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A Manuscript from the Library of the Great Lavra

On 15 November 2016, “a rare ninth-century Greek manuscript of the complete New Testament (Codex 1424, Diktyon 13410) was handed over by the Rev. Dr. James Nie-man, President of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) to His Emi-nence Archbishop Demetrios of America during a dignified and well attended cer-emony that took place at LSTC’s Augustana Chapel ... Archbishop Demetrios received the manuscript on behalf of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bar-tholomew”,¹ so as to restitute it to the Monastery of Παναγία Εικοσιφοινίσσα in Northern Greece: it had been there that Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus (1856–1912) saw the codex in 1885,² Hermann von Soden or one of his collaborators exam-ined it ca. 1900,³ and Kirsopp Lake (1872–1946) photographed it for the use of Caspar René Gregory (1846–1917).⁴ Soon after irregular troops led by Todor Panica (1879–1925) had despoiled Eikosiphoinissa during the First World War,⁵ the dealer Jacques Rosenthal (1854–1937) sold Codex 1424 to Levi Franklin Gruber (1870–1941),⁶ in whose possession it was described by Kenneth Willis Clark (1898–1979).⁷ Gruber’s library later passed to the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, where Nadezhda Kavrus-Hoffmann catalogued the manuscript for a second time⁸ and where a team

1 Archbishop Demetrios Receives 9th Century Codex 1424 from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, *Orthodox Observer News* online, published 17 November 2016.

2 A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, “Ἐκθεσις παλαιογραφικῶν καὶ φιλολογικῶν ἐρευνῶν ἐν Θράκῃ καὶ Μακεδονίᾳ. Constantinople 1886, 38–39. This publication is the source for H.A. SCRIVENER, Plain In-troduction to the Criticism of the New Testament. London ⁴1894, 377, who lists the manuscript as an “additional uncial” under the siglum $\mathfrak{u}$. At the time, it carried the monastery shelfmark 124.

3 H. VON SODEN, Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt her-gestellt auf Grund ihrer Textgeschichte. Bd. I.1. Göttingen ²1911, 74, 104 (siglum 830).

4 C.R. GREGORY, Textkritik des Neuen Testamentes. Bd. 3. Leipzig 1909, 1145–46. The present where-abouts of Lake’s photographs is unknown to me. Gregory registered the codex as number 1424 in his census of Greek New Testament manuscripts.

5 An eyewitness account by the monastery’s abbot Neophytus is printed in K.E. TSIAKAS, Ἱστορία τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς Εἰκοσιφοινίσσης Παγγαίου. Drama 1958, 40–41. Since 1966, Eikosiphoinissa has been a nunnery.

6 N.F. KAVRUS-HOFFMANN, Catalogue of Greek Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Collec-tions of the United States of America (IX). *Manuscripta* 59 (2015) 61–139, at 61, 120.

7 K.W. CLARK, Descriptive Catalogue of Greek New Testament Manuscripts in America. Chicago 1937, 104–106.

8 KAVRUS-HOFFMANN, Catalogue (IX) (as footnote 6 above) 117–131.

of the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts digitized it.⁹ The manuscript has thus come to be well known – except for a few medieval notes on its last pages. I hope that these will interest Erich Lamberz.

Written in a hand which palaeographers might classify as “scholarly”,¹⁰ the first note was almost certainly added while the book was in private hands: it records the birth of one Symeon at the third morning hour (ca. 10 AM) of Sunday, 24 November 1074 (Fig. 1). The boy’s father was in Tarsus at the time (that Cilician city was then under Byzantine rule).¹¹ Since the man is simultaneously referred to as “brother”, the record seems to have been penned by the newborn’s paternal uncle. I retain his spelling:

