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NOTE AND DOCUMENT

A Note on the Codex Angus and its Use

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The Codex Angus (Add. MS 40 in the University of Sydney Library's Rare Books and Special Collections) is a Byzantine Gospel lectionary meant for liturgical use. The findings presented here corroborate this catalogue description. There is ample evidence of its heavy use, which indicates a public not a private setting. After a brief description of the manuscript, particularities of its content and appearance are discussed, all of which point to a small rural community, in Northern Greece, as its original owner and user. Together with introducing the codex, this article casts light on the Christian community that might have used it.

This brief article undertakes to alert the academic community to the existence and digital availability of a largely unknown Byzantine lectionary and to establish, contrary to the hypothesis put forward a few years ago, that it was destined for public, not private, use. In the process, as a result of direct examination of the manuscript in the last two years, for the first time ever this article describes aspects of the lectionary's content, identifying the scriptural loci of certain pericopes and their liturgical use. It also indicates the exact structure and length of its sections. In so doing, the article corrects misrepresentations of the lectionary's content in the two relevant studies published so far, by Albrecht Gerber and Jean-Marie Olivier, in the journal of the Australian Institute of Archaeology, *Buried*

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History (2017, 2019); these works are engaged throughout. After introducing the manuscript's current location and library description, the article summarises the discussion of Gerber and Olivier in regard to its provenance, and then tackles what the two researchers reported on its content and possible use. The article ends with a tentative sketch of the community that might have used this lectionary.

The object catalogued as 'Additional Manuscript' (or *Add. MS*) 40 in the University of Sydney Library's Rare Books and Special Collections is a very little-studied item. Technically, this is a Byzantine liturgical manuscript, a Gospel lectionary, written on parchment leaves, recto and verso, in two columns and in minuscule script. It is commonly known as the Codex Angus, where 'codex' obviously refers to its book format – typical for scriptural manuscripts from the dawn of Christian literary culture[1] – while 'Angus' denotes the name of its onetime owner, Samuel Angus (1881–1943).[2] The manuscript was deposited in the library in 1936, immediately after its acquisition from Adolf Deissmann, Angus' Berliner mentor.[3] The catalogue description indicates Constantinople as its probable place of manufacture, which, given its poor workmanship, numerous mistakes and overall appearance (*see* Figure 1),[4] is doubtful. (This is not to say, however, that the Codex Angus did not belong to the liturgical sphere of Constantinople. Daniel Galadza's comparative study of lectionaries from Constantinople and Jerusalem brings to light similarities and differences that help in locating the manuscript

[1] See Ralph W. Mathisen, 'Paleography and codicology', in Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David C. Hunter (eds), *The Oxford handbook of early Christian studies*, Oxford 2008, 141–65, esp. p. 145; Margaret M. Mitchell, 'The emergence of the written record', in Margaret M. Mitchell and Frances M. Young (eds), *The Cambridge history of Christianity*, I: *Origins to Constantine*, Cambridge 2006, 177–94, esp. p. 192; and Frances M. Young, *Biblical exegesis and the formation of Christian culture*, Cambridge 1997, 12–15.

[2] For the career of Samuel Angus and the provenance of this manuscript see Albrecht Gerber, 'An unexplored 11th century Gospel lectionary in Sydney', *Buried History* iii (2017), 11–18.

[3] Cf. Angus' letter to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sydney, Sir Robert Strachan Wallace, of 3 November 1939, quoted ibid. 14. See also Jean-Marie Olivier, 'Concerning the origin of the *Codex Angus*', *Buried History* lv (2019), 27–30, esp. p. 27.

[4] By poor workmanship I mean, first, the quality of the parchment, and second, the manuscript's minimalist decoration, careless writing, which many times exceeds the margins of the two columns, as well as the lack of grammatical prowess and calligraphic skills of at least a couple of scribes involved in its production. By mistakes I mean misattribution of readings (see, for example, at fo. 35v, the reading for Saturday of the thirteenth week after Pentecost, from Matthew, but attributed to Mark, or at fo. 100v the passage for 18 October, from Luke, attributed to Matthew) and, the worst case, the replacement of a reading for the third Paschal week by a fragment read on Holy Thursday, before Easter, at fo. 9r. In terms of appearance, it is worth pointing out the low quality of the parchment, with many instances of unskilled preparation being obvious (see, for example, the very obvious skin pores of fos 20r, 38r, 63r, 83r etc.).

Figure 1. Codex Angus, fos 31v, 29r: examples of the poor quality of materials and workmanship.

under consideration in the Constantinopolitan tradition.[5]) The same description refers furthermore to the 'Greek Church in Bulgaria' as place of provenance. Various dates of production have been put forward, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, with the latter date being ascribed by Basilis Katsaros's list of parchment manuscripts that belonged to Kosinitsa Monastery before its library was robbed during the First World War.[6] Steps towards carbon dating the parchment leaves are currently underway.[7] The manuscript was digitised

[5] See Daniel Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem*, Oxford 2018, 306–12.

