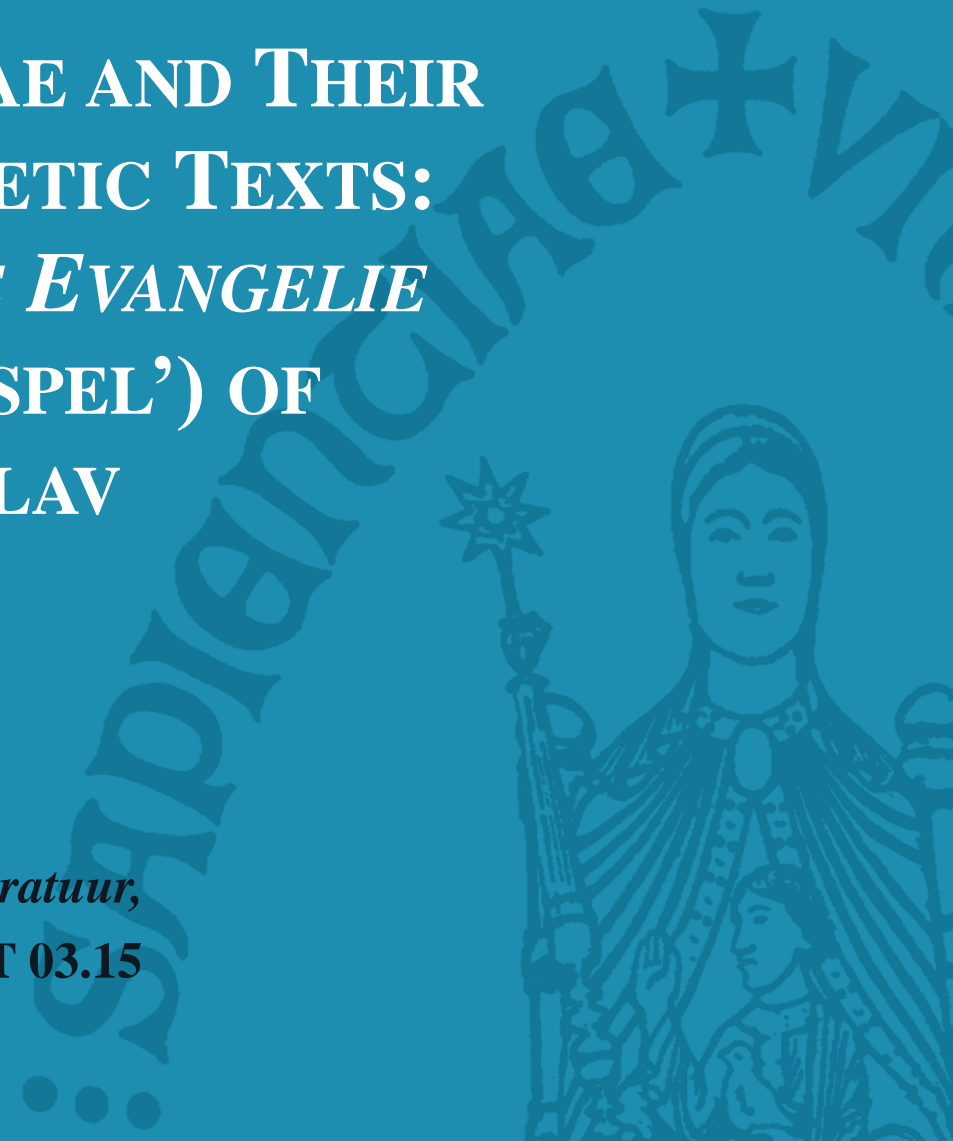


**GREEK NEW TESTAMENT CATENAE AND THEIR  
TRANSFORMATION INTO HOMILETIC TEXTS:  
THE CASE OF THE *UCHITEL'NOE EVANGELIE*  
(‘DIDACTIC/ HOMILETIC GOSPEL’) OF  
CONSTANTINE OF PRESLAV**

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**Research Seminar *Byzantijnse Literatuur*,  
KU Leuven, Faculty of Arts, LETT 03.15  
8 December 2022**



# SEMINAR OVERVIEW

## INTRODUCTION

- Dorival Gilles, “La postérité littéraire des chaînes exégétiques grecques,” *Revue des études byzantines*, 43, (1985): 209-226.

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The screenshot shows the website for 'The Vocabulary of Constantine of Preslav's Uchitel'noe evangelie'. The header includes the project title, navigation links (Home, Team, Events, Publications, In the Media, Links), and flags for English and Bulgarian. Below the header is a decorative border with a repeating geometric pattern. The main content area features a paragraph of text and four small images of manuscript pages with Old Bulgarian text.

**The Vocabulary of Constantine of Preslav's Uchitel'noe evangelie ('Didactic Gospel'): Old Bulgarian-Greek and Greek-Old Bulgarian Word Indices**

Home Team Events Publications In the Media Links   

Constantine of Preslav's *Uchitel'noe evangelie* ('Didactic Gospel') is a corpus of 51 sermons translated from Byzantine Greek and is one of the most important Bulgarian written monuments of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, not only among the translated but also among the original works, as it contains some parts composed by the translator himself. Some of the philological aspects of this codex, however, have not yet been systematically studied from all the philological aspects – e.g. as a lexical corpus or in terms of translation techniques used. The aim of the project will be to fill in a significant gap in the knowledge of the Bulgarian vocabulary of the time and more precisely of one of its prominent representatives. Its main task is to develop Old Bulgarian-Greek and Greek-Old Bulgarian word indices which should fully systemise the lexicon of this voluminous collection. The complete excerption of the data and their representation in the two glossaries will enrich the awareness of the language of Constantine of Preslav as both translator and author. The analysis of the data gathered in the bilingual

<https://uchitelnoevangelie.eu/?lang=en>  
(Accessed: 5 Dec 2022).

