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Palimpsest Manuscripts in the National Library of Greece, with a Focus on EBE 192

Abstract: The main manuscript collection of the National Library of Greece in Athens (EBE) includes twenty-five partial or complete palimpsests, with folios from older, mainly Greek but also non-Greek, manuscripts. I have studied this material thoroughly in the framework of the project *Rinascimento Virtuale – Digitale Palimpsestforschung*. For some palimpsests, more specific studies have been carried out, but a detailed catalogue is still pending. This paper presents a descriptive summary of all of these palimpsests with the addition of newer research findings. The second part is devoted to the most important palimpsest in the collection, EBE 192, whose oldest layer of writing derives from two manuscripts with philosophical, educational, and legal content.

1 Introduction

Twenty years ago, within the framework of the project *Rinascimento Virtuale – Digitale Palimpsestforschung*, I attempted to provide a first account of the palimpsest codices of the National Library of Greece (Εθνική Βιβλιοθήκη της Ελλάδος, EBE). I was able to identify a total of twenty-five palimpsests, the majority of which was already known from the catalogues by Georgios Kremos in 1876, Ioannis Sakkelion in 1892, and Linos Politis in 1991, as well as from the old specialised study by Heinrich Reich in 1882.¹ My research was assisted by the multispectral camera (MuSIS) devel-

¹ Kremos 1876, nos XL, LV, LVI, LXXXVIII, CX, CXX, CLIII, CXCVIII, CCIX (= respectively manuscripts EBE 177, 192, 193, 842, 864, 874, 452, 880, 485); Ioannis Sakkelion and Alkiviadis I. Sakkelion 1892: same manuscripts plus EBE 78, 139, 223, 347, 637, 1097; Politis 1991 added manuscripts EBE 2048, 2075, 2106, 2107, 2112, 2155, 2471, 2495; Reich 1882: same manuscripts as Kremos, except EBE 842; Melissakis 2003–2004: all the above-mentioned manuscripts – except EBE 2106 and 2495, whose description by Politis is exhaustive – plus EBE 2694 and 2795. This account was first presented during the workshop ‘Ο κόσμος των παλιμψηστων χειρογράφων στις βιβλιοθήκες της Ελλάδος και στις μονές και τα πατριαρχεία της ορθόδοξης Ανατολής’, Athens, 7–11 May 2003 in the framework of the project *Rinascimento Virtuale*. For more on this project, see <<http://palin.iccu.sbn.it>>, accessed on 1 March 2024. The collections of Metochion tou Panaghiou Taphou and Megali tou Genous Scholi, kept in the EBE, have no palimpsest manuscripts. All images used in this article are © Εθνική Βιβλιοθήκη της Ελλάδος, Athens.

oped by Forth Photonics, thanks to which I was able to see, very clearly, specimens of the older level of writing in certain manuscripts. Although my aim was to conduct a detailed study of these manuscripts, in the end the subsequent unavailability of the multispectral camera prevented me from achieving this goal. The only relevant opportunity appeared about ten years later, when, thanks to the support of Jost Gippert and Manuel Raaf, I obtained multispectral photographs of all the folios with a barely discernible text of codex EBE 192. The present study offers a brief presentation of the palimpsest codices in the EBE collection, enriched with comments from their new examination made in the summer of 2023, except for EBE 485 and 842, which are no longer accessible due to their very bad condition. In the second part of the paper, we will dwell more on EBE 192. Unfortunately, the EBE no longer allows the use of a UV lamp for the study of palimpsests, for reasons of their protection, and therefore the new photos that accompany this paper have been taken without it.

2 Survey of the palimpsests kept at the EBE

Table 1 presents the whole corpus of palimpsests manuscripts kept at the EBE.² It also offers information regarding the dating, content, material and visual organisation of the upper and lower layers.

Table 1: Corpus of palimpsest manuscripts at the EBE.

MS EBE	Upper Layer			Lower Layer			
	Date	Content	Support and page	Date	Content	Page and script	Folios
78	14th c.	Gospel lectionary	2 cols 31/32 ll.	10th c.	John Chrysostom	2 cols 31 ll. min. ⇔	1–144
				9th c.?	Gospel lectionary	2 cols 20+ ll. ogiv. ↕	<I>, <α>
139	15th c.	Misc. theological & liturgical	mostly paper 15/26 ll.	8th–9th c.	Gospel	roll 2 cols ogiv. ↕	245–246

² This table uses the following abbreviations: c. (century), biblic. maj. (biblical majuscule script), cols (columns), ff. (folios), maj. (majuscule script), min. (minuscule script), ogiv. (ogival script), parch. (parchment), pp. (pages), sl. ogiv. (slanted ogival script). The two symbols following indicate the upper and lower script running parallelly (⇔) or vertically (↕). Notice that EBE 637 is excluded from the survey because its lower layer comes exclusively from an Armenian codex (see Gippert 2019–2020).

MS EBE	Upper Layer			Lower Layer			
	Date	Content	Support and page	Date	Content	Page and script	Folios
177	14th c.	Gospel lectionary	2 cols 28/33 ll.	8th–9th c.	Gospel lectionary	2 cols 21 ll. sl. ogiv. ⇄	All
192	14th c.	Gospel lectionary	17/23 ll.	9th c. end	Philosophical texts	29/31 ll. min. ⇄	Almost all
				6th–7th c.	Legal texts	22 ll. biblic. maj. ⇄	32 ff.
193	13th & 15th c.	Gospel lectionary	parch. (2 cols 22 ll.) & paper (16 ll.)	7th c.	Gospel	2 cols 28 ll. sl. ogiv. ⇄	pp. 427–430
223	1195	Basil of Caesarea, Ascetics	31/32 ll.	8th–9th c.	Basil of Caesarea	2 cols (ff. 230–287) 31/33 ll. sl. ogiv. ⇄	All
347	1405/1406	Thekaras, Prayers	24/25 ll.	8th–9th c.	Gospel lectionary	2 cols 22 ll. ogiv. ↗	All
452	12th & 14th c.	John Chrysostom	2 cols 29 ll.	11th c.	<i>Vitae</i> of saints of January	2 cols 30/32 ll. min. ⇄	pp. 233–348
485	13th–14th c.	Hagiographical texts	2 cols 34/47 ll.	10th–11th c.	Gospel	2 cols min. ⇄	ff. 95, 98
				?	Latin text	2–3 mss 1/2 cols ⇄ ↗	Almost all
637	14th c.	Octoechos Parakletike	2 cols 48/55 ll.	?	Armenian lectionary	2 cols ⇄	ff. 21 sqq.
842	1251/1252	Menaion of November	27/30 ll.	8th c.	Apophthegmata Patrum	2 cols sl. ogiv. ↗	Almost all
864	14th c.	Menaion of December	2 cols 31 ll.	10th c.	Basil of Caesarea, Gregory Theologian	31 c. ll. min. ↗	pp. 1–276, 325–388
				10th–11th	Pentekostarion	29 c. ll. min. ↗	
				11th c.	Triodion	26–28 c. ll. min. ↗	
874	13th–15th c.	Triodion	parch. (20–30 ll.) & paper (21 ll.)	8th–9th c.	Menaion of December, September, Triodion etc.	29/33 ll. ogiv. ⇄	All parch. ff.
				11th c.	John Damascenus	2 cols 30 ll. min. ⇄	

MS EBE	Upper Layer			Lower Layer			
	Date	Content	Support and page	Date	Content	Page and script	Folios
				10th c.	Kontakarion of January	21 ll. min. ⇄	
				11th c.	Hymns	28 ll. min. ⇄	
				8th– 9th c.	Cyril of Jerusalem	2 cols sl. ogiv. ⇄	
880	13th c.	Typikon of Laura of St Sabas	19/20 ll.	mid 10th– 11th c.	Philo Judaeus	25–29 ll. min. ⇄	All
1097	13th– 14th c.	Misc., mostly grammatical texts	mostly paper 17/20 ll.	10th– 11th c.	Basil of Caesarea, Liturgy	roll min. ⇄	ff. 100–101, 131, 140
				11th c.	Old Testament	2 cols 20+ ll. min. ⇄	
				13th c.	Acts of the Apostles	24 ll.? min. ⇄	
				13th c.	Acts of the Apostles	22–26 ll. c. ⇄ same ms with precedent?	
2048	15th c.	Synaxarion for Dec.–Jan.	26–31 ll.	12th c.	Menaion of January	30–40 ll. c. min. ⇄	All
2075	11th, 13th c.	John Chrysostom	2/1 cols 40 ll.	10th c.	<i>Basilica</i>	32 ll. min. ⇄	ff. 211–215
2106	11th, 14th c.	<i>Vitae</i> of saints of December	2 cols 30 ll.	9th c.	Gospel lectionary	2 cols 24 ll. ogiv. ⇄	ff. 31, 38–47, 54, 185/186, 217, 242–254
				6th c.	Gospel	2 cols 20 ll. biblic. maj. ⇄	
2107	12th, 14th c.	<i>Vitae</i> of saints of November	2 cols 30 ll.	11th– 12th c.	Hypomnema to the Gospels	2 cols 36 ll. c. min. ⇄	ff. 21–27, 91–98, 169–176
2112	13th, 14th c.	Gospel lectionary	2 cols 20–22 ll.	9th c.	Gospel lectionary	2 cols 21 ll. sl. ogiv. ⇄	All
				11th c.	Gerontikon (?)	2 cols 29 ll. min. ⇄	f. 156
				11th c.	Menaion of November	27 ll. <i>Perlschrift</i> ⇄	f. 149
2155	14th c.	Sticherarion	parch. & paper 40 ll.	10th c.	Photius, <i>Nomocanon</i> (?)	29+ ll. min. ⇄	ff. 218–241