[6] The library catalogue indicates 'between 1000 and 1199'. Available at <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/17789>. For the possibility of a later, thirteen-century, production see Olivier, 'Origin', 27. Basilis Katsaros gives as date of production the fourteenth-century, if item 58 of his catalogue of manuscripts, an Εὐαγγελιστάριον (liturgical Gospel lectionary), is the object under consideration. Katsaros's item does match the description of the Codex Angus (namely, 122 fos, marked as from Kosinitsa Monastery, with no known present location): *Τά χειρόγραφα τῶν μονῶν Τιμίου Προδρόμου Σερρῶν καί Παναγίας Ἀχειροποιήτου τοῦ Παγγαίου (Κοσίνιτσας)*, Serres 1995, 283. Katsaros's third table (at pp. 281–9) catalogues 170 parchment manuscripts of Kosinitsa Monastery. Olivier engaged critically with Katsaros's work (see 'Origin', 28, 29, 30 n. 8), but without mentioning the catalogue of parchment manuscripts that he compiled.

[7] Project AP17460: C–14 dating of a parchment Byzantine Gospel lectionary, at Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO), 2024. At the time of this article's submission, the analysis was still underway.

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in 2017, before the restoration of its binding in 2021, with funds from the Selby Old Foundation.

Except for catalogue entries, until recently the codex was largely forgotten. Only Gerber and Olivier have so far discussed it at any length. Neither of them examined the manuscript's content thoroughly, however, instead focusing upon its possible provenance and the historical vagaries of its journey from Greece to Bulgaria to Germany to Australia.[8] It is noteworthy that, while Gerber was of the view that from Constantinople the manuscript reached Bulgaria 'many centuries ago', where it was supposedly kept in monasteries and museums,[9] Olivier prudently concluded that it belonged to Kosinitsa Monastery, in Northern Greece, which Bulgarian raiders ransacked in 1917.[10] Thus, the codex reached Bulgaria at the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, not earlier. Assuming the conclusion of Olivier to be correct, and if item 58 in Katsaros's list is what currently is known as the Codex Angus, the catalogue of the University of Sydney Library should record Kosinitsa Monastery as its place of provenance, not the 'Greek Church of Bulgaria'. That said, except for Olivier's correction about the Bulgarian leg of the journey, Gerber's account remains a credible source for the modern transition of the lectionary through various time zones, from Bulgaria to Germany to Australia.

More relevant, here, are the points made by Olivier and Gerber on the content of this manuscript. Olivier's article has precious little to say in this regard and the information it supplies is not entirely free of error. According to him, this codex would be a New Testament lectionary that contains 'readings for the days of the week between Easter and Pentecost and Saturdays/Sundays of the other weeks'.[11] In reality, it is a Gospel lectionary that comprises 220 unnumbered passages, so counted by this

[8] Gerber, 'A Gospel lectionary', 13–15; Olivier, 'Origin', 27–8.

[9] Gerber, 'A Gospel lectionary', 13.

[10] Olivier, 'Origin', 29. His conclusions correspond to the lapidary reference to what seems to be the Codex Angus in Katsaros, *Manuscripts*, 283, even though Olivier disagrees with Katsaros in regard to how many manuscripts were stolen from Kosinitsa (see Olivier, 'Origin', 28). The authoritative source of information for Kosinitsa Monastery is Apostolos Glavinas, *Το μοναστήρι της Εικοσιφοίνισσας: Ιστορία, Έγγραφα, Βιβλιογραφία*, Thessaloniki 1994. This source was unknown to both Gerber and Olivier.

[11] Olivier, 'Origin', 27. For the usual structure of Gospel lectionaries see John Lowden, *The Jaharis Gospel lectionary: the story of a Byzantine book*, New York–New Haven–London 2009, 16. This structure corresponds to earlier, fourth- and fifth-century liturgical patterns. See Bryan D. Spinks, 'The growth of liturgy and the church year', in Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris (eds), *The Cambridge history of Christianity*, II: *Constantine to* c. *600*, Cambridge 2007, 601–17, esp. pp. 613–16. For an older study of the history of lectionaries' structure see Elena Velkovska, 'Lo studio dei lezionari bizantini', *Ecclesia orans* xiii (1996), 253–71, esp. pp. 258–64.

writer. It does not include other New Testament pericopes and has most of the usual pericopes for the Easter to Pentecost season, including for weekends, as well as weekdays.[12] Olivier is correct when he points out that the codex has the weekend readings for the rest of year, namely, the other two liturgical seasons of the Byzantine rite, that is, the weeks after Pentecost and the Lenten section, the latter together with Holy Week.[13] Nevertheless, for Holy Week it prescribes readings for each day. But the manuscript includes two more categories of passages, which Olivier does not mention, that is, for the festivals and the saints of the twelve months from September to August (the *menologion* section, in technical parlance),[14] as well as the eleven Gospel readings for Sunday matins.[15]

In turn, Gerber's article includes a longer description of the manuscript,[16] which in parts requires correction too. This description refers to the codex's wooden cover, measurements, scribal competence and the overall appearance of the parchment leaves, especially its lack of illuminations. Indeed, the only elaborated adornment is the floral depiction in red ink that serves as a header for the first folio (*see* Figure 2).[17] The artistic quality of this ornament does not impress, however. Several of Gerber's assertions are problematic, and in what follows I dispute one of them in particular. Before that, another two of his points are worth addressing, for the purpose of forming a more accurate idea of the codex.