# The project “The Vocabulary of Constantine of Preslav’s *Uchitel’noe evangelie* (‘Didactic Gospel’): Old Bulgarian-Greek and Greek-Old Bulgarian Word Indices”, which is financed by the Bulgarian National Science Fund (contract КП-06-Н50/2 of 30.11.2020).



The Vocabulary of Constantine of Preslav's *Uchitel'noe evangelie* ('Didactic Gospel'): Old Bulgarian-Greek and Greek-Old Bulgarian Word Indices

[Home](#) [Team](#) [Events](#) [Publications](#) [In the Media](#) [Links](#)   

Constantine of Preslav is among the most prominent figures of the Bulgarian spiritual culture of the 9th and 10th centuries. He was a translator and author of works belonging to various genres. His collection known as *Uchitel'noe evangelie* ('Didactic Gospel') is comprised of sermons for all the Sundays of the year from Easter to the Palm Sunday. Most of them are translated texts attributed to several Church Fathers. Their introductions and conclusions, however, together with the whole 42nd sermon and the Prologue to the collections are his own creation. The monument is preserved in four full copies: Synodal, Viennese, Gilferding, and Hilandar. Several other copies of individual sermons are also known to the scholarship. The entire corpus was edited in 2012 by Maria Tihova (Старобългарското Учително евангелие на Константин Преславски) as vol. 58 of the *Monumenta linguae slavicae dialecti veteris* series.



## 1. STRUCTURE OF THE SEMINAR

- a. The main characteristics of the Greek New Testament Catenae manuscripts: a brief overview.
- b. Followed by a discussion and a close reading of two Greek texts.
- c. Greek New Testament Catenae and the composition of the *Uchitel'noe evangelie* ('Didactic/ Homiletic Gospel') of Constantine of Preslav.

## 2. BACKGROUND READINGS:

- a. Houghton, H. and Parker, D. "An Introduction to Greek New Testament Commentaries with a Preliminary Checklist of New Testament Catena Manuscripts," in: *Commentaries, Catenae and Biblical Tradition: Papers from the Ninth Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, in association with the COMPAUL project*. Ed. Garrick V. Allen et al. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2016), 1–36, esp. 1-28.
- b. Petrov, I. "The Greek Sources of *Učitel'noe Evangelie* Revisited: Sermon 20," *Paleobulgarica* 46, no. 2 (2022), 3-28.

# THE TERM ‘GREEK NEW TESTAMENT CATENA’

- The term ‘catena’ (from Latin ‘chain’)
- *Catena aurea*, compiled by Thomas of Aquinas.
- *Catena sexaginta quinque Patrum græcorum in S. Lucam* (Antwerp, 1628) and *Catena Patrum græcorum in S. Joannem* (Antwerp, 1630), edited by Balthasar Corderius.
- In the Medieval Greek tradition:
  - ἐξηγητικαὶ ἐκλογαί, exegetical extracts;
  - συναγωγή τῶν ἐξηγητικῶν ἐκλογῶν, collection of exegetical extracts;
  - συναγωγή ἐξηγήσεων, collection of exegeses (Dorival 1985: 210).

“The catenae were a logical and, in some ways, necessary response to the intense and voluminous exegetical production of the previous centuries. No individual or single school, church, or monastery could have a library containing all the exegetical writings of the church fathers. In addition to this, these writings were neither easy to study nor to reference. The catenae, on the other hand, which were compiled under the direction of competent textual critics, exegetes, and theologians, were eminently useful for study, for the preparation of sermons, and, not least, for the clarification of disputes concerning the meaning of a biblical passage and the refutation of theological heresies (Constas 2021: 117).”

# THE COMPILATION OF CATENAE

- Prokopios of Gaza (c. 465 – c. 528):

“Ἡδη μὲν καὶ πρότερον θεοῦ τὸ δύνασθαι χορηγήσαντος τὰς καταβεβλημένας ἐκ τῶν πατέρων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων εἰς τὴν Ὀκτάτευχον ἐξηγήσεις συνελεξάμεθα ἐξ ὑπομνημάτων καὶ διαφόρων λόγων ταύτας ἐρανισάμενοι. ἀλλ’ ἐπεὶ τὰς ῥήσεις αὐτὰς τῶν ἐκθεμένων ἐπὶ λέξεως ἐξεθέμεθα, εἴτε σύμφωνοι πρὸς ἀλλήλας ἐτύγγανον εἴτε καὶ μή, καὶ πρὸς πλῆθος ἄπειρον ἡμῖν ἐντεῦθεν τὸ σύγγραμμα παρετείνετο, συνεῖδον νῦν πρὸς μέτρον εὐσταλὲς συνελεῖν τὴν γραφὴν ἐπειγόμενος, εἰ μὲν τι σύμφωνον εἴρηται ἅπασιν, τοῦτο προσάπαξ εἰπεῖν· εἰ δέ τι διάφορον, καὶ τοῦτο συντόμως ἐκθέσθαι πρὸς τὸ διὰ πάντων ἐν γενέσθαι σῶμα τῆς συγγραφῆς ὡς ἐνὸς καὶ μόνου τὰς ἀπάντων ἡμῖν ἐκθεμένου φωνάς. προσθήσομεν δέ τι καὶ ἔξωθεν εἰς τρανοτέραν ἔσθ’ ὅτε παράστασιν. οὐκοῦν συνεργὸν ἡμῖν τὸν θεὸν γενέσθαι καλέσαντες ἐντεῦθεν ἀρξώμεθα” (PG 87: 21A–24A).

