

87. Mingana Greek 3 (Codex Wordsworth)

Contents: New Testament (complete, except for the Apocalypse).

Late 14th-early-15th century.

Folios: 233 fols., vellum.

Quiring: Quinions.

Binding: Fine tooled binding (plate 26), arguably of the late 14th-early-15th century. The binding is of red-brown leather stretched over wooden boards, linked with woven coloured threads to the

spine of the manuscript. The binding is the same back and front. The central rectangular field is ruled with diagonals and stamped with small concentric circles with medallions with Palaeologan eagles, and oval-shaped stamps with floral designs. The outer border has pairs of stamped concentric circles between floral motifs within oval shapes. A notable feature of the binding is the ridge top and bottom, at the spine end, indicating that late Byzantine manuscripts were held or slotted into a frame to be displayed and read. Holes down the outer and inner sides and at each of the four corners of the front indicate that fixtures, including clasps, have been removed. The Palaeologan eagle in medallions is found, albeit in double-headed form, on a silk binding of a book containing the writings of the emperor Manuel II (1391-1425) which once belonged to Bessarion and which is now in the library of the abbey at Grottaferrata (MS. gr. 161).³⁵ But this feature, and the binding as a

³⁵ H. Buchthal, 'A Greek New Testament Manuscript in the Escorial Library: Its Miniatures and Its Binding,' I. Hutter (ed.), *Byzanz und der Westen: Studien zur Kunst des Europäischen Mittelalters* (Wien, 1984), 96, fig. 17; J. Durand et. al., *Byzance: L'art*

whole, more closely resembles two bindings in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, dated by I. Hutter to the 14th(?) and 14th-15th centuries respectively.³⁶ One, the cover of Laud gr. 90, has the eagles in medallions and the concentric circular punches, as well as a stamped floral border and the ridge at top and bottom. The other (Auct. T. inf. 2.7) is stamped with the eagles and a floral border.

Provenance: Of the manuscript's earlier history it is known that it was at the Meteora monastery in the collection of the monk Gerasimos. It is stamped 'Bibliotheca Suchtelen'. Suchtelen was sometime Russian ambassador in Stockholm. In 1837 the manuscript was bought by the Rev. Christopher Wordsworth (Canon of Westminster and later Bishop of Lincoln) who died in 1885 leaving it to his son John Wordsworth, Bishop of Salisbury (died 1911). John Wordsworth also possessed MS M. Chr. Arab. 61, no. 81 above.

Illustration: Fol. 3r: Matthew headpiece; rectangular, in red interlace with gold heading. Red capital letter, formerly gilded. Fol. 41r: Mark headpiece, rectangular, with circular interlocking scrolls in red. Gilded initial letter. Fol. 66r: Luke headpiece, rectangular, with interlace/leaf design in red. Gold title with gilded initial letter. Fol. 105v: John headpiece, rectangular, with interlace/leaf design. Heading partially gilded; initial letter gilded. Fol. 143r: headpiece to Acts, rectangular, with foliage scrolls. Title of text in red and initial letter in red.

Bibliography: a detailed description of the text is given by F.H. Scrivener, *A Full and Exact Collation of about Twenty Greek Manuscripts of the Holy Gospels in the British Museum, the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth etc* (Cambridge, 1853), xliv-xlviii, no. 1, where a late-14th, as opposed to the previously generally believed early-13th, century date was suggested for the text. Other references are: Scrivener, *Criticism of the New Testament*, 223, ev. 542; Gregory, *Textkritik*, I. 193-4, ev. 479.1 scr. and 249, a 193; Von Soden, *Schriften*, I (1), 110, d359.

byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises, exhibition catalogue, Musée du Louvre 3 novembre 1992-1 février 1993 (Paris, 1992), 469-70, no. 361, and the drawing of a typical Palaeologan binding, 467.

³⁶ Hutter, *Oxford, Bodleian Library*, 99, fig. 381 (Laud. gr. 90), 14th(?) century; 72, fig. 187 (Auct. T. inf. 2.7), 14th-15th centuries. Hutter also illustrates the binding of MS Oxford Bodl. Barocci 31 (*Id.*, 97) with fig. 366, which has double-headed eagles and which she dates to c. 1300.