Following the pencilled page numbers, undoubtedly added by a modern hand, Gerber gives the total as 122 parchment leaves. But this count is not

[12] As this writer discovered, this section ranges from fo. 1r to fo. 25r. For the whole range of Gospel passages usually prescribed for this liturgical season, see fos 1–41 in the eleventh-century Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC, MS 1, BZ.1939.12 ('Gospel lectionary with marginal illuminations'), available at <https://www.doaks.org/resources/manuscripts-in-the-byzantine-collection/gospel-lectionary-with-marginal-illuminations>, accessed 10 June 2023.

[13] As this writer discovered, the weeks after Pentecost occupy fos 25r to 52v; Lent and Holy Week run from fo. 52v to fo. 96v. This structure corresponds to Dumbarton Oaks, MS 1, BZ.1939.12, fos 45–87.

[14] The composite word *menologion* can be rendered as 'the course of the (year's) months'. In the Codex Angus this section runs from fo. 96v to fo. 118v. Dumbarton Oaks, MS 1, BZ.1939.12 has this as the last section of the lectionary at fos 141–9. For an exhaustive study of the main parts of Byzantine lectionaries and their development see Mary-Lyon Dolezal, 'The middle Byzantine lectionary: textual and pictorial expression of liturgical ritual', unpubl. PhD diss. Chicago 1991, 74–134.

[15] This section occupies fos 118v–122r; Dumbarton Oaks, MS 1, BZ.1939.12 includes this section before the *menologion* at fos 136–40.

[16] Gerber, 'A Gospel lectionary', 15–17.

[17] An echo of this initial pattern is then found, on a much smaller scale, at fo. 57v. In turn, a number of leaves have simpler strings of long squiggles in black ink and shorter ones in red ink, consistent in appearance, marking the passage from a section to another or, in the *menologion*, from one month to the next one: see fos 56r, 101v, 102r, 106r, 109v, 111r, 112v, 113v, 116r, 117r, 118v and 122r.