MS EBE	Upper Layer			Lower Layer			
	Date	Content	Support and page	Date	Content	Page and script	Folios
2471	14th (first half?), 12th– 13th c.	Panygerikon, <i>Vitae</i> Pentekostarion (?)	paper (parch. pastedown) 2/1 cols 30–34 ll.	11th c.	John Chrysostom	2 cols 34+ ll. min. ⇄	ff. <I>, <α>
2495	13th c.	Gospels	21/22 ll.	13th c.?	Note of possession of the monastery of Lavra (Athos)	min. ⇄	f. 311 (313)
2694	13th c.	Ascetical texts	22/26 ll.	11th– 12th c.	Parakletike	24 ll. min. ⇄	ff. 50 sqq.
2795	14th c.	Three liturgies, Liturgical texts	20 ll.	8th c.	Menaion of December (?)	33 ll. c. sl. ogiv. ⇄	Various
				8th c.?	Menaion	26+ ll. sl. ogiv. ⇄	ff. 74, 87

2.1 The lowest layers of writing

Most of the lower layers in the EBE palimpsests feature a minuscule script. I identified folios from twenty-two minuscule codices, which were reused in fifteen codices of the EBE,³ as well as folios from fifteen majuscule codices that were reused in twelve volumes of the EBE.⁴ Nine EBE codices have palimpsest folios from more than one older codex (from two to five), either in minuscules only (EBE 864 and 1097), in majuscules only (EBE 2106 and 2795), or in both scripts (EBE 78, 192, 874, 2112) (Figs 1–2). We should highlight the special case of EBE 485, in which folios from one Greek and two or three Latin codices have been used. The high number of reused manuscripts written in minuscules indicates that the main reason for recycling a manuscript was not the abandonment of the majuscule script but other factors, such as the deterioration of the original codices or because the texts

³ These are EBE 78, 192, 452, 485, 864 (folios from three minuscule manuscripts), 874 (folios from three manuscripts), 880, 1097 (folios from one roll and two or three codices), 2048, 2075, 2107, 2112 (folios from two manuscripts), 2155, 2471, and 2694. In EBE 2495, the only palimpsested text seems to be a note of possession of the monastery of Megistē Lavra on Mount Athos; see below Section 2.3.

⁴ EBE 78, 139 (folios from a roll), 177, 192, 193, 223, 347, 842, 874 (folios from two majuscule manuscripts), 2106 (folios from two manuscripts), 2112, and 2795 (folios from two manuscripts).

they contained had fallen out of use or fashion.⁵ Finally, to observe the type of the oldest scripts that we found in the EBE palimpsests, we must limit ourselves to the – more recognisable – majuscule, in which ogival (in five manuscripts) and slanted ogival (in eight manuscripts) prevail, alongside two cases of biblical majuscule (Figs 3–4).

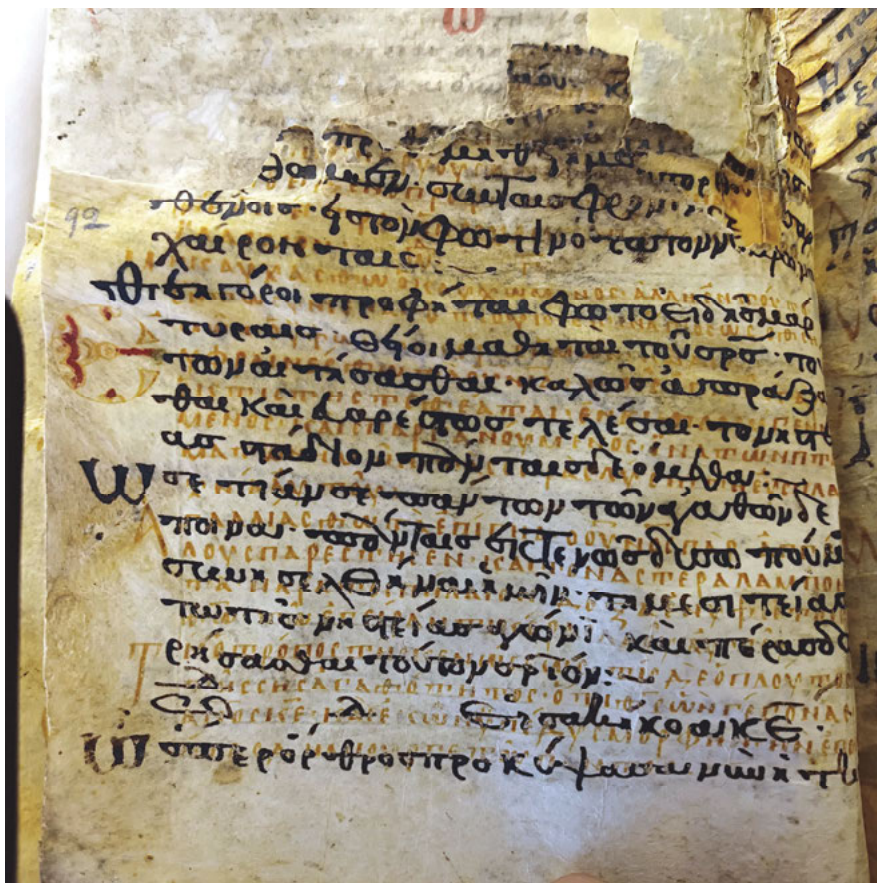


Fig. 1: EBE 874, p. 92 (majuscule script).

5 Folios from majuscule manuscripts were reused mostly in fourteenth-century EBE codices (EBE 78, 177, 192, 2106, 2112, 2795), less in thirteenth and fifteenth (EBE 139, 193, 347, 842, 874), only in two cases in twelfth (EBE 223) and eleventh century (part of EBE 2106), and never in tenth or ninth codices, when minuscules replaced majuscules in books. See also Section 2.2 below as well as Agati 2017, 70.

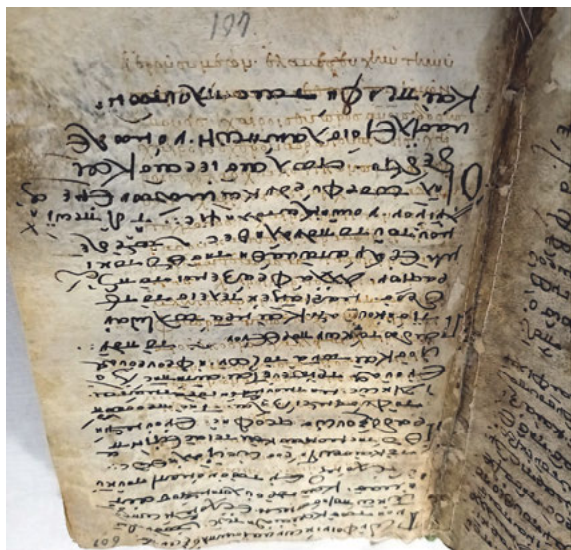


Fig. 2: EBE 874, p. 601 (minuscule script).

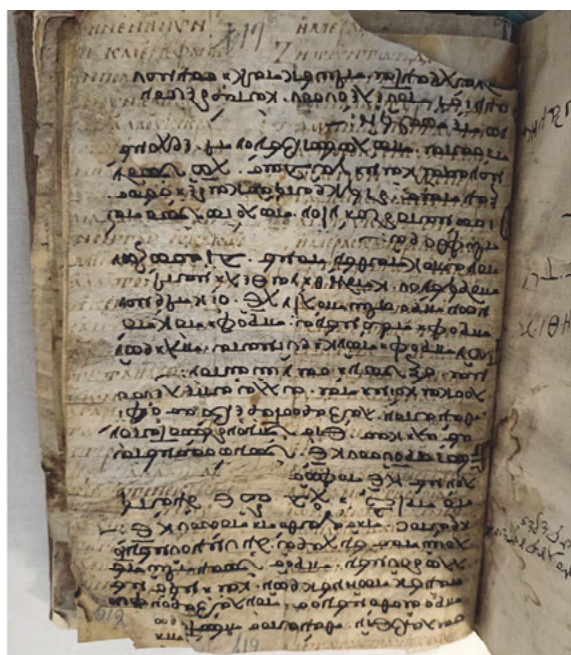


Fig. 3: EBE 874, p. 617 (slanted ogival script).