Μη(νι) Νοευρίω ή κδ' ημέρ(α) Κυρια(κή) ωρα τριτ(ή) τ(ης) ήμέρ(ας) εγενη(θη) | ο δουλ(ος) του
θ(εο)υ Συμε(ών) ινδ(ικτιωνος) ιβ' ετους ςφπβ' οτ(ε) ο π(ατ)ηρ του | καί αδε(λφός) υπηρχεν εν
Ταρσω.¹²

A second entry, palaeographically datable to the twelfth century,¹³ contains the simple prayer of a certain Christopher who asks the Lord to help him and keep him away (ἀπεβγάνειν)¹⁴ from every evil thing and all devilish influence (ἐπίρροια). Anyone reading the manuscript is also asked to pray God for this sinner. Christopher’s use of the accusative instead of the dative case¹⁵ is perhaps worthy of note (Fig. 1).

Κ(ύρι)ε βοήθει των σῶν δούλων Χριστοφό|ρων· καί ἀπεύγανε αὐτων ἀπο παν | τὸς κακοῦ· καί
πάσης διάβολικῆς ἐ|πιηρίας· καί εἰ της τὸ ἀναγνόθη δια τῶν | θ(εο)ν ἄς μὲ ευχεται τῶν
ἀμαρτολῶν.¹⁶

⁹ The digital photographs and a short description of the manuscript made on 8 March 2010 are now available online at the CSNTM website.

¹⁰ N.G. WILSON, *Scholarly Hands of the Middle Byzantine Period*, in *La paléographie grecque et byzantine*. Paris 1977, 221–239.

¹¹ F. HILD / H. HELLENKEMPER, *Kilikien und Isaurien*, I. *TIB*, 5. Vienna 1990, 432.

¹² The text is transcribed by CLARK, *Catalogue* (as footnote 7 above) 105 and summarized by KAVRUS-HOFFMANN, *Catalogue* (IX) (as footnote 6 above) 129.

¹³ The handwriting is of the type that I have called “typographic minuscule”, see G.R. PARPULOV, *A Twelfth-Century Style of Greek Calligraphy*. *TM* 24/1 (2020) 181–196.

¹⁴ See E. KRIARAS, *Λεξικὸ τῆς μεσαιωνικῆς ἐλληνικῆς δημώδους γραμματείας 1100–1669*. Thessalonike 1973, 10–12 (s.v. ἀποβγάνω).

¹⁵ D. HOLTON et al., *The Cambridge Grammar of Medieval and Early Modern Greek*, IV. Cambridge 2019, 1951–52.

¹⁶ The note is briefly mentioned by CLARK, *Catalogue* (as footnote 7 above) 105 and KAVRUS-HOFFMANN, *Catalogue* (IX) (as footnote 6 above) 129.

Three lines of text uncomfortably squeezed at the bottom of the same page must postdate Christopher's prayer. The book, they say, belonged to the hermit *Kyr* Abramius¹⁷ and was deposited at the *katechoumena* (the word will be explained below) in September 1240, when said Abramius died (Fig. 1).

Τὸ παρὸν βιβλ(ιον) ἦν τοῦ (μον)αχ(οῦ) κ(ϋρ) Ἀβραμίου (καὶ) ἡσυχαστοῦ τὸ καὶ προστεθ(έν) |
ἐν τ(αῖς) τ(ῶν) κατηγουμέν(ων) βίβλ(οις) μηνὶ Σεπτ(εμβρ)ίῳ (ἰ)ν(δικτιῶνος) ιδ' ἔτ(ους) ,ςψμθ'
καθ' ὃν | [καὶ]ρὸν ὁ τοιοῦτος (μον)αχ(ός) κ(ϋρ) Ἀβράμιος ἐκοιμήθη.¹⁸

The hand that wrote this added on the next two pages a versified warning against cutting leaves from the book (Fig. 2–3).¹⁹ I have normalized its accentuation of the indefinite pronouns:

Μὴ τεμνέτω τις φύλλα τὰ τῶν βιβλίων·
γράμμασιν αἰτῶ, κἂν σιγᾷ μου τὸ στόμα.