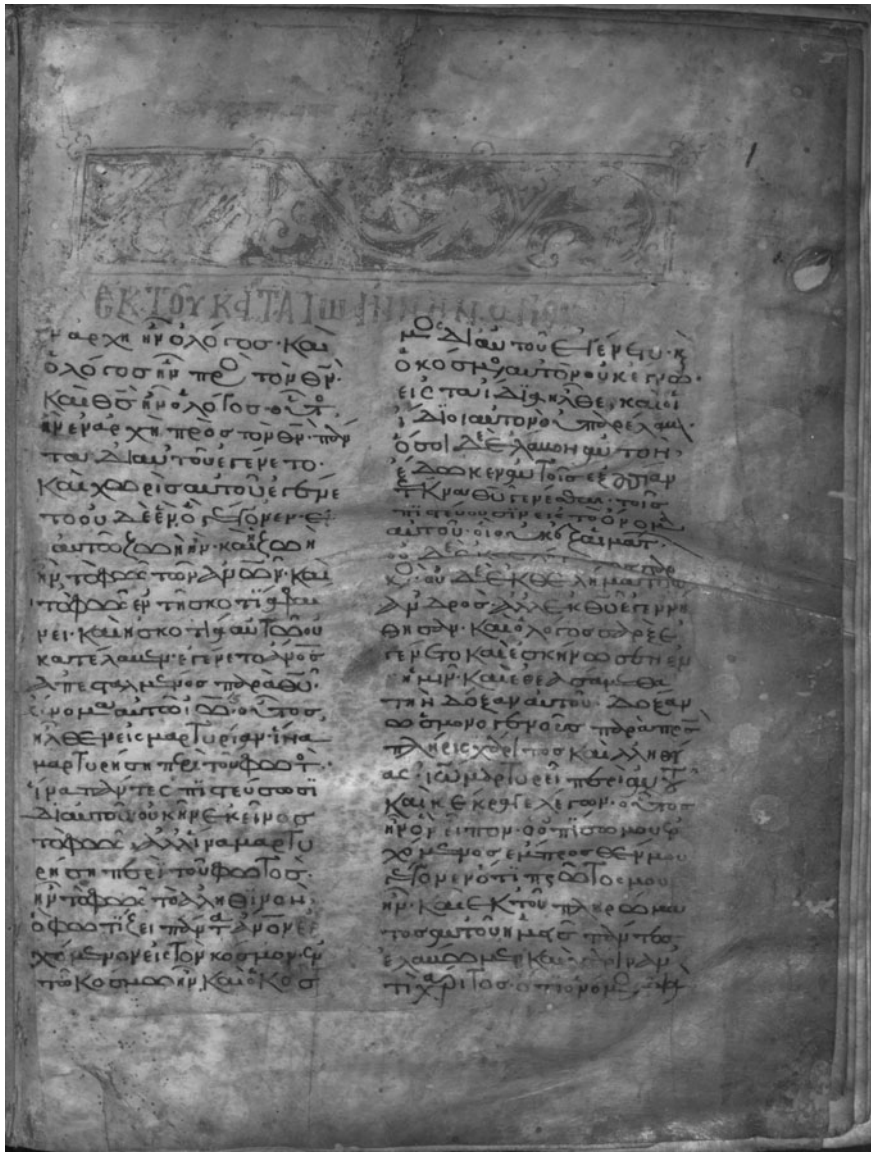

Figure 2. Codex Angus, fo. 1: the most elaborate illustration in the entire manuscript.

accurate, as one folio is missing and Gerber did not realise this. By all accounts, it was already missing when the codex was digitised, in 2017, the year when his own article was published, and its absence went again unnoticed. Thus, the digital version does not include the fifteenth folio;

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nor does the original, unfortunately. This leaf must have been lost at some point between 1936 – when the manuscript reached the library and when, presumably, the leaves were numbered in pencil – and digitisation. The missing text is obvious in that the last pericope on fo. 14v is incomplete (John viii.51–9; Tuesday of the fifth week after Easter), whereas the first reading on fo. 16 represents the end of another pericope (John x.9; Thursday of the fifth week after Easter). What matters, for the record, is that the Codex Angus has now only 121 parchment leaves. The other matter of interest is Gerber's point that, after the Easter to Pentecost section, the lectionary contains readings 'for each week (Sunday) of the year'.[18] In fact passages are prescribed for Saturdays too, hence the reference to the section dedicated to the weeks after Pentecost as σαββατοκυριακόν (Saturdays and Sundays),[19] with Holy Week having prescribed daily readings.[20]

More relevant here is another of Gerber's assertions, namely, that the codex was destined for private use within a monastic setting. He mentions private use twice, monasticism being referred to in the second instance. Gerber's first statement is not very explicit. In his words, 'this lectionary was clearly not intended for display'.[21] Poor quality of materials and the unaesthetic appearance are taken to signify the codex's deliberate production for anything but liturgical use. One wonders how warranted this conclusion can be. If, as will be seen, the manuscript belonged to a small community of modest means that needed it for simple worship, not cathedral pomp, poor quality and appearance cannot signify a private destination and use. But the context leaves no doubt about Gerber's assumption that, because of its appearance, the codex could not have been meant 'for display'. It is this assumption that led him to the conclusion that it was not designed for public worship.

This conclusion becomes obvious several paragraphs later, when Gerber returns to this point and adds the following: 'The original purpose of this lectionary was primarily for personal, that is to say, devotional use, as a kind of "work copy" for cenobitic monks or even consecrated anchorites.'[22] That he means private use is clear, given the known practice of monastic meditation on sacred texts. The spiritual discipline of monastic meditation on scriptural passages is abundantly attested.[23] Nevertheless, Gerber does

[18] Gerber, 'A Gospel lectionary', 16.

[19] See fo. 25r, right column, rubric in red ink. This structure indicates that the Codex Angus belongs to the 'abridged' form of lectionary. For the various types of lectionaries see Elisabeth Yota, 'The lectionary', in Vasiliki Tsamakda (ed.), *A companion to Byzantine illustrated manuscripts*, Leiden–Boston 2017, 287–99, esp. p. 288.

[20] See fos 62v (Palm Sunday) to 96v (Holy Saturday).

[21] Gerber, 'A Gospel lectionary', 16.

[22] Ibid. 17.

[23] For the specifics of monastic scriptural meditation in the early medieval tradition see Douglas Burton-Christie, *The word in the desert: Scripture and the quest for holiness in early*

not supply evidence for either the supposed monastic setting where this lectionary would have been used or the reasons that demanded the private use of a lectionary, whether by 'consecrated anchorites' or others. Olivier's discovery that the codex was stolen from a Greek monastery[24] lends support to the idea of monastic use, but Gerber could not have been aware of this information when he published his article. Even so, what Olivier's findings indicate is the presence of this manuscript at Kosinitsa Monastery for an unspecified time, not that it was manufactured there[25] and destined for private use.

The hypothesis that a lectionary could have been destined for any other purpose than public worship finds no support among scholars. As a medieval invention,[26] lectionaries, Jeffrey Anderson tells us, were specifically designed for public use.[27] A plethora of scholars, of various generations, agree with this assessment.[28] Roland Betancourt, likewise, emphasises that for the Byzantines reading the Scriptures was foremost a public, liturgical act, his conclusion drawing upon the study of numerous lectionaries.[29] After examining a great many manuscripts, one of Gerber's sources, Christopher Jordan, arrived at the same conclusion. In his words, 'It seems that Gospel lectionaries are liturgical codices designed

Christian monasticism, New York–Oxford 1993, 117–29; John Wortley, 'How the desert Fathers "meditated"', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* xlvi (2006), 315–28. The same patterns of 'meditation' (including loud recitation of passages, repeated, reflective and prayerful) were later adapted to the public sphere, as attested by the eighth-century *Great canon*. See Doru Costache, 'Andrew of Crete's *Great canon*, Byzantine hermeneutics and Genesis 1–3', in Andrew Mellas and Sarah Gador-Whyte (eds), *Hymns, homilies and hermeneutics in Byzantium*, Leiden–Boston 2020, 67–85, esp. pp. 69–72.