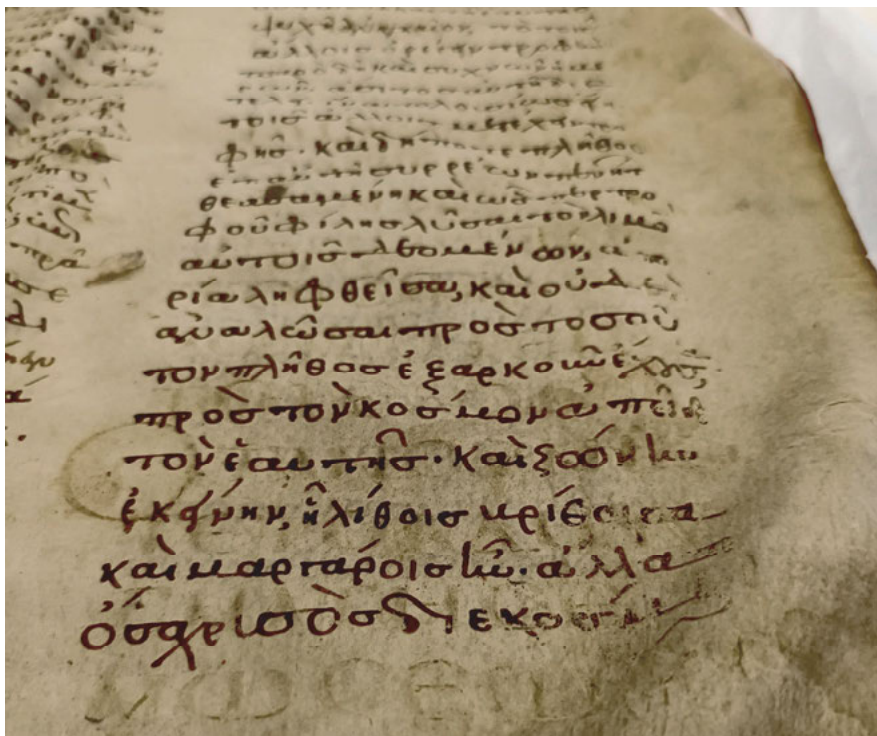


Fig. 4: EBE 2106, fol. 350^r (biblical majuscule).

2.2 The dating

Regarding the chronology of the codices, both the older reused and the newly manufactured ones, we must point out that in some cases the general dating of the new codex is not so important. Of importance is only the dating of the newer writing on its palimpsest leaves, since, at times, these were added later to fill some gaps. This is, for example, the case of EBE 193, in which the palimpsest leaves were rewritten in the fourteenth century but added to a composite produced later, as most of its folios are datable to the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. Another example is EBE 452 from the twelfth century, in which folios from an eleventh-century codex were used during the fourteenth century to fill its gap. In EBE 2471, two palimpsest folios were used as flyleaves. They were taken from a codex from the twelfth or thirteenth century, in which they had been used after their older eleventh-century text had been erased. However, in the EBE collection, we have palimpsested leaves with older writing datable to the sixth to thirteenth centuries, with most cases (twenty-two, to be precise)

datable from the tenth century and later, as opposed to sixteen cases that predate this century. Of course, we must consider a percentage of incorrect dating, since in many cases the oldest writing is barely visible. On the other hand, the reuse of the old folios took place from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, with most cases observed in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries (eleven and six to nine cases, respectively).⁶ A final observation, arising from the new examinations, possibly concerns a rare case of folios that were palimpsested twice. These are the flyleaves of EBE 78, in which we noticed that reading symbols (ekphonic notation) that are not from the latest writing layer appear even in the space between the columns of the old layer, which leads to the suspicion that these folios also carry a third, even older, layer, which however we cannot currently distinguish (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5: EBE 78, p. α (144) (*bis rescriptus*; space between the columns of the older layer).

⁶ On this issue see also n. 7 below.

2.3 The content

Most of the codices reused in the EBE manuscripts were – as expected – church books for daily service, and so subject to more wear and tear. Their contents include liturgical books (thirteen volumes), Gospel lectionaries (five volumes), consecutive Gospels (four volumes), an Old Testament, and texts of the Church Fathers (eight volumes). A few comprised ascetic and hagiographical content. Three transmitted legal collections (the *Ecloga* and *Nomos Nautikos* in EBE 192, the *Basilica* in EBE 2075, and Photius's *Nomocanon* in EBE 2155). One volume – EBE 192 – had various philosophical texts, which we will discuss in more detail in Section 3. Worthy of attention is the case of EBE 223, in which the older and the newer texts on some folios are identical (Basil of Caesarea, *Ascetic Decrees*).⁷ We observe a similarity throughout the content of the newer manuscripts in which these leaves were placed: again, the liturgical manuscripts (nine volumes) and the lectionaries or Gospels (six volumes) prevail, but there are far fewer texts by Church Fathers (three cases), more with theological and ascetic content (seven cases), and in only one case we have non-religious texts.⁸ The case of EBE 2495 is completely unique, since, according to Politis, its one and only palimpsest leaf contains nothing but the standard thirteenth-century possession note of the library of Megistē Lavra, known from many other codices and studied by Boris Fonkich.⁹

2.4 The reuse of palimpsest leaves

In the EBE collection, we find eleven entirely or almost entirely palimpsested codices,¹⁰ while some or at least a few palimpsest leaves are found in twelve further codices. The case of the paper triodion EBE 874 is interesting; it was produced when the main scribe-compiler likely collected exclusively palimpsest parchment leaves from other triodia of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, joined them together, and filled in the many gaps in the text by writing solely on paper folios.

7 This is also the case of the Latin manuscript Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, 280 (469), which contains orations of Cicero in both layers; Reitzentein 1925, 299. According to Perria 2011, 201, such cases are rather common, although she does not mention any particular example. However, it is always important to distinguish if the text on every layer is of the same variation.

8 EBE 1097 with mainly grammar content.

9 Politis 1991, 497; Fonkich 1967.

10 Entirely or almost entirely palimpsest are EBE 78, 177, 192, 223, 347, 485, 842, 864, 880, 2048, 2112.

EBE 2155 has mixed quires, that is, it is in paper except for the outer bifolio, which is in parchment and in several cases palimpsested.¹¹

It is relevant to analyse the way in which the old folios have been arranged in the new manuscripts. The following scenarios are possible: (1) placement of open bifolios to form one folio, as in the flyleaves of EBE 78; (2) single folios that rendered just one new folio, for example in EBE 2112, fol. 156; (3) folding of folios to form bifolios, for example in EBE 347 (Fig. 6); and (4) folding of pieces from a scroll to form bifolios (EBE 139 and 1097).

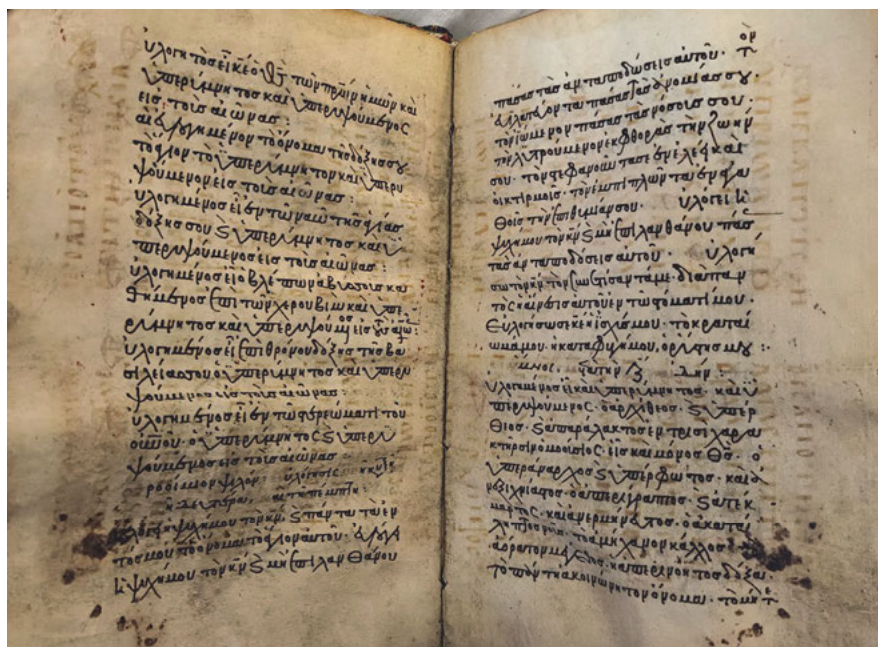


Fig. 6: EBE 347, fols 35^v + 36^r (folding of folios to form bifolios).

