*, dir. Krijnie Cigaar, Adelbert Davids, Herman Teule, Leuven-Paris, Peeters, 1996, p. 153-168.
- Agrigoroaei 2014 – Vladimir Agrigoroaei, “Rara avis: la traduction française médiévale du Barlaam et Ioasaph du Mont Athos”, *Medioevo Romano*, 38, 1, 2014, 1, p. 106-151.
- Agrigoroaei 2016 – Vladimir Agrigoroaei, “La datation du ‘Barlaam’ français du Mont Athos (à propos d'un article récent)”, *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica*, 20, 1, 2016, p. 153-164.
- Agrigoroaei 2018 – Vladimir Agrigoroaei, “Traduction et sotériologie. Nouvelles recherches au sujet du Barlaam français du Mont Athos”, in *Francofonie medievali : Lingue e letterature gallo-romanze fuori di Francia (sec. XII-XV)*, dir. Anna Maria Babbi, Chiara Concina, Verona, Fiorini, 2018, p. 229-249.
- Der Nersessian 1937 – Sirarpie Der Nersessian, *L'Illustration du roman de Barlaam et Joasaph d'après les clichés de la Frick Art Reference Library et de la Mission Gabriel Millet au Mont Athos*, Paris, De Boccard, 1937.
- Distilo 1990 – Rocco Distilo, “Fra latino e romaico. Per un Credo ‘francese’ del Duecento”, in Rocco Distilo, *Káta Λατίνον. Prove di filologia greco-romanza*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1990, p. 13-41.
- Egger 1857 – Émile Egger, “Mémoire sur un document inédit pour servir à l'histoire des langues romanes”, *Mémoires de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres*, 21, 1, 1857, p. 349-376.
- Lambros 1900 – Spyridon P. Lambros, *Κατάλογος των εν ταις βιβλιοθήκαις του Αγίου Ορους ελληνικών κωδίκων. Catalogue of the Greek manuscripts on Mount Athos*, 2 vol., Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1895-1900.
- Longnon 1911 – *Chronique de Morée (1204-1305): Livre de la conquête de la princée de l'Amorée*, ed. Jean Longnon, Paris, Renouard, 1911.
- Matejic, Thomas 1992 – *Catalog. Manuscripts On Microform Of The Hilandar Research Library (The Ohio State University)*, compiled and with an introduction by Predrag Matejic, Hannah Thomas, 2 vols., Bloomington, Slavica, 1992.
- Meyer 1866 – Paul Meyer, “Fragments d'une ancienne traduction française de Barlaam et Joasaph, faite sur le texte grec au commencement du treizième siècle”, *Bibliothèque de l'École de Chartes*, 27, 1, 1866, p. 313-334.
- Volk 2006-2009 – *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos VI/1 & VI/2: Historia animae utilis de Barlaam et Ioasaph (spuria)*, ed. Robert Volk, 2 vols., Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 2006-2009.

- Καλονάρος 1990 – *Το χρονικόν του Μορέως: Το Ελληνικόν κείμενο κατά τον κώδικα της Κοπεγχάγης μετά συμπληρώσεων και παραλλαγών εκ του Παρισινού*, ed. Πέτρος Καλονάρος, foreword Ρένος Αποστολίδης, Athens, Εκάτη, [1990].
- Πελεκανίδης, Χρήστου, Μαυροπούλου-Τσιούμη, Καδάς, Σκιαδαρέσης 1975 – Στυλιανός Μ. Πελεκανίδης, Παναγιώτης Κ. Χρήστου, Χρυσάνθη Μαυροπούλου-Τσιούμη, Σωτήρης Ν. Καδάς (et Μάκης Σκιαδαρέσης) (Eds.), *Οι Θησαυροί του Αγίου Όρους, Σειρά Α' Εικονογραφημένα χειρόγραφα. Παραστάσεις, επίτιπλα, αρχικά γράμματα*, Τόμος Β' *Μονή Ιβήρων, Μονή Αγίου Παντελεήμονος, Μονή Εσφιγμένου, Μονή Χιλανδαρίου*, Athens, Εκδοτική Αθηνών, 1975.