[24] Olivier, 'Origin', 29.

[25] As Georgi Parpulov shows, not all Byzantine scribes were monastics: 'The Bibles of the Christian East', in Richard Marsden and E. Ann Matter (eds), *The new Cambridge history of the Bible*, II: *From 600 to 1450*, Cambridge 2012, 313.

[26] Jeffrey C. Anderson, *The New York cruciform lectionary*, University Park, PA 1992, 3–4; Lowden, *The Jaharis Gospel lectionary*, 15.

[27] Anderson, *Cruciform lectionary*, 2, 4.

[28] Without focusing upon the destination of lectionaries for public worship, the seminal study of Dolezal does not leave room for the possibility of private use: 'The middle Byzantine lectionary', 1–2, 3–4. The same goes for Velkovska, 'Lo studio', 253, 270. More clearly, Yota ('The lectionary', 287, 289–90) shows that there is no other reason for using lectionaries outside the liturgy. The same goes for Marcello Garzaniti, 'The Gospel book and its liturgical function in the Byzantine-Slavic tradition', and Gerard Rouwhorst, 'The liturgical reading of the Bible in early Eastern Christianity: the protohistory of the Byzantine lectionary', in Klaas Spronk, Gerard Rouwhorst and Stefan Royé (eds), *Catalogue of Byzantine manuscripts in their liturgical context: challenges and perspectives*, Turnhout 2013, 35–54, esp. pp. 35–6, 155–72, esp. pp. 157–68. Rouwhorst points out that the 'codex' format of lectionaries had an explicit liturgical function: 'Liturgical reading', 155–6.

[29] Roland Betancourt, *Performing the Gospels in Byzantium: sight, sound and space in the divine liturgy*, Cambridge 2021, 13, 174–5.

for public recitation rather than private reading. Any Gospel reading by monks outside of the liturgical services probably involved [full] Gospel manuscripts, the non-liturgical Gospels.'[30] Gerber did not follow Jordan's analysis up to this conclusion. But let us consider Gerber's argument more closely.

Gerber invokes three reasons for concluding that the codex was not meant for the liturgical setting. First, he mentions the minimal ornamentation, the clumsy calligraphy and the low literacy levels of certain contributing scribes, obvious in the many 'orthographical errors, erasures, overwrites or corrections' that litter the text.[31] For him, substandard workmanship would be incompatible with public worship. Second, Gerber observes that 'the text lacks any ekphonetic notations – a system of mnemonic voice-modulation marks, usually in red ink, to guide the (audible) reader's intonation, tempo or pitch'.[32] His assessment relies on Jordan's doctoral dissertation on Byzantine lectionaries, adopting the quantitative argument the author put forward there.[33] In summary, this argument posits that, since many Byzantine lectionaries contain ekphonetic notation, denoting their use for public worship, the absence of this feature means private use. Third, to assert the codex's private or devotional usage, Gerber refers to an eleventh-century list of manuscripts that mentions one such 'work copy'.[34] This external proof is unconvincing, as it cannot be verified and lacks quantitative support. That said, even if someone would amass quantitative evidence to that effect, the internal evidence tells a different story. It is that evidence that is the contribution of the present article. Gerber himself does not delve into this topic, shifting his attention to a related point, that 'exactly when, where and for what type of monastery the Codex Angus was initially produced remains undetermined'.[35] While this point has no bearing on the matter of whether the manuscript was used privately or publicly, it draws attention to the issue of manufacture and destination.

It is Gerber's view that the codex was meant for private, not liturgical, employment, monastic or otherwise, that is challenged here. The Codex Angus is a liturgical object, designed for public use. The absence of ekphonetic notation does not necessarily indicate a private destination.[36] After

[30] Christopher R. D. Jordan, 'The textual tradition of the Gospel of John in Greek Gospel lectionaries from the middle Byzantine period (8th–11th century)', unpubl. PhD diss. Birmingham 2009, 117–18.

[31] Gerber, 'A Gospel lectionary', 16.

[32] Ibid.

[33] The title of the relevant chapter is telling: 'The function of Greek Gospel lectionaries: public, private or display?' See Jordan, 'The textual tradition of the Gospel of John', 89–90, 96. For a recent analysis of ekphonetic notation in Byzantine lectionaries see Betancourt, *Performing the Gospels*, 2, 18, 172–3, 177, 208, 210, 214–15, 217, 255.