Unique is the case of EBE 864, as most of its bifolios were formed by affixing two pieces of parchment from older codices whose text runs parallel to the newer one, usually in a ratio of two-thirds plus one-third ($\frac{2}{3} + \frac{1}{3}$) of the surface of the bifolio (Fig. 7). Finally, in some manuscripts, such as EBE 2155, the much larger original bifolio had to be trimmed to fit the smaller dimensions of the new volume. This oper-

¹¹ Politis 1991, 181.

ation caused the loss of portions of the older content (Fig. 8). In turn, in EBE 2112, we see the opposite phenomenon: one of its palimpsest folios derives from a volume of smaller dimensions and falls short, both in height and width, compared to the rest of the new codex.

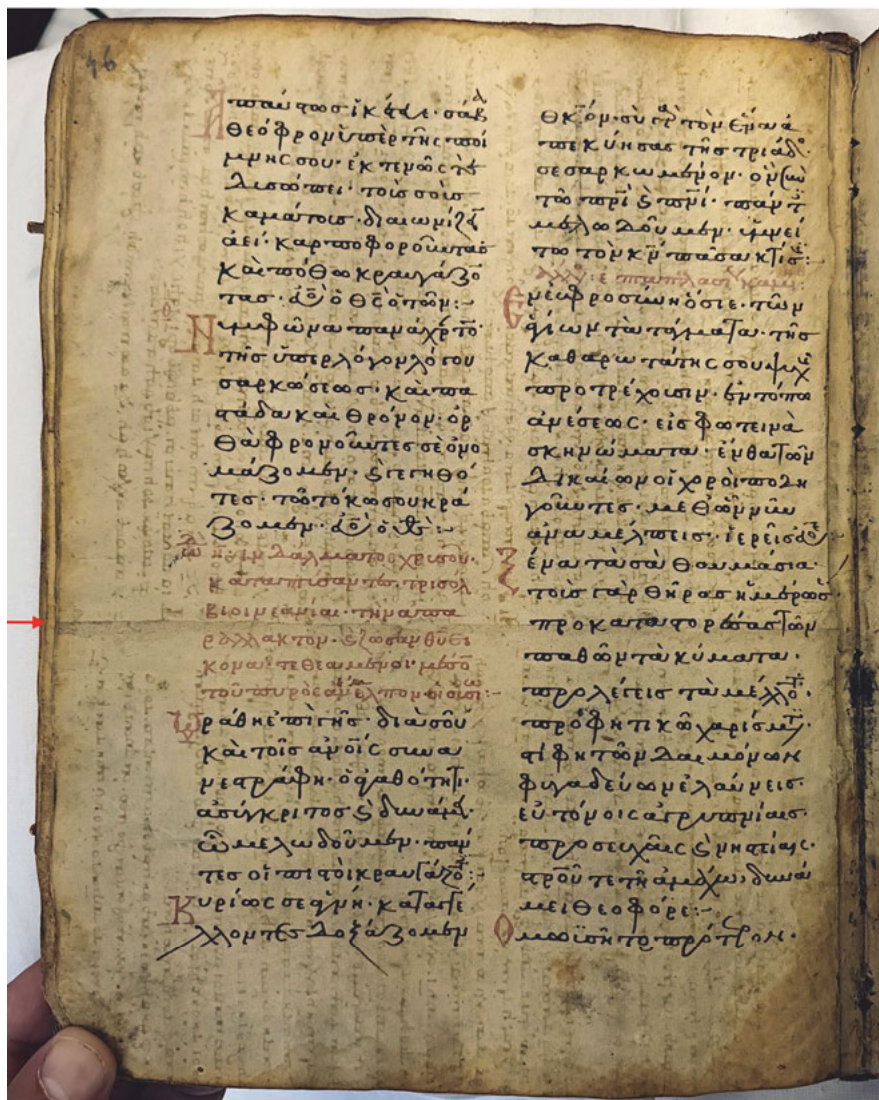


Fig. 7: EBE 864, p. 46 (affixed pieces of used parchment to form bifolios).

Depending on the way in which folios were reused, the older writing appears either parallel (in thirty cases) or perpendicular (in eleven cases) to the newer one.¹² We observe a tendency in favour of the parallel sequence of the two scripts. Reusing the old folios in this way could facilitate the construction of the new codex, since the ruling of the older folios could be used for the new ones.

3 EBE 192

We will henceforth focus on EBE 192, the codex that has perhaps garnered the greatest interest because of the contents in its lower layers. This is a small-format codex – 168 × 125 mm – of 240 folios (plus a nineteenth-century paper pastedown at the beginning), numbered as pages 1–480.¹³ It is entirely palimpsested and consists of bifolios or simple folios from two older volumes, with the newer text written always parallel to the older one and in one column (full page, similar to the older texts) of 17–23 lines. The newest layer is datable to the fourteenth century, on a palaeographic basis.¹⁴ It renders a Gospel lectionary, which starts abruptly, as an unknown number of folios are missing (apparently the entire first quire).¹⁵

The oldest of the two palimpsested codices, which provided thirty-two folios in EBE 192, can be dated to the eighth century on the basis of its majuscule script, and contained legal texts, among which today we can distinguish the *Ecloga* and the *Nomos Nautikos*.¹⁶ The more recent one, which yielded all the remaining folios reused in EBE 192, is datable, also on the basis of the script, to the end of the ninth century, and contained various philosophical texts.

¹² See Agati 2017, 70–71.

¹³ For a codicological description of this manuscript, see Melissakis 2003–2004, 172–177.

¹⁴ Although it is difficult to date with precision, on the basis of the mostly traditional – but rather inexperienced – script of the manuscript, I consider the thirteenth century less likely.

¹⁵ The first remaining quire (pp. 1–16) is preserved intact, while from the fragmentary surviving numbering of the volume's quires, marked by the hand of the scribe of the Gospel lectionary, we conclude that there is indeed one quire missing at the beginning of the volume. Likewise absent is a paper ternion before p. 1, of which only traces are now discernible – obviously a later addition, which may not have contained any writing at all but merely served as flyleaves.

¹⁶ In 2004, when the exact content of this part of the EBE 192 was not yet identified, I presented a paper on it with the title 'Il codice 192 della Biblioteca Nazionale di Atene e il testo giuridico nascosto in esso' at a workshop in the framework of the project Rinascimento Virtuale ('Quod in palimpsesto, laudo equidem parsimoniam: A Workshop on Legal and Other Palimpsests', Groningen, 11–12 July 2004). In this (unpublished) paper I stated that the lower script of these folios (pp. 387–392, 395–416, 419–420, 429–430, 433–464) is a biblical majuscule of the Syrian-Antiochean type, on which see Cavallo 1967, 98–104.

3.1 The history of the codex

In EBE 192, we find notes written by the scribes of the latest layer of the writing and by the ninth-century scribe, respectively; unfortunately they are just vows and do not offer relevant information about the provenance or early biography of the manuscripts or their producers (Fig. 9).¹⁷ In contrast, much later notes help us to fathom some stages in the later history of the volume. An Arabic note (Fig. 10) indicates that the codex once belonged to the monastery of Megalē Panagia in Jerusalem. The presence of the codex in the Near East is confirmed by the Arabic translation of the titles of many of the Gospel passages, which a later hand added next to the corresponding Greek titles.¹⁸ As testified by another note, the codex belonged in 1863 to the Hagio-taphite archimandrite and exarch of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Athens, Kyrillos Athanasiadis. According to one of his own publications in 1890, Athanasiadis bought today's EBE 192 together with another 'Arabo-Syrian' manuscript in Damascus. In 1868, Athanasiadis donated EBE 192 to the library of the University of Athens, which was then united with the National Library of Greece.

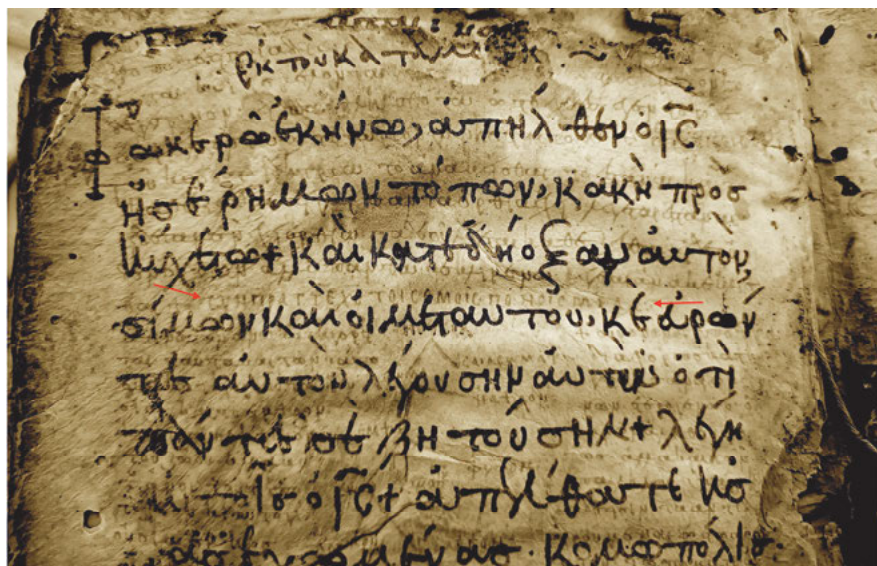


Fig. 9: EBE 192, p. 474 (older layer; note prayer of the scribe).