# THE FORM OF CATENAE

- 1) *Catena in Two Columns/ Scholia-Catena*
- 2) *Marginal/ Frame Catena*
- 3) *Alternate(ing) Catena*

## CATENAE IN TWO COLUMNS/ SCHOLIA-CATENAE

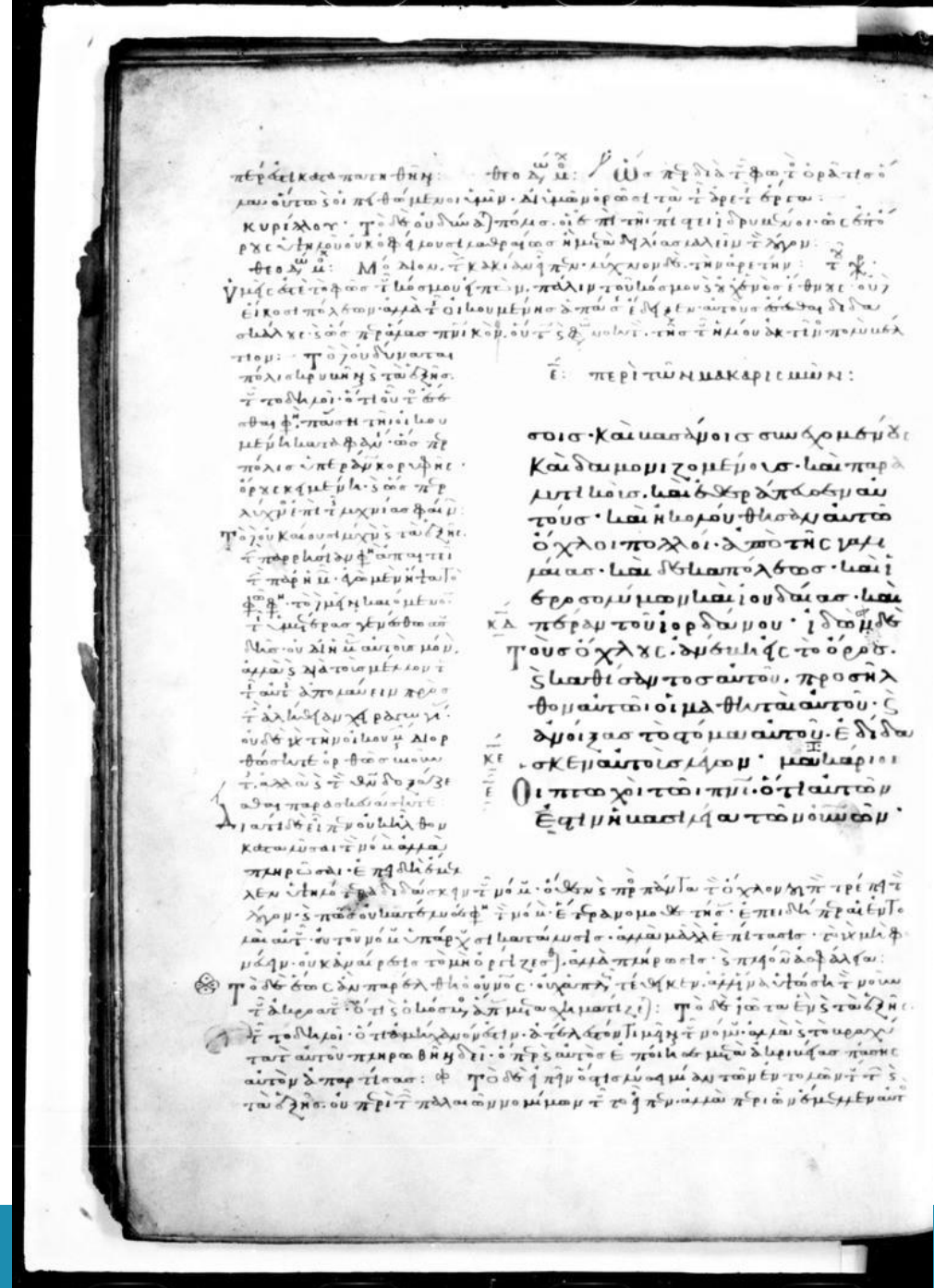
- The earliest form of biblical catena.
- Biblical text and the exegetical extracts face each other symmetrically on the two columns of the folio.
- The first *Scholia-Catena*e date back to the sixth century.
- They were composed first in Palestine, then throughout the Byzantine Empire.
- The two-column layout was replaced by the marginal catenae.

# MARGINAL/ FRAME CATENAE

- The biblical text in the centre of the folio or closer to the inner margin.
- The biblical text in larger characters or in ink of different colour; the commentary in smaller script.
- The predominant form of Greek New Testament catena until the very end of the eleventh century.