[34] Gerber, 'A Gospel lectionary', 17.

[35] Ibid; cf. Olivier, 'Origin', 27.

[36] For the history and the types of intonation signs see Sysse Gudrun Engberg, 'Greek ekphonetic notation: the classical and the pre-classical systems', in Jørgen

all, as Betancourt shows, not all lectionaries were equipped with 'chant marks', despite being used in worship gatherings.[37] That intonation signs are missing from the Codex Angus is consistent with the poor workmanship of this manuscript, but this is a different matter altogether. It cannot be invoked in support of Gerber's hypothesis. Further evidence in this regard renders his conclusion improbable.

Gerber ignores the fact that the lectionary's inferior manufacture denotes yet another possibility, which has no bearing on the matter of usage. In short, it relates to the financial capacity, or lack thereof, of the community that owned and used the manuscript.[38] Parchment was an expensive material,[39] and even unskilfully written books increased the cost of the final product. In addition, the price range of the best *scriptoria*, which produced exquisitely illustrated and elegantly written tomes, remained prohibitive for disadvantaged communities. It is reasonable to think that, except for cathedrals, rich urban parishes and large monasteries, countryside churches and small monastic settlements could not afford the best liturgical items that the *scriptoria* of the major centres produced. This should not come as a surprise. Throughout history, luxury items, including of a religious nature, have been and are available only to the affluent. And the codex under consideration does not exhibit the known features of a luxury item destined for, say, cathedral ceremonies,[40] such as illuminations, elegantly stylised, gold lettering[41] and ekphonetic notations. Its appearance matches the minimally adorned tomes of the four Gospels in their entirety, as well as, immediately relevant to this article, a group of lectionaries designed for reading during services, but not for processions.[42] It is possible that these unadorned lectionaries were minimalistic in their outlook precisely because of the lack of means of the communities that needed them. Such is, undoubtedly, the case of the community that owned the Codex Angus, which could not have paid for the services of the

Raasted and Christian Troelsgård (eds), *Palaeobyzantine notations: a reconsideration of the source material*, Hernen 1992, 33–55.

[37] Betancourt, *Performing the Gospels*, 208.

[38] The ensuing analysis partially draws on other disciplinary areas, beyond those mentioned by Velkovska ('Lo studio', 257) and her sources (art history, codicology, hagiology, liturgics and palaeography), such as social studies and the history of economics.

[39] See John Bowden, 'Book production', in Elizabeth Jeffreys, John Haldon and Robin Cormack (eds), *The Oxford handbook of Byzantine studies*, Oxford–New York 2008, 462–72, and Mathisen, 'Paleography and codicology', 142–3.

[40] For the usual characteristics of cathedral lectionaries see Anderson, *The New York cruciform lectionary*, 5, 9–10.

[41] True, the initial letter of each new pericope is stylised, but in most cases these *E*s (for Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος, 'The Lord said') and *T*s (for Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, 'At that time') are clumsily executed. So, for example, the *E*s of fos 9v, 11v, 14v, 20r, 21v, 22r etc., and the *T*s of fos 31v, 33r, 36r, 44v, 46v, 48r etc.

[42] See Lowden, *The Jaharis Gospel lectionary*, 15, 17.

accomplished hands at major *scriptoria*. No wonder that there are other pointers to its poor manufacture, for example the collage of leaves written by different scribes, with the text being inexpertly squeezed so that continuity is secured. This is the case of fos 27v and 28r (*see* Figure 3).

In short, the poor quality of the parchment, the minimal adornment and the many inexpert hands that copied the text denote its manufacture by a 'budget' *scriptorium*, which produced liturgical books for small communities, either monastic or parochial, that could not afford a quality item.[43] The large and wealthy Kosinitsa Monastery – if the Codex Angus is the mysterious object catalogued there – does not fit this profile. This might mean that the manuscript was deposited there at some point out of respect for its liturgical character, after being used elsewhere,[44] not that it was used privately.

The time has now come to turn to Gerber's points about usage. Amounting to a selection of scriptural passages prescribed for liturgical reading, similar to any other Gospel lectionary, the Codex Angus could not have been destined for private use. Private readers of Scripture, including for the purposes of monastic contemplation and prayerful reflection, would seek manuscripts of the New Testament, or the collected Gospels in their entirety, not lectionaries that provide a very limited array of passages. Jordan's conclusion to that effect confirms this point. In this light, since the Codex Angus is a lectionary, not a New Testament manuscript, it was destined for public worship not private reflection. Abundant internal evidence supports this assessment: first, clear marks of heavy usage and, second, aspects of its content.

The most important proof of the codex's public use comes from its overall appearance, which does not corroborate the idea of reflective reading in the privacy of one's monastic cell or home. The evidence of public use is overwhelming. For example, the front and back leaves are weathered and very dark (*see* Figures 2 and 4), which shows that originally – and for an indeterminate length of time – the lectionary did not have the current wooden hard covers to protect it. While this evidence supports the proposal, that the Codex Angus originated in a 'budget' *scriptorium* that manufactured liturgical books for disadvantaged communities, it also substantiates the assertion that it was heavily used for liturgical purposes.