Μὴ τεμνέτω τις λάθρα φύλλα βιβλίων·
γράμμασιν αἰτῶ, κἂν σιγᾷ μου τὸ στόμα.

Since their wording varies, the dodecasyllables may be the scribe's own creation. In fact they reoccur (DBBE 21452 and 30844), penned by his hand again, in at least two more codices (Fig. 4–5).²⁰ One of these came to Paris in the 1650s from the Lavra of St Athanasius on Mount Athos; the other still belongs to that venerable monastery.²¹ Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741) rightly saw that a single person had annotated many manuscripts at the Lavra's library.²² That man's earliest dated records come from AD 1218 (Fig. 6).²³ Codex 1424 now turns out to contain the

17 On the title *kyr* see A. KONTOGIANNOPOULOU, *Η προσηγορία κυρ στη βυζαντινή κοινωνία. Βυζαντινά* 32 (2012) 209–226.

18 CLARK, *Catalogue* (as footnote 6 above) 105 refers to this note as an obituary (“records deaths in 1241”); KAVRUS-HOFFMANN does not mention it.

19 The words “I beseech with writing, though my mouth be silent” (γράμμασιν αἰτῶ, κἂν σιγᾷ μου τὸ στόμα) are as if “spoken” by the manuscript itself.

20 Yet another autograph distichs by the same scribe is registered as DBBE 21451.

21 R. DEVRESSE, *Le fonds Coislin*. Paris 1945, ii–iii, vii, 223.

22 B. DE MONTFAUCON, *Bibliotheca Coisliniana olim Segueriana*. Paris 1715, 43, 186, 292. See also DEVRESSE, *Fonds Coislin* (as footnote 21 above) 413 (index, s.v. Lavra).

23 The note on the upper left in my Fig. 6, dated January 1218, is transcribed by S. EUSTRATIADES, *Ἀγιορειτικῶν κωδίκων σημειώματα* (I). *Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς* 1 (1917) 49–62, at 57–58. Two more notes from the same year are transcribed in MONTFAUCON, *Bibliotheca Coisliniana* (as footnote 22 above) 43, 252.

youngest one – from AD 1240 (Fig. 1).²⁴ The codex most probably carried a shelfmark like those written at the beginning of other volumes from the Lavra (Fig. 6–8),²⁵ but the upper ends of its first five leaves are now cut out.²⁶ Its onetime owner Kyr Abramius has left no trace in another document, and the librarian who recorded his bequest remains, for the moment at least, nameless.²⁷ Not even the *katechoumena* where the book was once deposited exist anymore: the storey above the *narthex* in the Lavra's central church was demolished in 1814.²⁸ Still, it was there that the manuscript recently returned to Eikosiphoinissa was kept in the distant year 1240. Perhaps another restitution is in order.

²⁴ Previously, the last known date-bearing record by that hand was the note on the lower left in my Fig. 6, written on 16 November 1236 and transcribed by E. LITSAS, *Palaeographical Researches in the Lavra Library on Mount Athos. Ελληνικά* 50 (2000) 217–230, at 225.

²⁵ On the thirteenth-century shelfmarks of Lavra manuscripts: N.G. WILSON, *The Libraries of the Byzantine World. GRBS* 8 (1967) 53–80, at 67–68; B.L. FΟΝΚΙΪ, *Библиотека Лавры св. Афанасия на Афоне в X–XIII вв. Палестинский сборник* 17 (1967) 167–175; LITSAS, *Researches* (as footnote 24 above) 224; E. ELIA / R.M. PICCIONE, *A Rediscovered Library: Gabriel Severos and His Books*, in R.M. Piccione (ed.), *Greeks, Books and Libraries in Renaissance Venice*. Berlin 2021, 33–82, at 60–63.