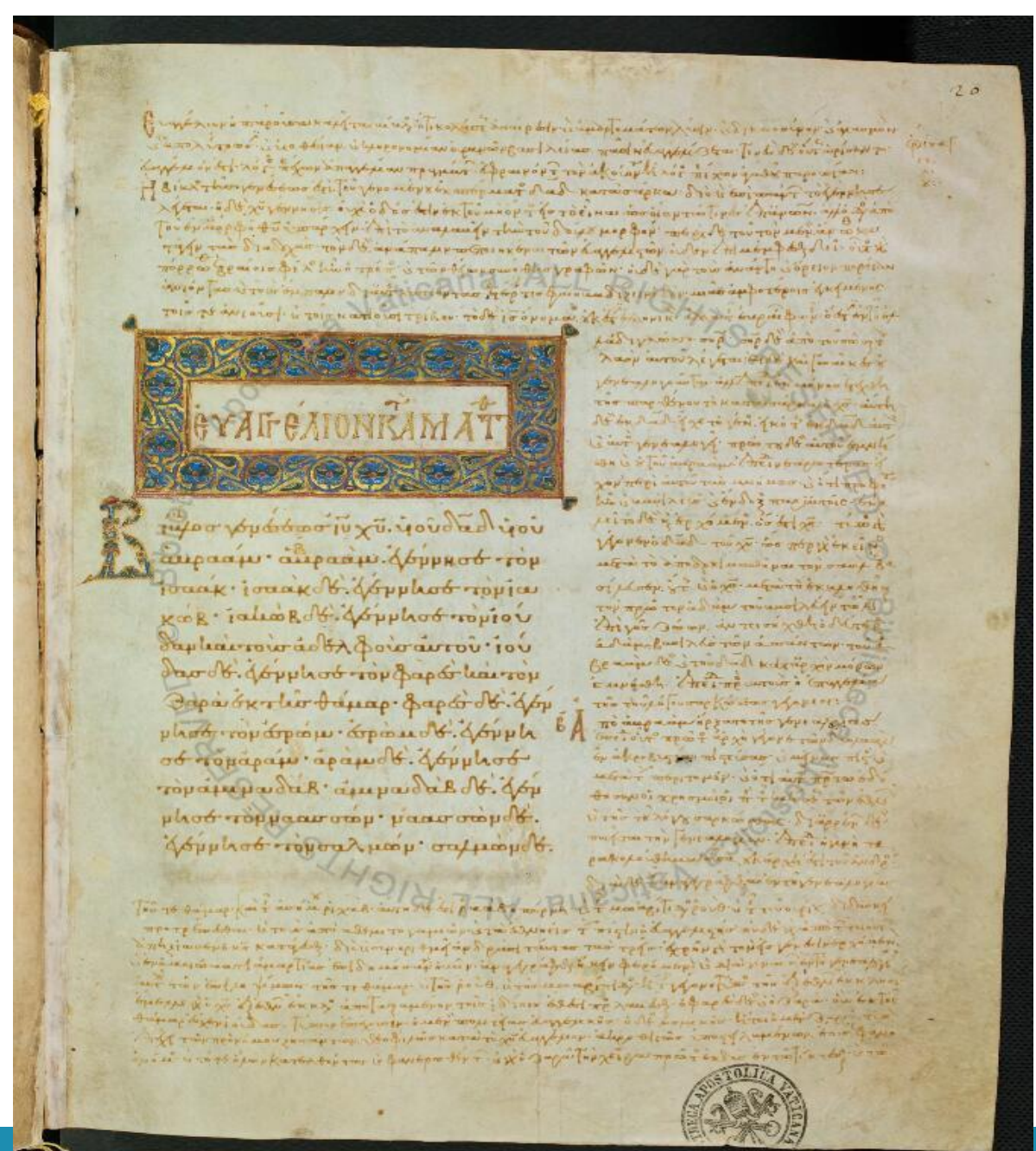
Cod. Coislin. Gr. 23 (11<sup>th</sup> c.), f. 14b

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b110001366/f18.item> (Accessed: 5 Dec 2022)



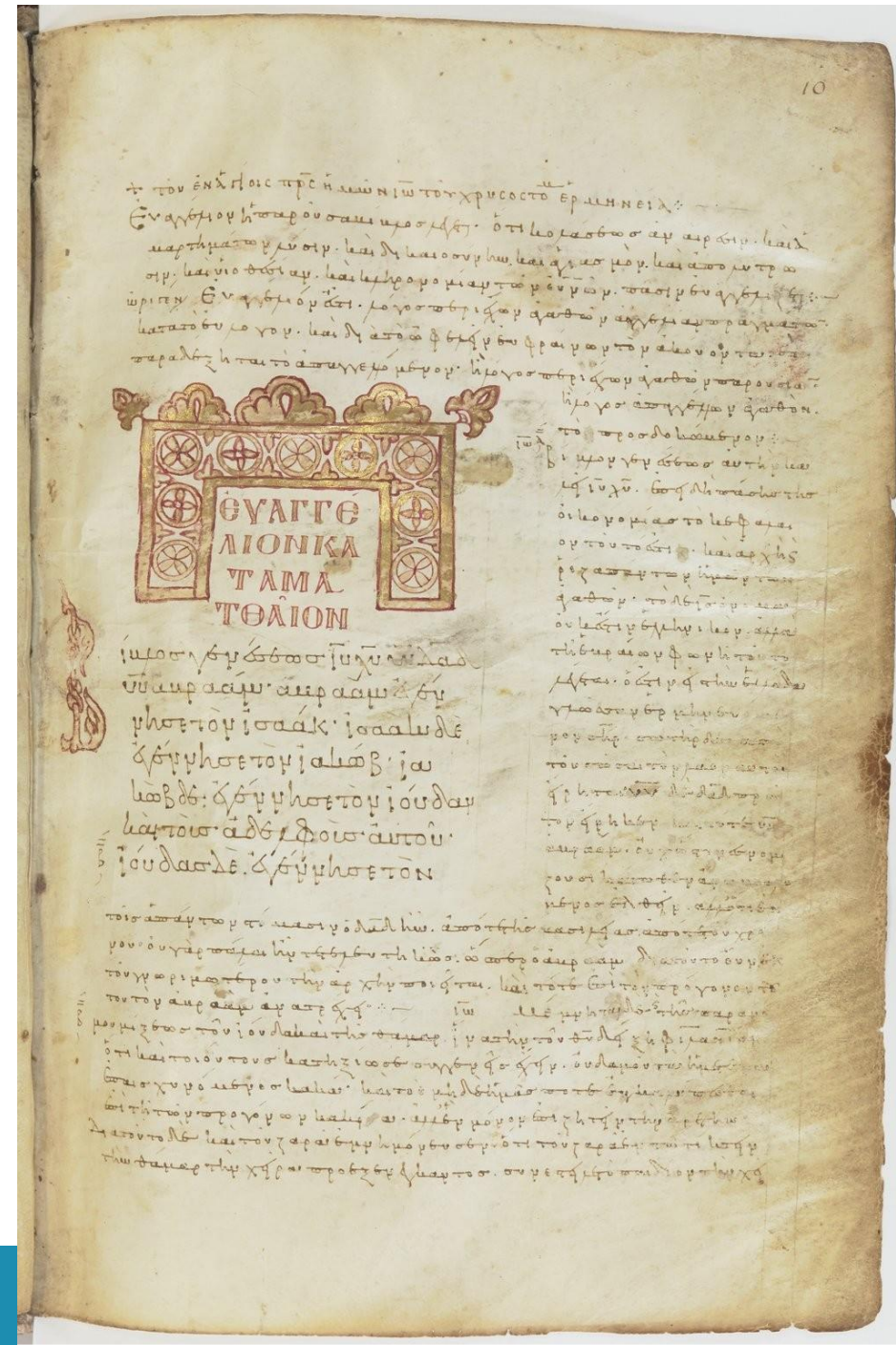
- Cod. Vat. Gr. 358 (11<sup>th</sup> c.), f. 20a
- *Catena in Matthaeum* (CPG C.111) by Pseudo-Petrus of Laodicea