17 EBE 192, p. 473 (latest layer): + σωθ(ῆ) ο γράψ(ας) ημέ(ρας) / τεσσαρισκαίδεκα +; p. 474 (older layer in capital letters): + ΣΥΝΠΑΤΤΕ Χ(ΡΙΣΤ)Ε ΤΟΙΣ ΕΜΟΙΣ ΠΟΝΟΙΣ ΜΙΑΣ :: (= πονήμασι?).

18 See Melissakis 2003–2004, 176, n. 25.



Fig. 10: EBE 192, p. 170 (Arabic note of possession).

3.2 Previous research on EBE 192

EBE 192 was first known to researchers in 1876 from the catalogue of George Kremos, who mentions that he showed the codex to Victor Gardthausen, who studied it for a few days. A few years later, Heinrich Wilhelm Reich included it in his work on the palimpsests of the EBE. Ten more years later, Ioannis Sakkelion included it in his comprehensive catalogue of EBE's manuscripts, and in 1909, Caspar René Gregory also mentioned it in his *Textkritik des Neuen Testamentes*.¹⁹ One of the above scholars seems to have used – in accordance with the practice of the time – a chemical substance to make the older layer of writing more distinct.²⁰ Traces of this intervention are visible today on some pages of the codex (e.g. pp. 178–179) (Fig. 11).

¹⁹ Kremos 1876, 92; Reich 1882, 97–100; Ioannis Sakkelion and Alkiviadis I. Sakkelion 1892, 36; Gregory 1909, 424.

²⁰ For such practices, see Emanuel Zingg's contribution to the present volume.

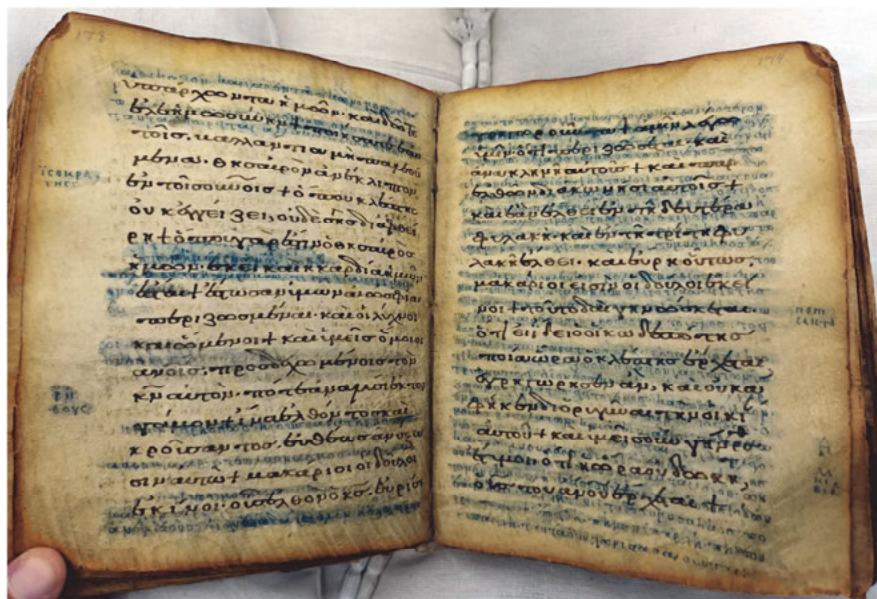


Fig. 11: EBE 192, pp. 178–179 (traces of use of chemical substance).

3.3 The Aristotelian content

In this section of my paper, I focus on some relevant features of the content, script, and visual organisation of the ninth-century codex which provided most of the palimpsest folios reused in EBE 192. Dieter Harlfinger has been studying this part of the manuscript since 2004.²¹

A comprehensive list of the works transmitted in the palimpsested folios of the ninth-century manuscript is still a desideratum. Most of its text remains illegible because it has been either covered by the newer text or completely erased and cannot be recovered through multispectral imaging. Based on passages read on various folios, the contents are roughly as follows:

- (approx. pp. 1–82) Joannes Damascenus, *Dialectica sive capita philosophica (recensio brevior)* (CPG 8041)
- (p. 111?) Unidentified text; the title distinguished is Ἀγὼν Ἀμφίωνος Ὀρφῆως καὶ Ἀππίωνος, probably a school exercise

²¹ Harlfinger referred to EBE 192 during the closing conference of the Sinai Palimpsests Project, ‘New Light on Old Manuscripts: Recent Advances in Palimpsest Studies’, 25–27 April 2018.

- (approx. pp. 127–215) Ammonius, *In Porphyrii isagogen sive quinque voces* and *In Aristotelis categorias commentarius*
- (approx. pp. 169 sqq.) Unidentified texts as scholia in Aristotle; titles distinguished are, among others, *Περὶ γραμματικῆς* [...] *Ὁρισμὸς περὶ τῆς μουσικῆς* [...] *Περὶ ὅλου* [...] *Περὶ τοῦ ἔχειν* [...] *Περὶ ἐρμηνείας* [...] *Περὶ ῥήματος* [...] *Περὶ ἀντικειμένων* [...] *Περὶ προτέρου* [...] *Περὶ κινήσεως ἥτοι περὶ μεταβολῆς*
- (approx. pp. 345 sqq.) Photius, *Amphilochia*
- (approx. pp. 421 sqq.) Hierocles, *In aureum Pythagoreorum carmen commentarius*.

Although in our palimpsest we have identified enough areas where the writing is clearly discernible to provide a satisfactory sample of it, unfortunately the same is not true for the text in these areas, since only fragments can be read and not large sections, which would allow us to follow its flow and, thus, its organisation.²²

3.3.1 The script types

The minuscule script of the lower script in most of the palimpsest folios in EBE 192 fits well into the rigid general writing trend of the ninth century. However, since its shape seems looser than examples from the first half or even the middle of that century, it is possible to date it to the end of the century (Fig. 12). Although the script develops more in width and rounded letter forms predominate, the ascenders and descenders of many letters (*η*, *κ*, *λ*, *μ*, *ν*, *χ*) extend well into the interlinear space, emphasising their height as well. We could therefore characterise this script as sitting between the angular and rounded trends of that period (the evolution of the older *antico oblungo* style and the *Nicola* or *minuscola antica rotunda-studita*).²³ In fact, even the hooks at the tip of a few letters (such as *ι* and *τ*) are curved, while in the horizontal strokes of *τ* and *π* a rounded tip sometimes appears, vaguely reminiscent of the *Keulensstil* of this period, but also of the later *bouletée*, or rather the *prebouletées*, of the same period.²⁴ As regards the height-width proportion and the angular letterforms, a tendency towards the squared script of the second half of the ninth century is discernible, but clearly we are far from the artificial image of these. A final

²² On these fragments, see Melissakis 2003–2004, 173–175.

²³ On these scripts, see Perria 2011, 69–78.

²⁴ Perria 2011, 83, 91–92. On *Keulensstil*, see Hunger 1977, 203.

element that leads us to a dating before the beginning of the tenth century is the lack of uncial forms, except perhaps for the letter θ and rarely for the letter λ .