²⁶ Another New Testament manuscript with commentary, the present-day Paris, BnF, Coislin 23 (GA 39, Diktyon 49165), was once placed on the second shelf (βιβλίον τῆς δευτέρας θέσεως). Its shelf-number is now illegible: FΟΝΚΙΪ, *Библиотека* (as footnote 25 above) 168, 174; J. DUPLACY, *Manuscripts grecs du Nouveau Testament émigrés de la Grande Laure de l'Athos*, in K. Treu (ed.), *Studia codicologica. TU*, 124. Berlin 1977, 159–178, at 170.

²⁷ The man's name was neither Macarius (as Montfaucon thought) nor Demetrius (as Litsas seems to suggest): MONTFAUCON, *Bibliotheca Coisliniana* (as footnote 22 above) 43, 120, 186, 192; LITSAS, *Researches* (as above note 24) 227. The former was a donor, not a librarian: FΟΝΚΙΪ, *Библиотека* (as footnote 25 above) 169 n. 9. The latter is attested relatively late, in 1278/79: S. EUSTRATIADES, *Ἀγιορειτικῶν κωδίκων σημειώματα* (II). *Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς* 1 (1917) 145–160, at 151. N.B.: the misprint 1579 which occurs in that article is repeated by SPYRIDON and S. EUSTRATIADES, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts in the Library of the Laura on Mount Athos. Harvard Theological Studies*, 12. Cambridge 1925, 23 (cat. 207/B 87).

²⁸ S. VOYADJIS, *Το καθολικό της Ιεράς Μονῆς Μεγίστης Λαύρας στο Ἅγιον Ὄρος: ἱστορία καὶ ἀρχιτεκτονική*. Athens 2019, 91–94, 107–108, 115–116, 211–215 (reconstruction drawings 35–36, 39, 42). In 1744, the Ukrainian pilgrim Basil Barsky (1701–47) still found the monastery's library in a room above the *narthex*: N.P. BARSKOV (ed.), *Странствования Василия Григорьевича Барского по святым местам Востока с 1723 по 1747 г., III*. Saint-Petersburg 1887, 15. On some other books from the *katechoumena* see LITSAS, *Researches* (as footnote 24 above) 224–225.

Figures

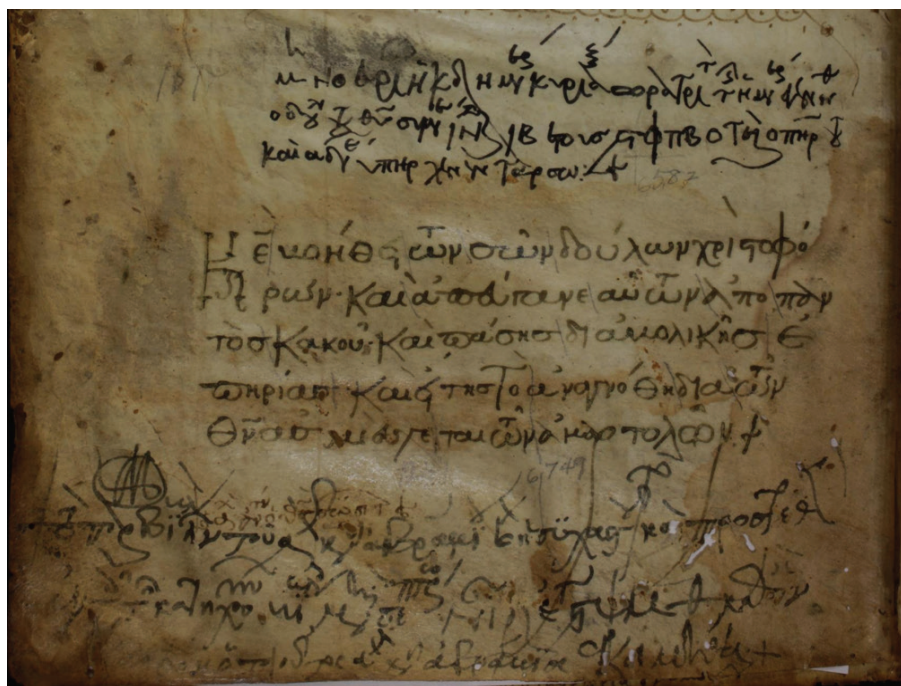


Fig. 1: Drama, Eikosiphoinissa Monastery 3P (Diktyon 13410), f. 336v (detail). Photo: © Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, Plano TX