[https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.gr.358](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.358)  
(Accessed: 5 Dec 2022)



- Cod. Coislin. Gr. 195 (10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> c.), f. 10a
- Catenae in Matthaeum (CPG C110-C116)

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10547049c/f29.item> (Accessed: 5 Dec 2022)

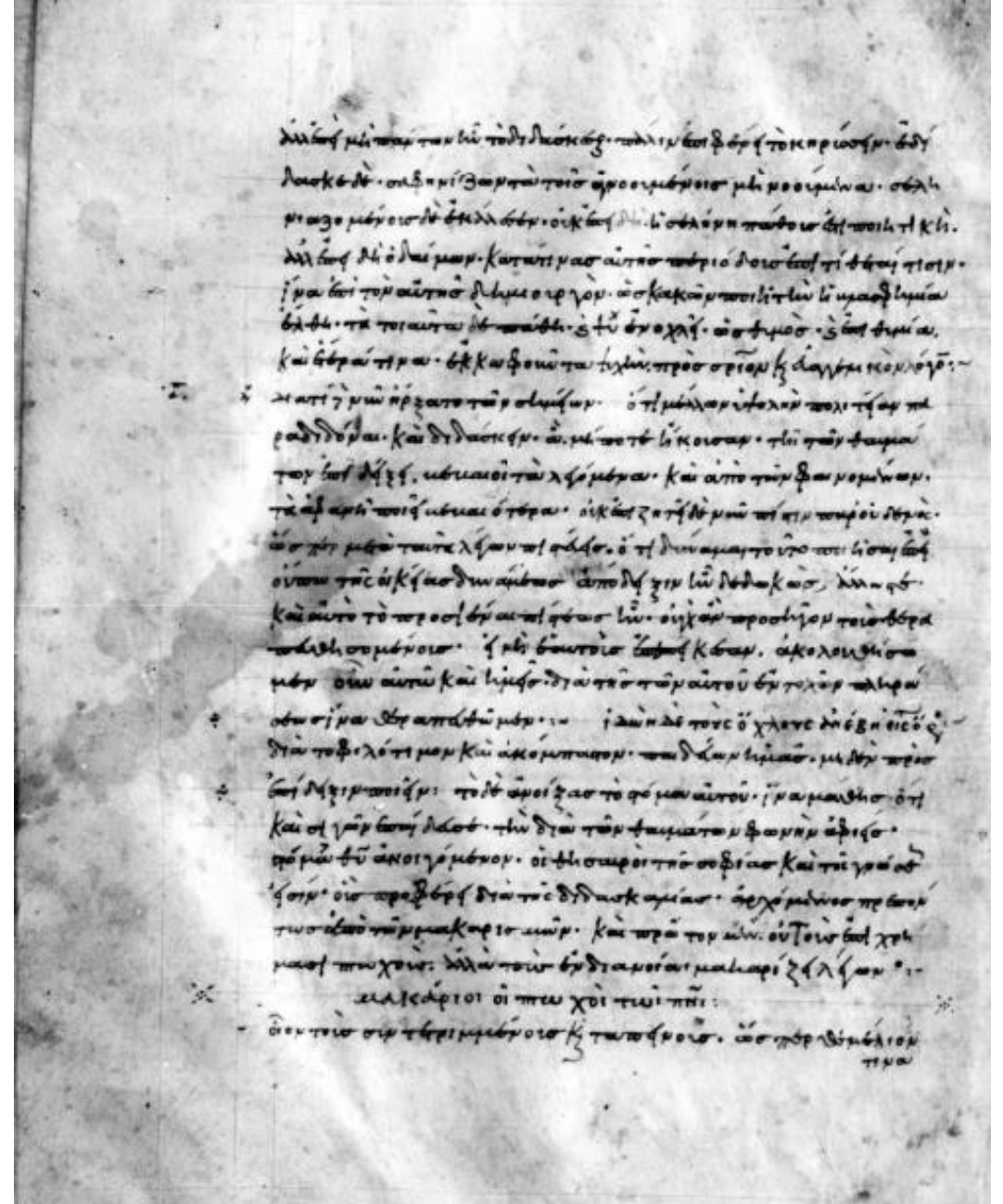


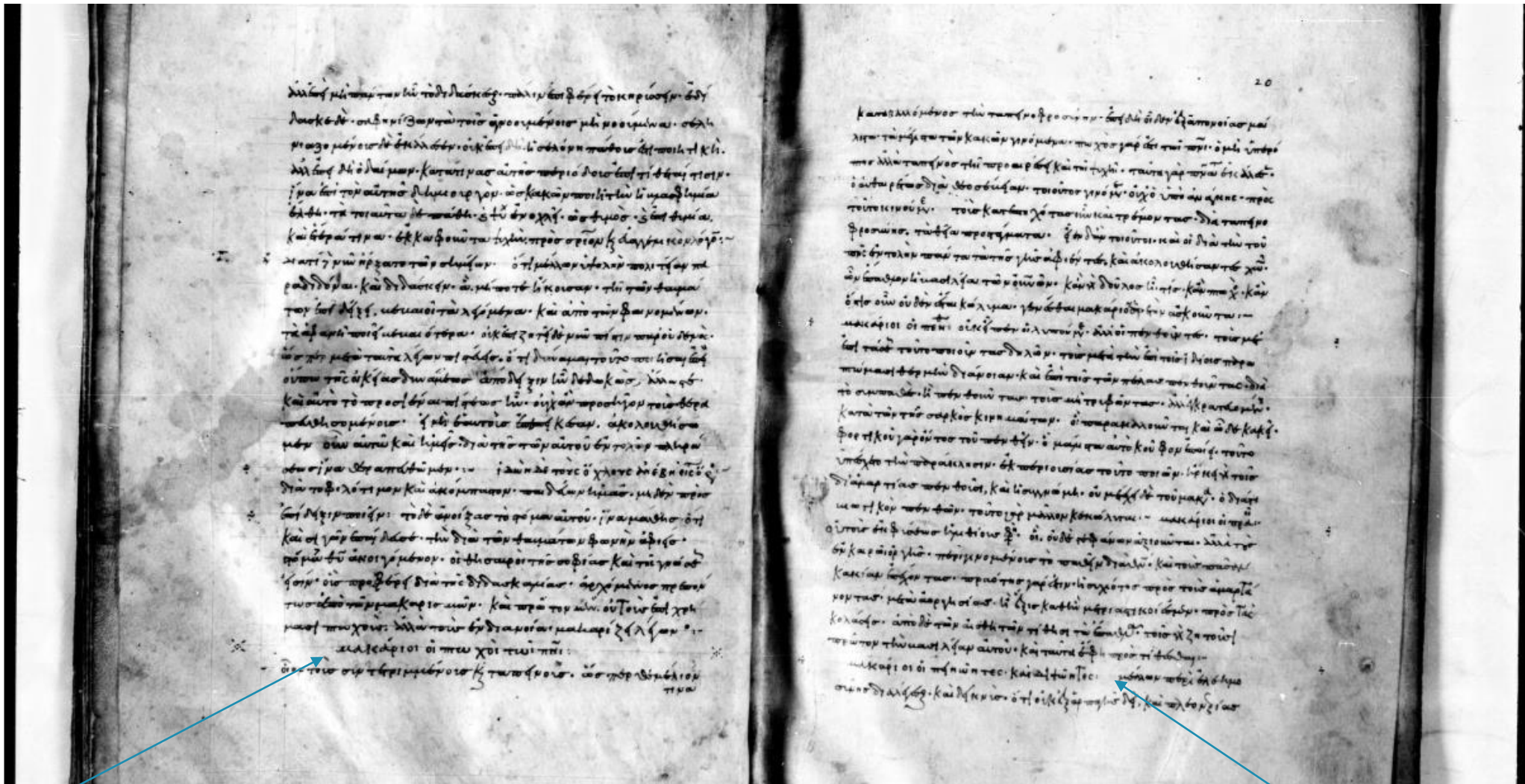