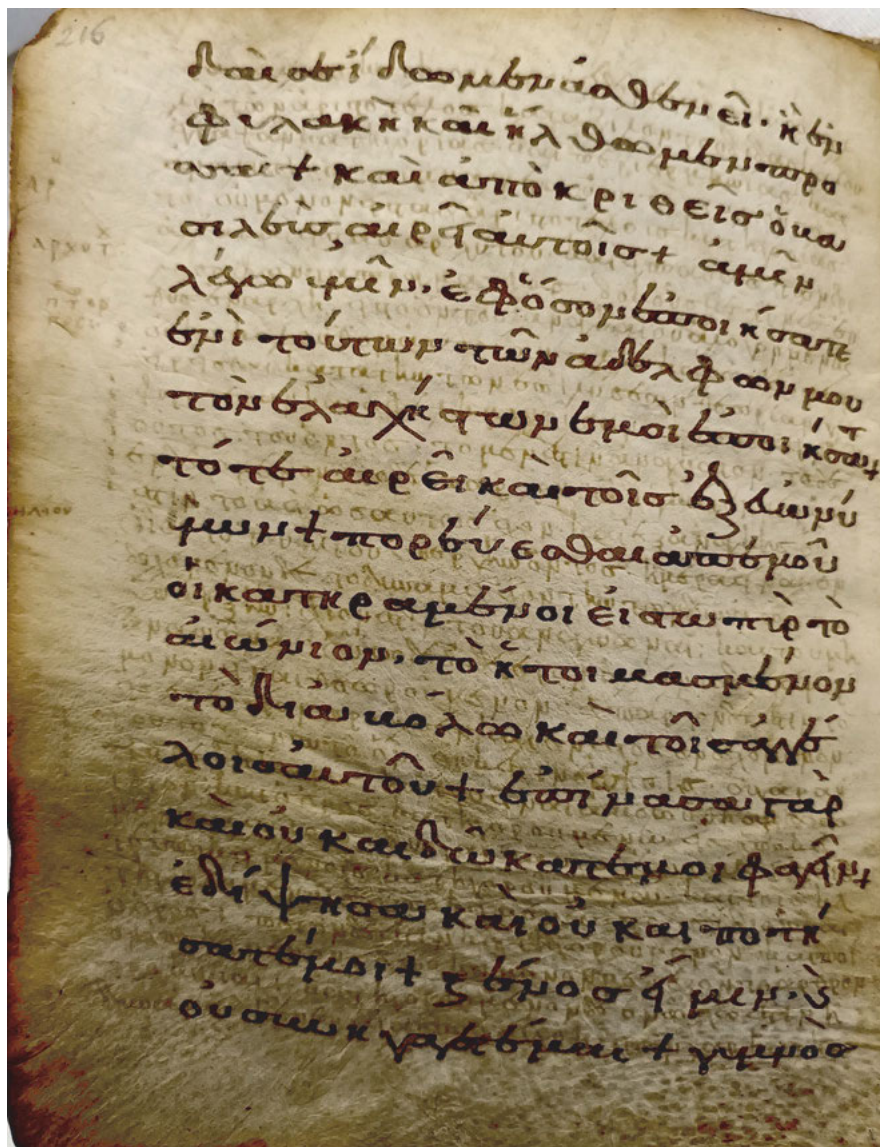


Fig. 12: EBE 192, p. 216 (minuscule of the end of the ninth century).

We therefore have a pure minuscule script in which the phenomenon of the reintroduction of majuscule characters that characterises the first decades of the tenth century does not yet appear.²⁵ At the time our manuscript was written, several specific styles or types of writing have been identified as being in use, such as the *tipo Anastasio*, the highly artificial square style, and of course the very particular writing of the so-called *collezione filosofica*, which is in fact only a subset of the *Keulenstil*. Our script does not seem to belong to any of these types, coming from high-level scribes, perhaps even professional ones; but, in combining general characteristics from various contemporary trends, it probably derives from a hand that is experienced, and the result is calligraphic – as well as orthographically correct – but the manuscript was nevertheless intended as a book for study or perhaps for teaching, as Dieter Harlfinger suggests. There are very few abbreviations, and likewise merged letters, which strictly follow a limited repertoire, imposed by the lack of readers' familiarity during this first period with the use of the minuscule in books.

3.3.2 The layout and paracontent

The layout of the ninth-century codex follows the 'humble' appearance of the script in which its contents were written. The text is written in one column (full page), sometimes even with wavy lines and an unjustified right-hand edge. The number of lines mostly varies between 29 and 31. As is usually the case in Byzantine manuscripts of Aristotle's works with marginal commentaries, the text block is placed in the centre of the folio, with margins of approximately equal width on the four sides, ranging from 15 to 20 mm, although it is likely that all the folios had part of the margins cut off. In the case of the codex reused in EBE 192, it seems that a large margin (*marge exégétique élargie*, as Michel Cacouros names it),²⁶ reserved for commentaries, was not needed, as it did not contain any Aristotelian treatise but rather presented works by other authors introducing Aristotelian philosophy. Nevertheless, on several folios we find such interpretative or merely auxiliary material, which can be classified as follows:

1. Commentary in the margins contemporary with the main text, possibly also by the hand of its scribe, but in a majuscule script placed between the biblical

²⁵ On this phenomenon, see Perria 2011, 88–89.

²⁶ Cacouros 2020, 314.

and the upright ogival, with the alterations that these two show in the last phases of their decline (Fig. 13). The use of majuscule script in the commentary of a text in minuscule was common in both the ninth and tenth centuries. In our manuscript such a commentary is found on a few pages (e.g. p. 373), but sometimes it covers almost the entire extent of one or more of the margins. It is most likely that the manuscript's scribe did not plan to include any marginal commentary when he wrote the core text. This is strongly suggested by the layout of the commentaries: they are crammed into the margins in a rather sloppy manner. The ninth-century ruling in the folios supports the hypothesis that the addition of marginal commentaries was not planned during the first production process. Whenever visible (e.g. pp. 341 and 382), the oldest ruling in the folios presents lines only for the main text and no lines for comments in the margins.

2. Short auxiliary indications in the margins (mostly titles and *ethica*), usually an epigrammatic indication of the subject dealt with in the core text. Often these are introduced with the preposition ΠΕΡΙ ... (e.g. pp. 162, 189, 120). We also find standard abbreviations such as OP(ΟΣ) (for ὁπος ('definition'); e.g. p. 174). In other instances, the name of an author mentioned in the core text is noted (pp. 114 and 126) (Figs 14–15). These indications were written, probably by the scribe of the manuscript, in the same capital letters as the marginal commentaries and were intended to facilitate the study of the core text and to help readers navigate through it.
3. *Schémas* or figurative illustrations placed within the core text or in the margins of the folios. These were written by the scribe of the core text (e.g. pp. 103 and 385). All three main types, according to Cacouros's classification, are used: *schémas diérétiques*, *diérèses*, *arbres* (pp. 340, 474), *rectangles* (p. 385), and very occasionally *diagrammes syllogistiques* (p. 327) (Figs 16–17).²⁷ The texts that are part of the *schémas* are written in a majuscule script, but one of larger dimensions compared to the one employed for the other two types of auxiliary material.
4. *Scholia in margine* by a later hand, in cursive script probably from the tenth or eleventh century. These occur only seldom (pp. 177, 191, 192) and are rather short in length.

²⁷ Cacouros 2020, 320–323.

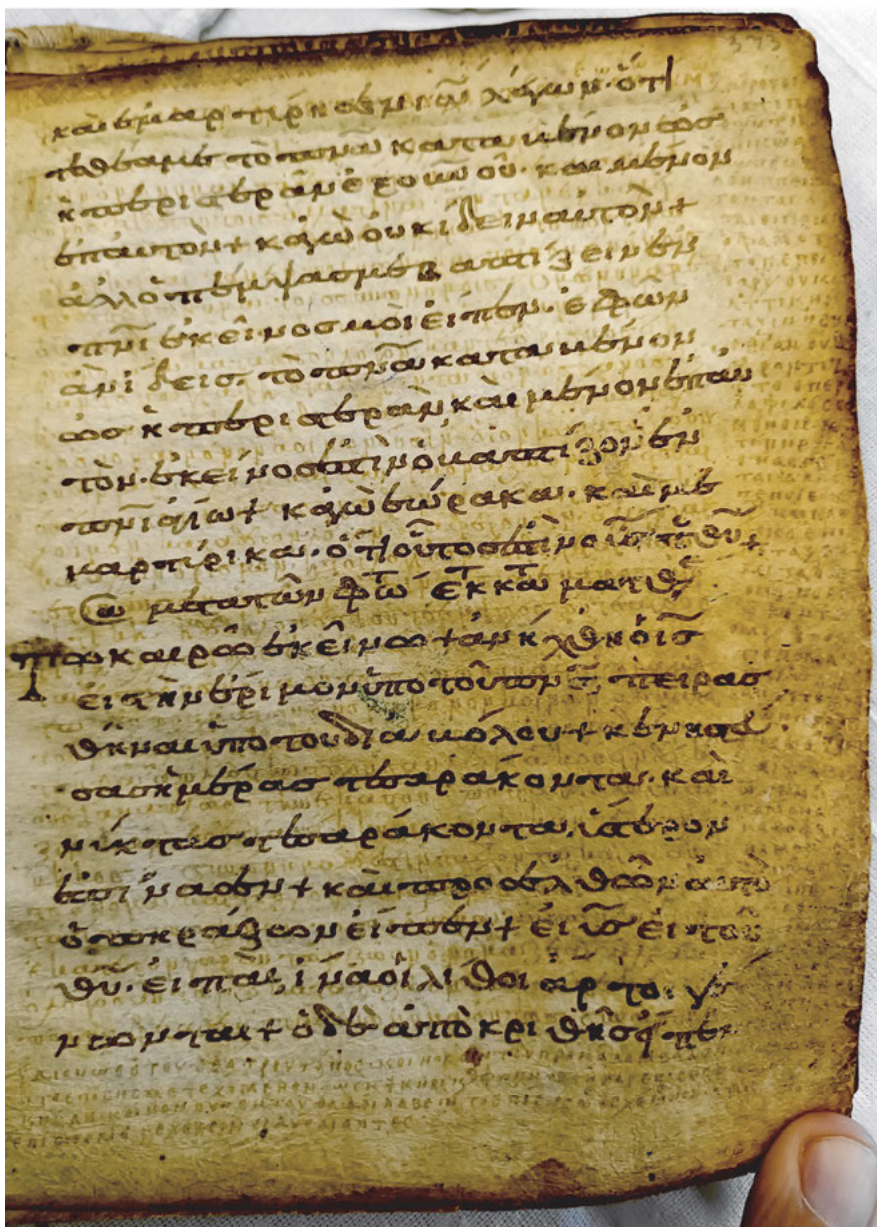


Fig. 13: EBE 192, p. 373 (commentary in the margins in majuscule script).