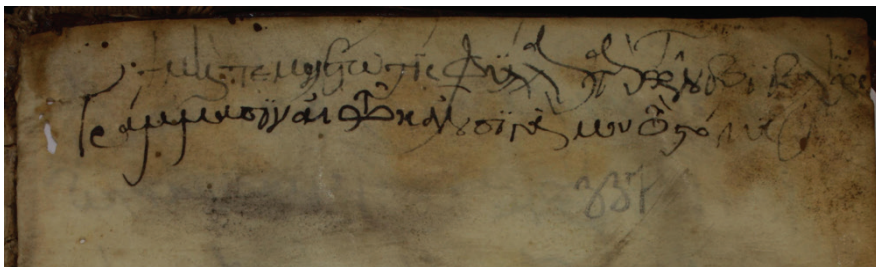


Fig. 2: Drama, Eikosiphoinissa Monastery 3P, f. 337r (detail). Photo: © Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts

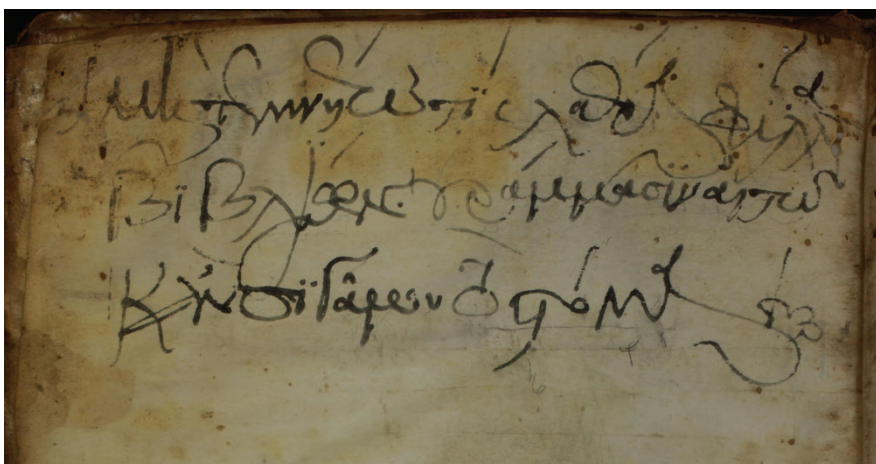


Fig. 3: Drama, Eikosiphoinissa Monastery 3P, f. 337v (detail). Photo: © Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts

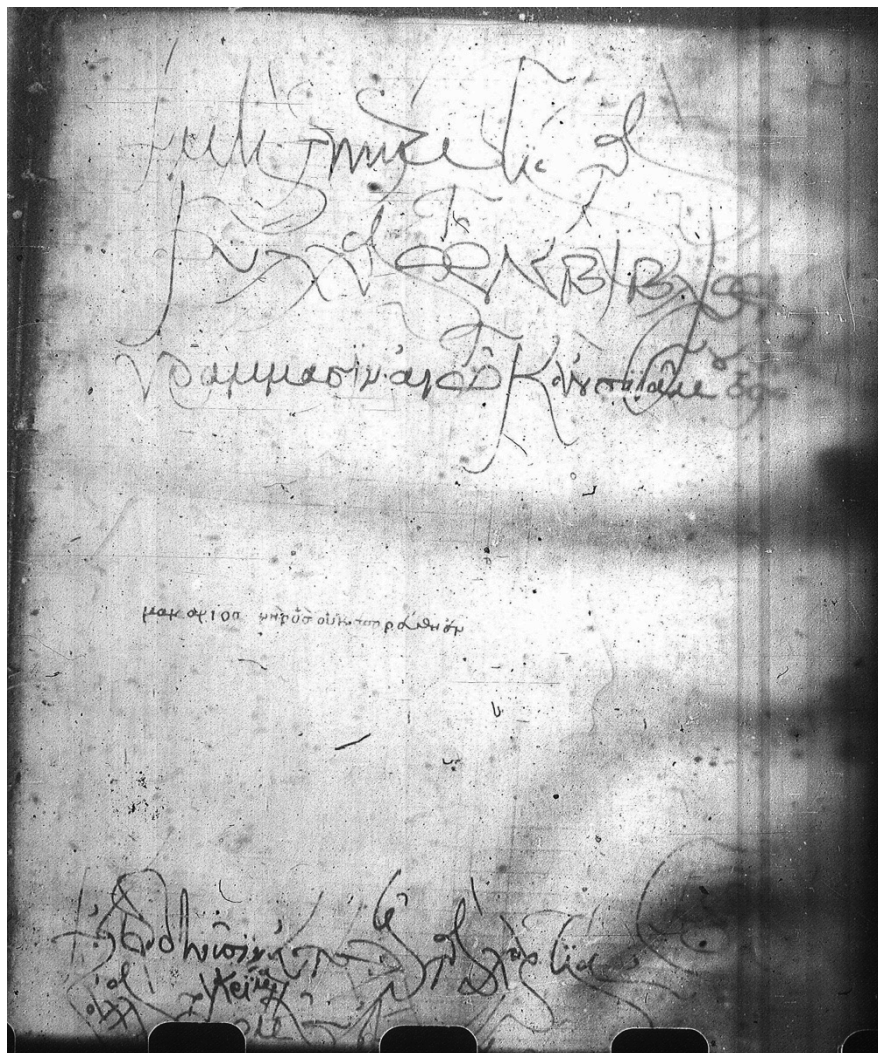


Fig. 4: Mount Athos, Great Lavra Δ 70 (Diktyon 27381), f. 7r. Photo: © Marcel Richard, Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes, Paris

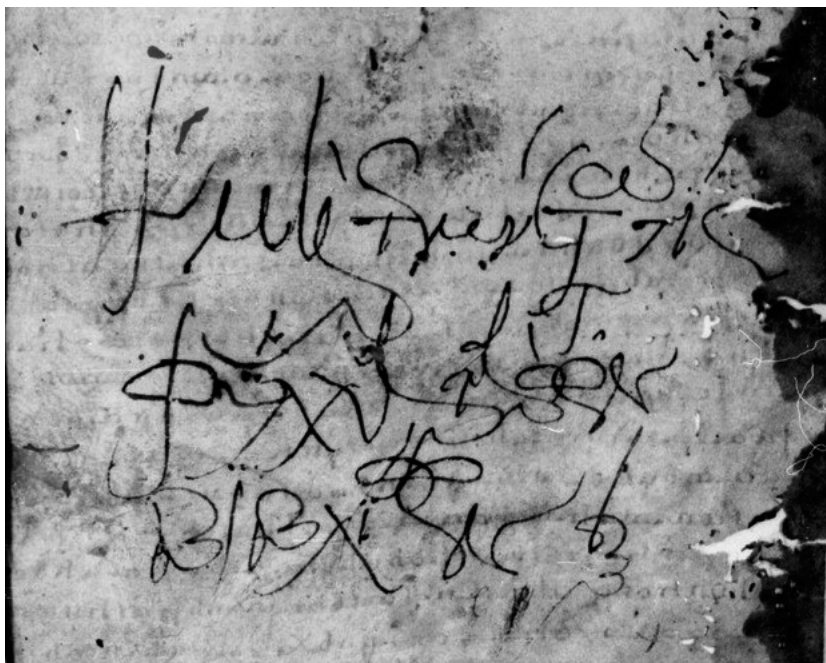


Fig. 5: Paris, BnF, Coislin 242 (Diktyon 49383), f. 374^{bis}r (detail). Photo: © BnF