# ALTERNATE(ING) CATENAE

- A biblical verse or a couple of verses, stylistically marked, and followed by exegetical extracts.
- Widely spread from the twelfth century onwards.

Cod. Coislin. Gr. 602 (11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> c.), f. 19a, containing *Catena in Matthaeum* (CPG C110-C116):

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b110001188/f22.item> (Accessed: 5 Dec 2022)





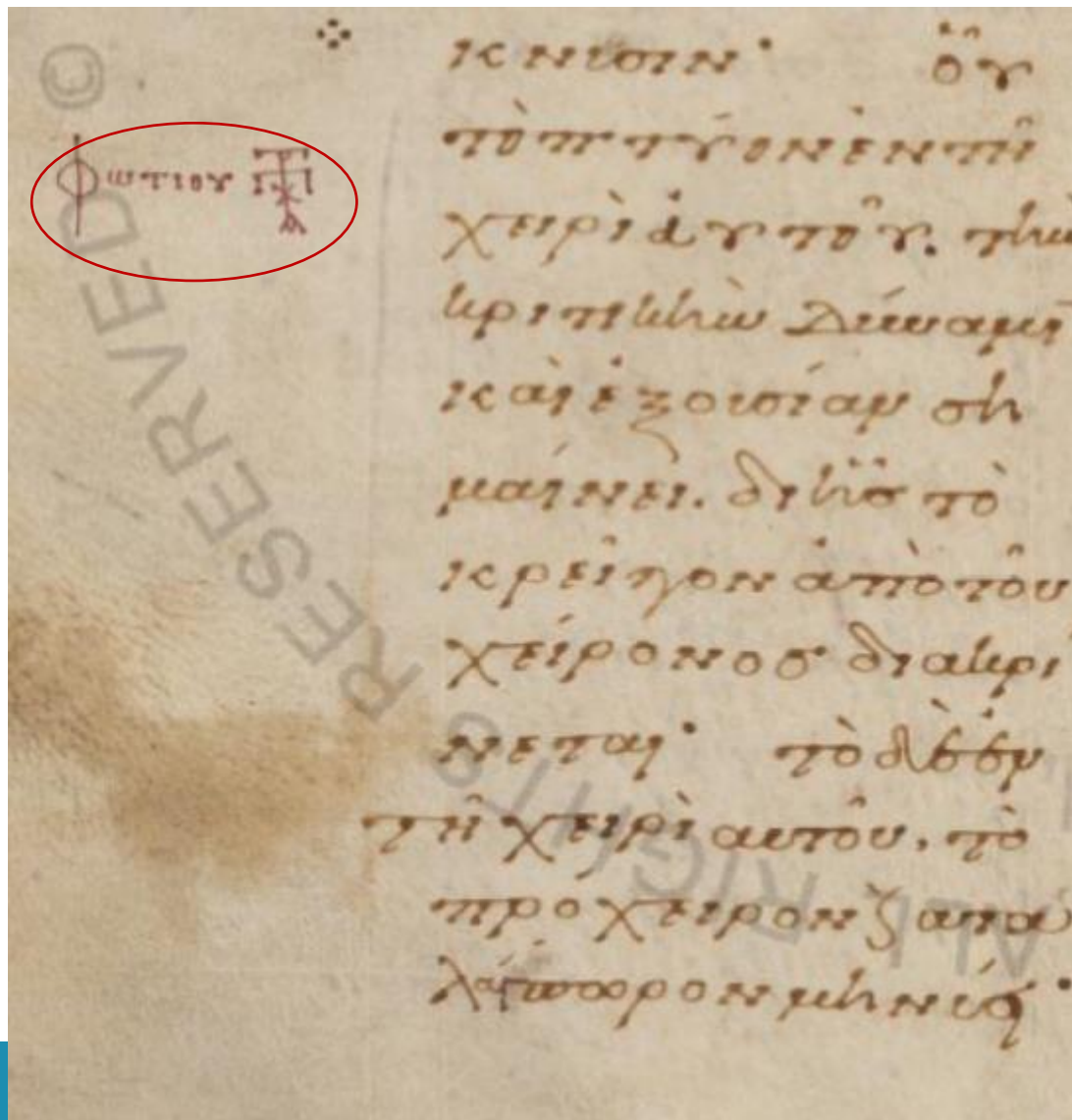
μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι (Mt 5:3)

μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες (Mt 5:6)

# THE SOURCES OF CATENAE

- **Primary Catena** – excerpts taken directly from exegetical writings, mainly homilies and other exegetical treatises.
- **Secondary Catena** – excerpts taken directly from other catenae.

# AUTHORS



- **Sigla** in the margin of the manuscript indicates the author of whose works the commentary is taken.
  - Ω and P for Origen (Ὠριγένης);
  - XP for Chrysostom (Ἰωάννης ὁ Χρυσόστομος).
- Sometimes, when we have two consequent commentaries by the same author, this is indicated by the abbreviation TY AY = τοῦ αὐτοῦ, ‘from the same’.

Cod. ASP 59 (10<sup>th</sup> c.), f. 17v:

[https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Arch.Cap.S.Pietro.B.59](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Arch.Cap.S.Pietro.B.59)

(Accessed: 5 Dec 2022)





# DISCUSSION: FROM HOMILY TO CATENA

# THE *UCHITEL'NOE EVANGELIE* ('DIDACTIC/ HOMILETIC GOSPEL') OF CONSTANTINE OF PRESLAV



# SLAVONIC TRANSLATIONS OF BIBLICAL BOOKS AND EXEGETICAL LITERATURE

- In the 6<sup>th</sup> c. the Slavs crossed the Danube river and began to settle in the Balkan territories of the Byzantine Empire.
- By the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> c. they were well settled in the so-called *Sklaviniai*, over which Byzantium had no real control.
- In 681 the Bulgars together with the Slavs they established a new political formation.
- In 864 or 865, the Bulgarian ruler Boris was baptised by a Byzantine bishop.
- Translation of significant Christian writings from Greek into Old Church Slavonic during the reigns of Boris (852-889), Simeon (893-927) and Petăr (927-969)



# The Old Church Slavonic translation of the *Contra Arianos* by Athanasius of Alexandria

+ These pious books, called Athanasians, were translated from the Greek into Bulgarian on the request of our Bulgarian Prince Simeon by Bishop Constantine [of Preslav], who was a disciple of Methodius, the archbishop of Moravia, in the year from the beginning of the world 6414 [906], tenth indiction. [...] In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen (Petkov 2008: 43).

## Prologue to *Tsar Simeon's collection of St John Chrysostomos' sermons, the so-called Zlatostruj*

Since the pious Tsar Simeon learned all old and new books, the esoteric and exoteric meanings of the Holy Scripture, the customs and traditions of all the teachers, and the prudent wisdom of the blessed John Chrysostomos, he marvelled at the latter's rhetorical eloquence and the grace of the Holy Spirit. And because he became accustomed to reading all of his books, he selected from his works all sermons and gathered them together in a book he called *Zlatostruj* [Stream of Gold]. Given that "stream of gold" has already been applied to another [work], I believe that we will not be wrong to call this book "Stream of Gold." For the teaching of the Holy Spirit, similar to a golden stream, washes away through sweet human talk all sins like the deliverance of penance and brings us closer to God (Petkov 2008: 64-65).

# THE *UCHITEL'NOE EVANGELIE* ('DIDACTIC/ HOMILETIC GOSPEL')

- Compiled by Constantine of Preslav in the period between 886 and 894.
- It consists of 51 homilies for each Sunday of the ecclesiastical year for the period from Easter to Palm Sunday, preceded by a short introduction.

