

UTS MS 069

A Codicological Review

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Introducing the Manuscript

UTS MS 069

Located currently at the Burke Library, Union Theological Seminary in New York, NY, MS 069 is believed to have originated at the Iveron monastery in Mount Athos, Greece. On January 15, 1942, Union Theological Seminary (henceforth referred to as UTS) purchased this manuscript from Vassilios Iatropoulos of Denver, Colorado, and New York City. As cited in Kavrus-Hoffmann, Nadezhda. *Manuscripta* Vol. 51.1, 2007. pp. 111-123, this document is believed have been originally purchased by Iatropoulos within Moscow, however this is largely uncertain. This manuscript is dated approximately to the Medieval 14th Century. Later to become Constantinople (modern Istanbul), this text is understood to have been composed in Byzantium. Colonized in 657 BCE, the city of underwent urban renewal of the cityscape around 330 CE under rule of emperor Constantine I, thus receiving its new name Constantinople. At some point this text found its way from Constantinople to the Iveron monastery in Greece. Established some time in between 980-983, the monastery became an influential site for the Greek Eastern Orthodox tradition. This monastery prides itself on its large library of more than 2,000 manuscripts, 15 liturgical scrolls, and 20,000 books in Gregorian, Greek, Hebrew, and Latin as well as its extensive collection of religious relics.

The manuscript is a bound collection of texts, written in Greek, with few Greek annotations likely written by a scribe or later reader. The texts included are as follows: (1) Preface to the Gospels, (2) Preface to the Lectionary of the Gospels, (3) The Gospel of Matthew, (4) The Chapter Titles to the Gospel of Mark, (5) Preface to the Gospel of Mark, (6) The Gospel of Mark, (7) The Gospel of Luke, (8) Chapter Titles to The Gospel of John, and (9) The Gospel

of John. The scribe to these texts is Hieromonk Gennadios of the Hodegon Monastery and the script used is Vertical calligraphic minuscule. The ornamental decorations within the heading to each section of texts is believed to have been done by Gennadios (though this is largely uncertain).

What follows is a in depth review of the manuscript. It will be examined in two parts: exterior and interior. It will also be examined marginally for an competent understanding of its contents. Finally, it will be reflected upon in hopes to better situate it theologically and historically. Pictures will be available for clarity (some pictures were impossible to obtain due to UTS paper covers. An attempt to remove these would severely threaten the quality of the manuscript).

Exterior

The front and rear covers are made from reddish-brown leather on wooden board. The front cover contains five icons. The centered icon is that of the crucified Christ. The other four icons in all corners of the front leather cover are indiscernible due to significant wear of the leather. These icons are painted on in fine gold leaf. Aside from the wear to the cover there is one more significant slash in the leather from the top right corner of the cover to the center (this slash strikes directly through the icon in the top right corner). Surrounding these icons are floral designs also done in fine gold leaf. The rear cover was impossible to observe due to UTS blank white paper covering it—removal was impossible without possibly damaging the manuscript. The edges of the paper are golden with floral designs impressed into the edges. Attached to the rear cover were two leather straps with gold metal locks that interlocked with hinges on the front cover. As stated above, the entire front and rear contain a blank white dust jacket for added

protection. Inside this dust jacket there is emplaced a UTS logo with cited “MS69” written in pencil. Overall, the exterior, aside from wear of the front cover icons, is in family good condition.

Interior

The first two initial pages are blank. The paper is blank white paper, though worn significantly and discolored. Henceforth, each page is enumerated in pencil at the top corners of every page. Pages 3 and 4 are introductory pages to the documents. In between these two pages is a thin piece of white paper states “Vassilios Iatropoulos, January 15, 1942. Each set of texts contains an ornamental design and ornamental first letter of the document (see example images below). Many of the texts contain scribal notations encircled. Below is one that contains the notation $\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha\varsigma$. Chapter titles are indicated with a faded orange capitalized Greek letter that matches the text’s title (see images 6 and 8 for examples). Occasionally scribal notes will be written in red ink. This may be due to the annotations being added at a later period of time and very well may point to another [unknown] scribe (though this is speculative); (see image 9). At the end of each text section, there a portion of the page contains an ornamental design (see image 10). There are, at times, imperfections in the paper overlaying or interrupting the text. For instance, on page 78, there is a single drop of wax, likely from a candle, overlaying the text (see image 11). Page 121 contains the most complex and beautiful ornamental design for the text’s header. It is done in black and gold with flur de lis on each corner and a cross at the center. (see image 12). This text is the book of Luke; perhaps the emphasis on design indicates scribal or artist preference of the text. Page 259, as the ending to the gospel of John, contains a large stain and juxtaposed to this is a authorial note; though this page is not numbered.