Indeed, throughout the manuscript can be found many stains left by a variety of liquids, such as darker ones, of wine accidentally poured upon it during eucharistic celebrations, but also lighter, left by water, possibly spilled on the occasion of baptismal offices and the blessing of the waters,

[43] Minor, low-cost *scriptoria* were not rare: Parpulov, 'The Bibles of the Christian East', 314.

[44] The practice of retrieving old manuscripts, especially of religious significance, for conservation purposes was widespread. The monastic libraries of Northern Greece, including from Mount Athos, provide abundant evidence for this practice.

Figure 3. Codex Angus, fos 27v, 28r: attempts by the scribes to secure the continuity of the text.

as well as oil.[45] Interestingly, fo. 116 appears to have been sprinkled with scented oil, to the extent that when one opens it a very pleasant aroma can be sensed. Other stains are caused by melted wax from candles (*see* Figure 3), consistent with the rush of reading the designated passages during liturgical offices.[46] More often than anything else, there are stains left by greasy fingers and unwashed hands. As expected, these appear on the lower outer corners of the pages, both recto and verso, as well as on the median outer side of the leaves (*see* Figure 5).[47] Also, not using anything like the Jewish 'Torah' pointers (the so-called *Yad*), but using one's own fingers to follow the text, means that the script is faded or indeed vanishing in many places. Sometimes, the fading text can still be read,[48] but where repeated pressure led to its disappearance later scribes added the missing text in their own handwriting (*see* Figure 6).[49] All this is indication of a liturgical book heavily used for public worship.

Second, regarding the content of the manuscript, noteworthy is the very 'seasonal' aspect of its selection of passages. Regular lectionaries, such as

[45] Codex Angus, fos 2r, 3r, 4r, 5r, 50r, 77r, 88r, 113r etc.
[46] Ibid. fos 5r, 18r, 21r, 25r, 30r, 58v, 59r–v, 61v etc.
[47] Ibid. fos 26r, 48r, 102r, 111v, 112r, 113r–v, 119r etc.
[48] Ibid. fos 69r, 74r, 91r, 95v, 96r etc.
[49] Ibid. fos 23r, 26r, 74r, 91v, 107v, 120v, 121r etc.

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Figure 4. Codex Angus, fo.122v: the last leaf, showing clear signs of exposure to the elements.

the Codex Atheniensis 2803 (dated 1288),[50] give pericopes for the entire

[50] Available at <https://digitalcollections.nlg.gr/nlg-repo/dl/en/browse/3518>, accessed 15 June 2023.

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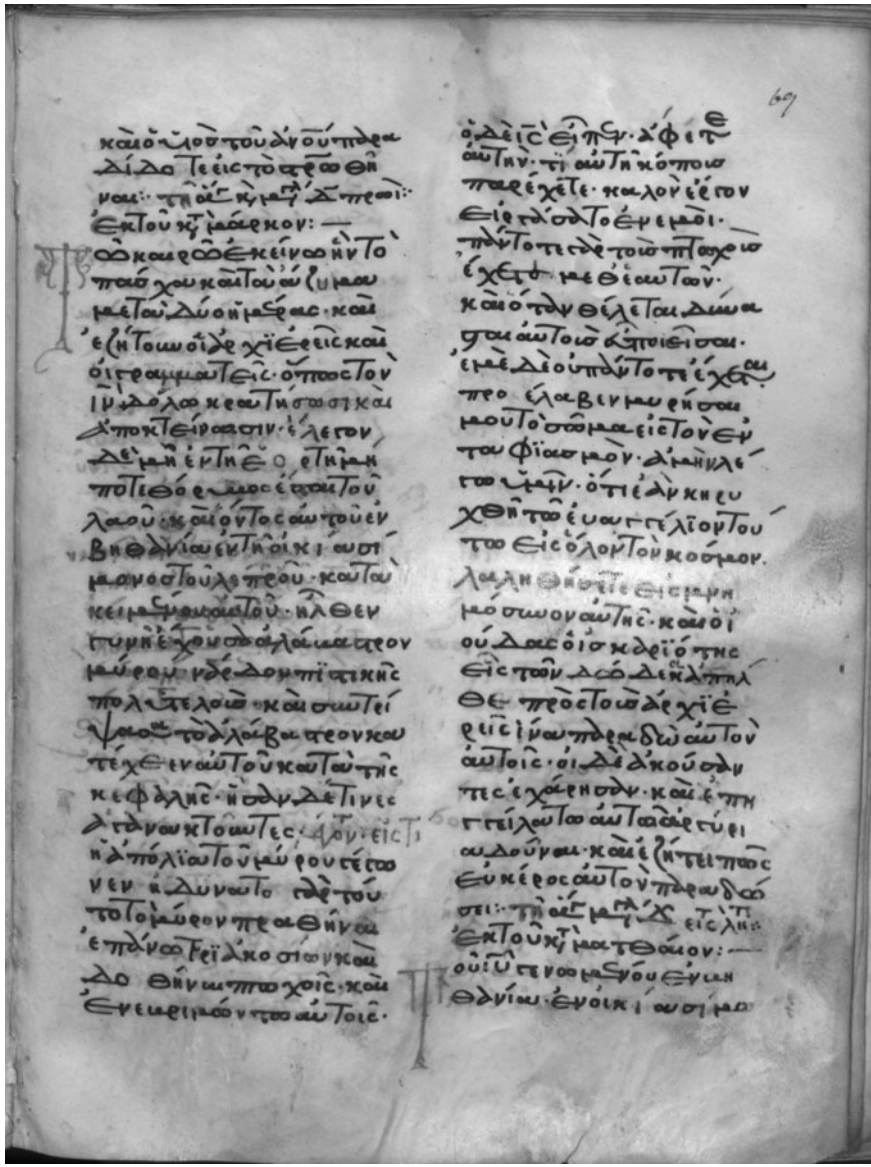