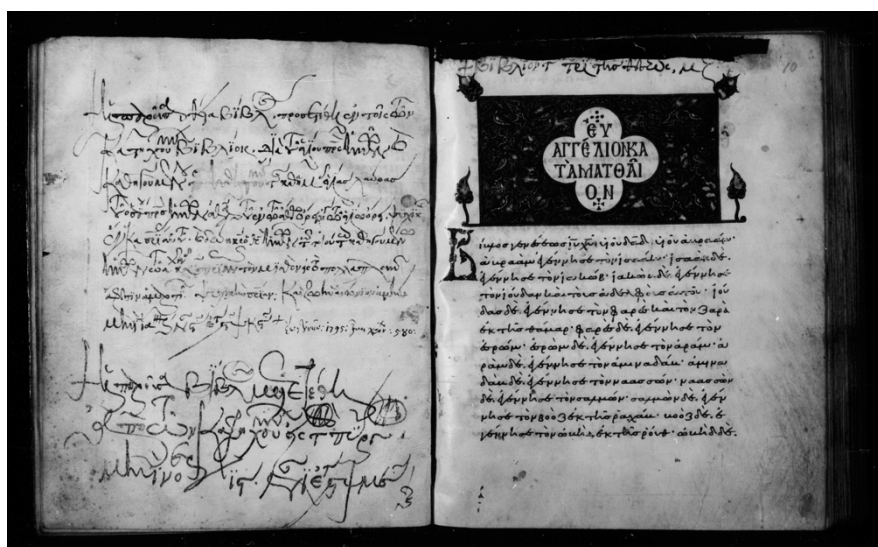


Fig. 6: Mount Athos, Great Lavra A 57 (Diktyon 26985), f. 9v–10r. Photo: © Library of Congress

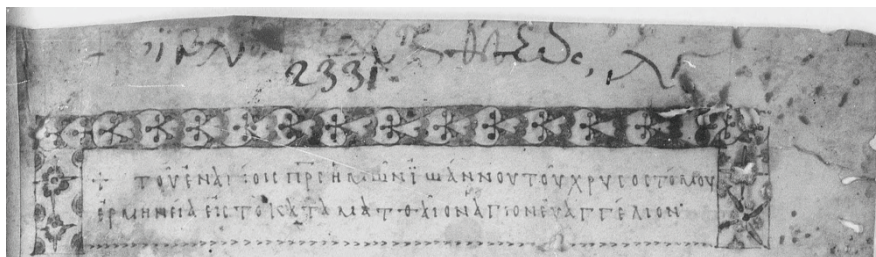


Fig. 7: Paris, BnF, grec 702 (Diktyon 50283), f. 1r (detail). Photo: © BnF

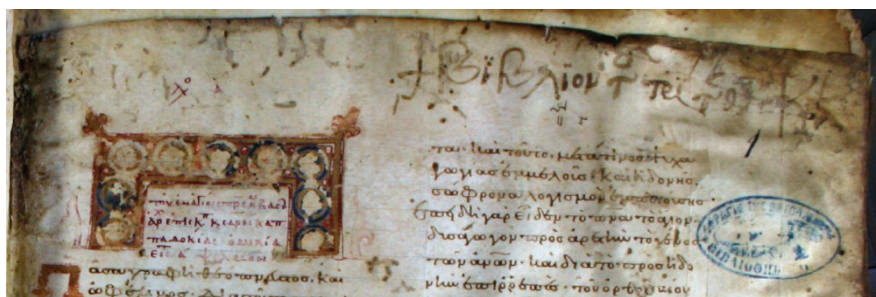


Fig. 8: Mount Athos, Vatopedi Monastery 53 (Diktyon 18200), f. 1r (detail). Photo: © Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopedi

