

ABOUT TWO 10TH CENTURY MANUSCRIPTS ILLUMINATED IN ‘BLÜTENBLATT’  
STYLE: THE GOSPELS OF BERAT 4 AND VLORË 5 IN THE STATE PUBLIC  
RECORD OFFICE IN TIRANA

*(Summary)*

Subject of this article are two Gospels, i.e. Berat 4 and Vlorë 5 preserved in the Public Record Office in Tirana, which are exemplary of the early coloured Byzantine style, widely known as ‘*Blütenblattstil*’ (developed in the 10th century and emblematic of Greek illuminated manuscripts). Although new miniatures were added later in the place of original ones, the two manuscripts largely preserved their original design. Their ornamentation – a series of lavishly decorated canonic tables, headpieces and initials, and exquisitely elegant script-type, i.e. ‘pearl’ script – is illustrative of the production of Constantinople scriptoria on one hand, and of the development of typological patterns of decoration relating to the content of the works and its graphic structuring, taking into consideration their functional designation (for liturgical purposes or for individual prayers) on the other hand.

The article briefly reviews two styles of ornamentation developed in the 10th century, viz. Laubsägestil and Blütenblattstil, the first of which appeared and was disseminated mainly in the 10th–11th century, with reminiscences in the work of parochial scriptoria in the 12th and 13th centuries, and the second, which was in use for luxurious parchment codices, produced to ‘high’ orders. As far as the Gospel of Berat 4 is concerned, the analysis of the decoration corroborates its initial dating, i.e. 10th century and, more precisely, we propose that it was produced in its second half, while in our opinion the Gospel of Vlorë 5 was produced in the middle of the 10th century and not in the 11th–12th century as proposed by a number of Albanian researchers.

*Axinia Djurova,*

*Center for Slavic and Byzantine Studies “Ivan Duichev”*