Figure 5. Codex Angus, fo. 69r: deterioration caused by touch.

liturgical year. The Codex Angus, however, corresponding to Dumbarton Oaks MS 1, BZ.1939.12,[51] gives a short selection of passages, especially

[51] Dumbarton Oaks, MS 1, BZ.1939.12, fos 45–87.

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Figure 6. Codex Angus, fos 91v, 5r: heavily stained parchment and repairs to deteriorated text.

for the longest section of the liturgical year, that is, the thirty-six weeks after Pentecost (from fo. 25r to fo. 52v). In total, there are only twenty-eight leaves for this section, compared to the eight weeks of the Paschal season, which are allocated a total of twenty-four and a half leaves (from fo. 1r to fo. 25r), and the seven weeks of the Lenten season, including Holy Week, which occupy forty leaves (from fo. 56v to fo. 96v). More specifically, with utmost consistency readings for the largest section of the year are prescribed – and marked as such by paratextual numbered notations[52] – only for Saturdays and Sundays, hence the name σαββατοκυριακόν. As this part of the liturgical year corresponds to the northern hemisphere's summer, autumn and winter, it includes seasons of busy agricultural and farming activities, as well as difficult times for travelling to church. Other manuscripts give the same limited selection of

[52] See, for example, Codex Angus, fos 26r (the left column is marked as the Second Saturday, while the right column as the Second Sunday), 26v (the right column is marked as the Third Saturday), 27r (the left column is marked as the Third Sunday), 27v (the left column is marked as the Fourth Saturday), 28v (the left column is marked as the Fifth Saturday, while the right column as the Fifth Sunday), etc. These markings are consistent with the liturgical, public, that is not private, use of the manuscript.

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readings for the σαββατοκυριακόν. Nevertheless, while a study of the socio-economic factors that might have determined this reduction in terms of prescribed readings is not usually undertaken, in the case of the Codex Angus this feature seems to denote the rhythms of a small community, very possibly a rural one of farmers and shepherds,[53] but also one usually badly affected by the snow in winter. That winters could have been hard in that area is obvious in the very few readings that the Codex Angus prescribes for Christmas (25 December): only for vespers on the eve and for the festal liturgy (not even for matins, let alone the second and the third days of the festival).[54] It is true that the rubrics point to other places within the lectionary where the passages can be retrieved, but the fact that they are not copied here is telling.

In this last regard, my argument is based on the practical rationale of lectionaries as liturgical books, where the presence of readings indicates compulsory gatherings for worship.[55] If there are no readings, no gatherings are held. This is another important proof that the manuscript under consideration was meant for public worship. In short, the scarcity of prescribed readings was very likely determined by the geographic features and the economic rhythms of the community that used it. As such, this manuscript documents the fluctuations of liturgical practice along the lines of Galadza's conclusions to that effect.[56] This and the other specifics point to the Codex Angus as a liturgical item meant for public worship and used as such by a small community. Thus – before it was stored at Kosinitsa Monastery, if Olivier's conclusions are correct and if this is the item Katsaros catalogued – this lectionary belonged to a rural community, possibly located in Northern Greece's mountainous regions, near Kosinitsa Monastery. The Codex Angus, which does not evidence the rigorous observance of monastic liturgical standards, thus gives indirect insights into a small Byzantine community as it navigated everyday life and religious commitments.

[53] A very sketchy depiction of Byzantine villages, including in Greece's northern parts, can be found in Alan Harvey, 'The village', in Jeffreys, Haldon and Cormack, *The Oxford handbook of Byzantine studies*, 328–33. Strangely, this depiction does not include any reference to religious life.

[54] For some reason, Theophany is better stocked, prescribing readings for the liturgy of the eve (5 January), the matins and the liturgy of the festival (6 January), and the liturgy in honour of John the Baptist (7 January). This indicates the popularity of this festival, which seemingly overshadowed Christmas celebrations.

[55] Cf. Anderson, *Cruciform lectionary*, 2.

[56] See Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem*, 302.