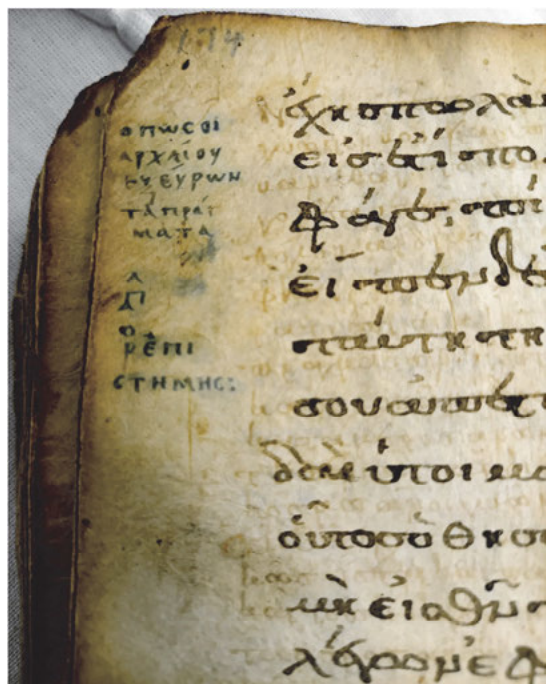


Fig. 14: EBE 192, p. 174 (auxiliary indications in the margin).

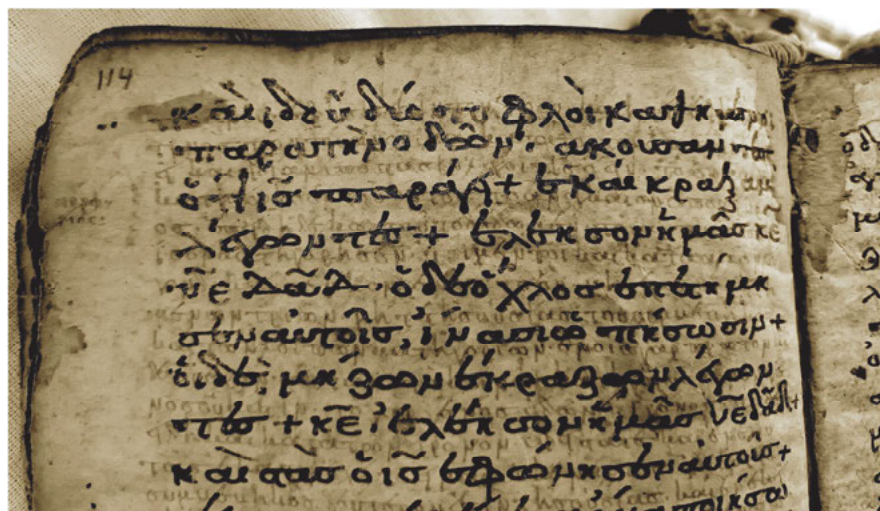


Fig. 15: EBE 192, p. 114 (name of the author Πορφύριος in the margin).

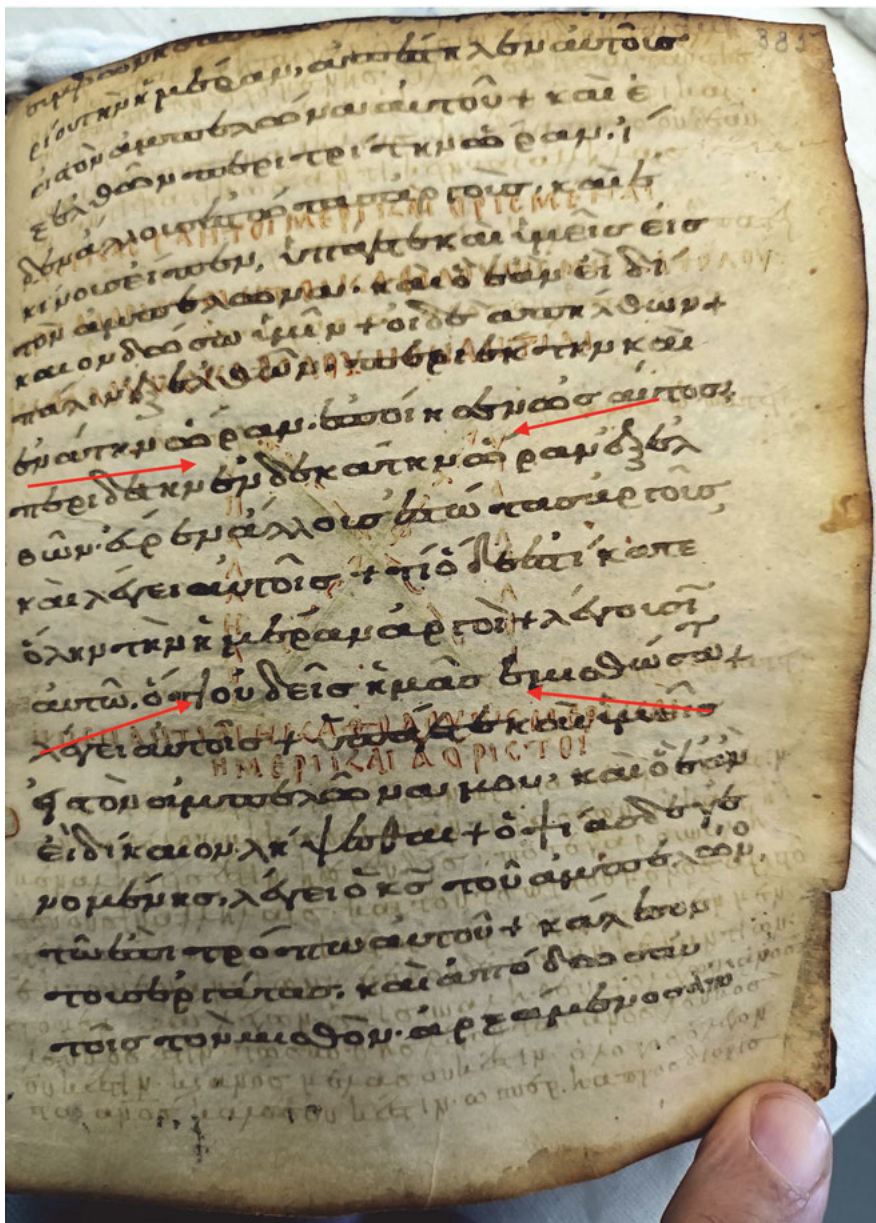


Fig. 16: EBE 192, p. 385 (*schéma*, rectangle).

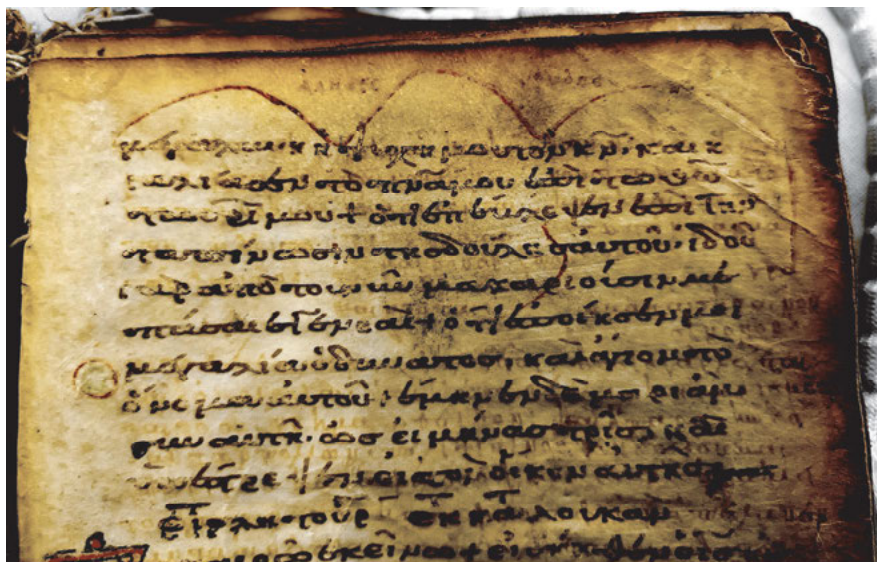


Fig. 17: EBE 192, p. 327 (*diagramme syllogistique*).

Further paratextual elements that the scribe used to better structure the content are

- a. Initial letters, written mainly outside the text block (e.g. pp. 188, 274, 288, 328) (Fig. 18).
- b. Titles of sections and subsections, in separate lines or even within a text line, written in the same ogival script of the scholia and comprehension *schémas*, usually accompanied by simple decorative elements, such as frames (e.g. pp. 151, 35, 34, 127, 471, 373) and over-title bands (pp. 111, 151, 31). The use of very simple decorative elements – stripes or bands formed by the repetition of small simple decorative strokes – is found in manuscripts from the given period, after the extremely simple, almost non-existent, decoration of the early decades of the use of minuscules. In contrast, the over-title bands, although quite crude in their design, are considerably more complex and may have been added later to the manuscript (Fig. 19). The red lettering of both the over-titles and all the initial letters, as well as the titles (e.g. p. 385), could also be later additions. However, this is not certain and it cannot be ruled out that the rubrication occurred within the first production process of the manuscript in the late ninth century.
- c. Alongside the above-described decorative elements, certain simple ornaments at the end of what appear to be discrete sections of works (pp. 351 and 385). These small lines consist of a cross or two dots at the beginning and repetitive simple wavy strokes that follow.

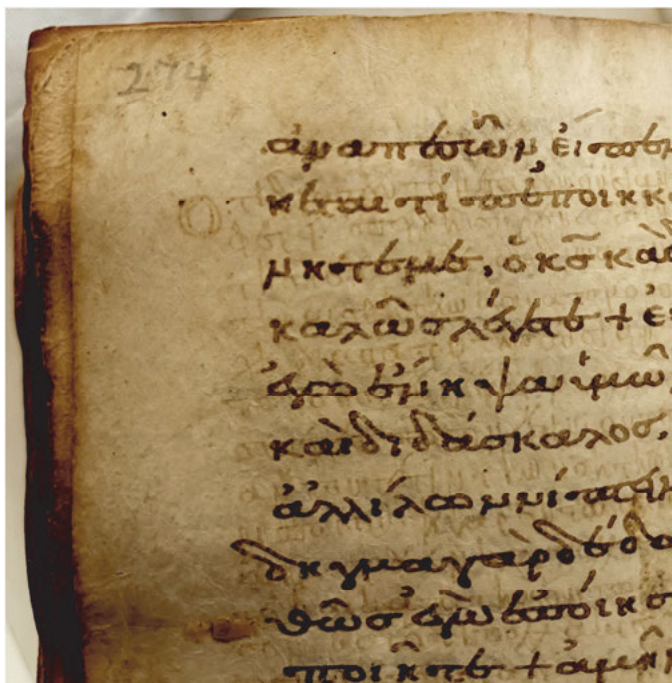


Fig. 18: EBE 192, p. 274 (initial letter).

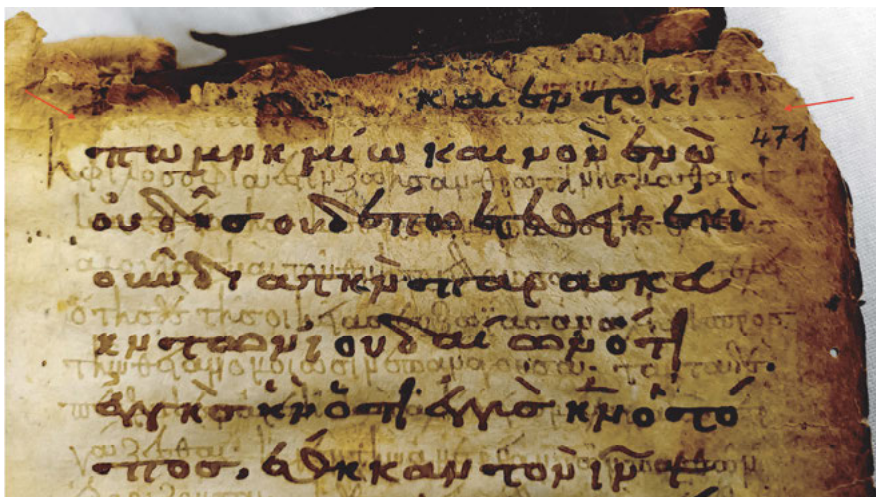


Fig. 19: EBE 192, p. 471 (band formed by small decorative strokes).

Finally, to better visualise the structure of the contents, the scribe used, where the text allowed it, chapter and subsection numbering (pp. 35, 214, 341), and, at least in the *Dialectic* of John Damascene, a table of contents is included (p. 35).

3.4 A few provisional remarks on the legal section in EBE 192

Information about the thirty-two folios in EBE 192 that contain legal text (seemingly *Ecloga* and *Nomos Nautikos*) was first pointed out by Gregory, although he limited his reference to stating that they were palimpsest leaves of non-theological content, written by another hand.²⁸ In recent years, further data on these folios was gained. On these folios – in reality, all bifolios – the oldest writing is biblical majuscule (Fig. 20). I had initially assumed that it dates to the fifth or sixth century, since, in the few places where it can be distinguished, we can observe all the characteristics of the decline of this type of script that begins during this period. Now, thanks to the identification of the content on the folios, that dating must be revised. The *Ecloga* was written most probably in 741 CE,²⁹ which is the *terminus post quem* for the oldest palimpsested codex in EBE 192. The text on the folios is written in 22 lines per page, and, similar to the rest of the palimpsest folios in the volume, it runs parallel to the newer one. Although the upper margin of these folios has been cut off – sometimes together with lines of the old text – to arrange the folios to the dimensions of the new codex, we estimate that the dimensions of the older one would not have been much larger. From the text today we can read a few excerpts (p. 407: δεσποτεία τούτων ἐκ τοῦ τοιούτου [...] μέλλον τοῦ ἐμφυτευθέντος; p. 410: ἐὰν ὁ δανεισάμενος γράμματα γινώσκων καὶ δυνατὸς ἔχων ἐν τῇ τοῦ χρέους [...]),³⁰ while in the left margin we can see its numbering (nos α–ν). However, with the help of the multispectral photos, we anticipate the possibility to reconstruct the original image of these folios. Surprisingly, the text is characterised by bad spellings, which, combined with the recent history of the entire codex, should perhaps point us to an origin in the region of Syria-Palestine, where the Greek language would have been in a state of initial decline.³¹ Furthermore, since the folios with philosophical content were probably used for educational purposes (a kind of workbook or teaching aid, with no particular claims to calligraphy or aesthetics), it is possible that the ones with the legal texts derive from some school in the East.

²⁸ Gregory 1909, 424.

²⁹ Troianos 2011, 160 and n. 39.

³⁰ *Ecloga*, ed. Burgmann 1983, 12.3 (ll. 598–600) and 14.9 (ll. 670–671).

³¹ Potentially this could explain some orthographical mistakes and lingual peculiarities we have noticed in the text (p. 174: [...] οἱ ἀρχαίου [...]; and p. 474: [...] σύνπραττε [...]), which probably indicate that the manuscript was written in an area where the Greek language was not dominant.

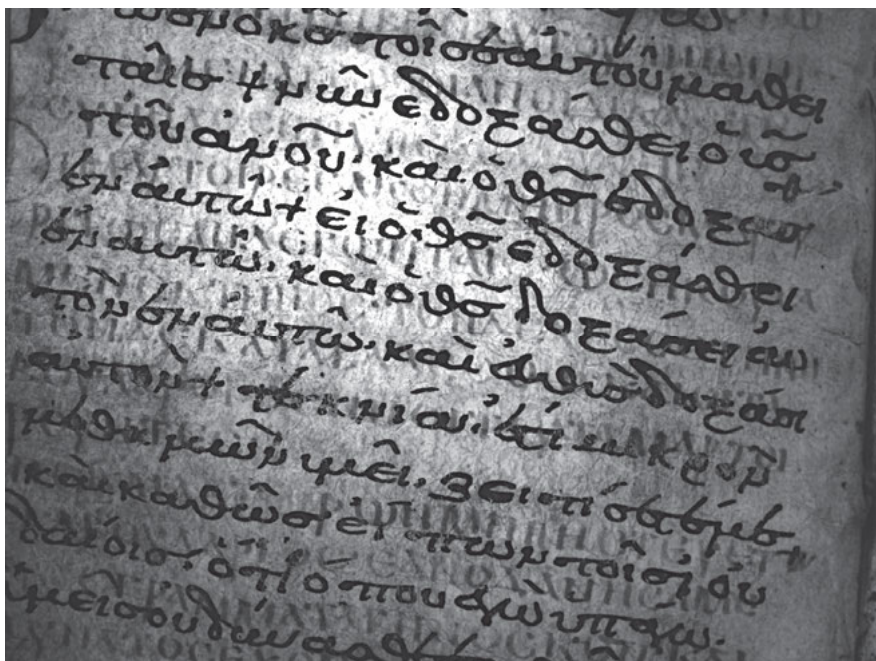


Fig. 20: EBE 192, p. 410 (oldest layer in majuscule biblical script).

Abbreviation

CPG = Maurits Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, vols 1–5 (Corpus Christianorum), Turnhout: Brepols, 1974–1987.

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