Textual Contents

Page 1, Preface to the Gospels.

Only spanning one page and written in Greek, the *incipit* is Ἰστέον ὅτι τέσσαρά ἐστιν τὰ εὐαγγέλια and *explicit* is τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐμφανίζει.

Page 2, Preface to the Lectionary of the Gospels

Also only spanning one page and written in Greek, the title of this page contains Δήλωσις διαλαμβάνουσα τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τῶν εὐαγγελίων ἀνάγνωσιν καὶ τὴν τῶν...; here the *incipit* is Ἰστέον ὅτι ἀναγινώσκεται τὸ ὕφος τοῦ κ(α)τ(ὰ) Ἰω(άννην) εὐα(γγελίου) ἐν ἑβδομα̃σ(ιν) (sic) ὄλαις ἑπτὰ; *explicit* is ἐν τοῖς σαββάτοις καὶ κυριακαῖς.

Pages 3-73, Gospel of Matthew

Here begins the Gospel of Matthew written in Greek, the *incipit* βιβλος contains an ornamental β in gold. The header is red and gold design. *Explicit* is illegible.

Pages 73-74, Chapter Titles for the Gospel of Mark

Here the first twenty titles for the book of Mark are missing. The *incipit* for this section is Περὶ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἄρτων; *explicit* is Περὶ τῆς αἰτήσεως τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Κ(υρίου)υ.

Page 74, Preface to the Gospel of Mark

Aside from the general preface to the gospels on page 1, Mark is the only gospel to have its own special preface. The reason for this is uncertain, but it may either indicate that the other prefaces are missing or, that this denotes specialization to the gospel of Mark. The *incipit* Ἰστέον ὅτι τὸ κατὰ Μ(ά)ρ(κον) ἄγ(ιον) εὐα(γγέ)λ(ιον) ὑπηγορεύθη ὑπὸ Πέτρου and *explicit* εἰκόνα τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. The actual gospel begins on page 75-120. Immediately following the gospel of mark is the Gospel of Luke. There are no sections of preface or notations before it.

Page 199, The Chapter Titles to the Gospel of John

The title to this section contains Τοῦ κατὰ Ἰω(άννην) ἀγίου εὐα(γγελίου)τὰ κεφάλαια.

The *incipit* states Περί τοῦ ἐν Κανὰ γάμου; the *explicit*, *Περὶ τῆς αἰτήσεως τοῦ Κυριακοῦ σώματος*.

Pages 200-259, The Gospel of John

This section is not nearly complete as it contains a lacuna from pages 255 and 256.

Ending the Gospel of John as well as the book as a whole, there contains a colophon on page 258.

Reflective Notes

MS 069 is quite an internist piece. Being conceived among the byzantine tradition of early Christianity, this text speculatively reflects some crucial theological points. Firstly, the priority of artistry given to the Gospel of Luke is surprising. Why does the artist feel the need to add additional design to Luke and no others? Perhaps this is due to the Gospel of Luke being so heavily weighted towards a Gentile audience and a text that gives much credence to Jesus' miracles. Perhaps such emphasis within the text of Luke reflects the monastic traditions of Byzantium. If Luke could be considered to have speciality by the artist of the text, then the Gospel of Mark ought to be speculated to have special priority for the scribe. This is because the Gospel of Mark in the manuscript is the only gospel to have its own preface. Many guesses could be made as to why the scribe would consider this gospel as more important for a preface. One of which guesses could possibly be that Markan priority in textual transmission sets the narrative for the rest of the gospels. Though this could be problematic since Mark is not the first of the Gospels within this book. Overall, this manuscript is fascinating and intriguing. Further research

must be implemented in order to properly translate this text so as to better understand its historical and theological setting.

Images

(numbered from left to right)



