

Introduction to the Greek Lectionary pt. 2

Terminology & Textual Studies of the Lectionary

When studying the text and lections of the Greek lectionary it is also necessary to have at least a basic understanding of the Greek terms used throughout the lectionary. There are many. For a more in depth study I refer the reader to the studies by Christopher Jordan in his thesis found at CSPMT and also the *Special Uses of Terms in the Gospel Lectionary* section in the Colwell & Rife article pt. II from the *Prolegomena*, Univ. of Chicago, (1933). Briefly the main technical and history behind is as follows.

Often the terms, *evangelistarium* or *evangelarium* have historically been used for the Gospel lectionaries. Lectionaries today are known to be divided into the synaxarion or συναξαριον and the menologion μηνολογιον pericopae sections. The Greek lectionary is further broken down into four types of gospel lectionary. First, the weekly lectionary or εβδομαδες (e) type lectionary contains weekday only readings from Pentecost-Holy Saturday. The εβδομαδες /σαββατοκυριακαι or (esk) lectionary form of lectionary contains pericopae running from Pascha to Holy Saturday and pericopae for weekends until Palm Sunday. The third type, the (sk) or σαββατοκυριακαι lectionary contains lections usually for weekends Saturday-Sunday only. Lastly, the (k) type or κυριακαι lectionary contains pericopae lections only for Sundays.

It is the (esk) lectionary which is thought by most scholars to have been the first type of lectionary developed. As the needs for the church grew more specified for the lectionary on specific days and days dedicated to specific saints the other types also began to develop. The earliest dating from the 8th centuries and the earliest complete extant L672 dating the ninth century. The (e) type also has several early extant examples though none again before the 8th century. The progression of the Greek lectionary has been linked to the development of the differing varieties of continuous majority text manuscripts. However as Prof. Basil Antoniadis made a case in point in his Greek introduction in the official (1904) Greek Church text that the earlier type had been developed prior even to Chrysostom before 4th century. That is at least the type of text found in a minority of lectionaries as none date extant as previously mentioned to that early date.

In reality no real in-depth studies of the Lectionary manuscript tradition existed prior to that of Colwell in the 1930's. Few New Testament textual scholars gave notice to this vast manuscript tradition even rather ignoring them altogether in various Greek critical editions and few mentioned at passing at best. Why so? It appears to have been a result of a combination of factors. One reason was the preferential treatment of the older large uncials, the papyri discoveries and a general lack of understanding the Greek lectionary. It is also true that traditional text studies also waned after Westcott-Hort's theory of the Byzantine recension increased in popularity in the West. Scrivener however collated many lectionaries though really did not value them as much as should have been possible on his part. Tischendorf rather ignored them as did Westcott and Hort.

The situation did not change under E. Nestle or under Von Soden's work on the text of the New Testament. While the West was busily involved with other textual studies, interest in the East lectionary studies had taken a new turn. Prof. Basil Antoniadis under the auspicious of the

Greek Orthodox Church began collations at the turn of the century of over forty important lectionaries for the production of a new official Greek New Testament. In (1904) this Antoniades text came out relatively hidden from the eyes of scholars in the West.

Finally in the West during the 1930's at the University of Chicago under Wikgren, Rife and Colwell lectionary studies began to slowly take some notice. In Colwell's well-know *Prolegomena* to lectionary studies (1933) the field of lectionary studies began to take shape. Other small studies followed, but without advancements in traditional or majority textual studies the field of study languished behind once again in the field of New Testament textual criticism something which would have left Ernest Colwell in dismay.

The keys to understanding Greek lectionary text types within the lectionary manuscripts seemed locked away in Antoniades (1904) study. The Colwell study though helpful, not offering extensive collations lection by lection in sections of the Gospel of John that would offered more definite results. Colwell's spot collations did not go far enough. Incipit and explicit collations lectionary examinations are not the answer either in determining the textual nature of the lectionary text. The only way was by means of lection by lection collation this is something that both Colwell in the West and Antoniades in the East would have agreed upon. According to Antoniades and the Greek Church's extensive own collations of over forty manuscripts, the Greek lectionary textually can be divided into two types, one older and the other more recent. Within the two types the older differing in text type within the pericope lection between the synaxarion and the menologion. The more recent textually being stable from earlier synaxarion to the later menologion.

This brief review it is hoped will assist interested New Testament to some of the more important terms and textual history of the Greek lectionary. The remaining Part III of *Introduction to the Greek Lectionaries* will lastly examine the specifics of the lectionary calendar in order for the textual scholar to collate internally lection by lection in order to properly textually identify the text of the Greek lectionary. It will in conclusion be a plea of sorts for interested scholars to follow in the steps of Colwell and Antoniades' methodology of lectionary studies, through lection by lection rigorous collation resulting in a greater understanding of the great Greek lectionary manuscript tradition.

In summary, the Greek lectionary textually can indeed be identified. Like studies into the continuous text manuscripts of the New Testament, continuing to ignore the traditional/majority text and its various nuances will only stall the advancement of studies into lectionary studies as well. Textual Scholars would be wise to follow Colwell's advice in this area. It is hoped that a recent spur in interest in the various types of text found in the continuous text will also renew lectionary studies again. This brief examination part II has been dedicated in part to the memory of Antoniades and Colwell and their excellent insightful studies on the Greek lectionary. Blessings,

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