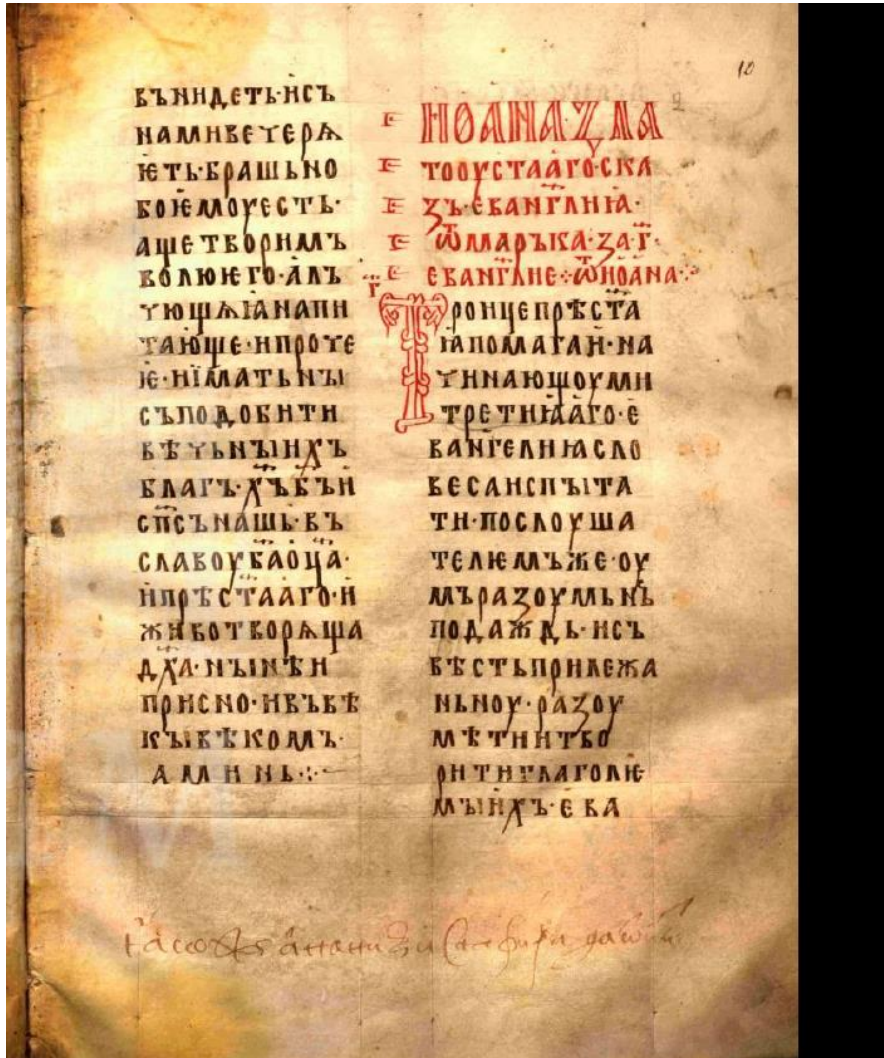
Cod. GIM. Sin. 262, f. 1v-2r:  
<https://catalog.shm.ru/entity/OBJECT/164766?query=%D0%A1%D0%B8%D0%BD.%20262&index=3> (Accessed: 5 Dec 2022)



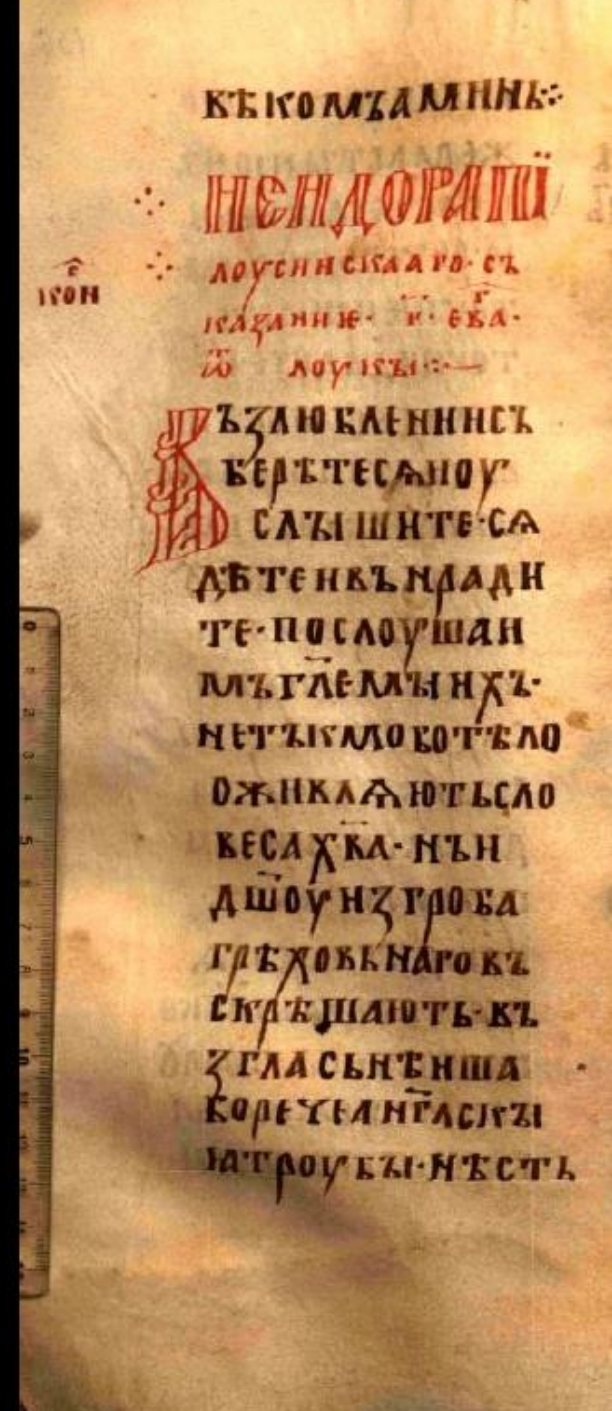
# THE PROLOGUE

“It is good, brethren, always to begin with God and finish with God, as Gregory the Theologian said, to instruct ourselves in the divine law day and night [...] For that reason I, the humble Constantine, reassured by your pleading as well, brother Naum, and by the commandments mentioned above, bowed to your humility. And you, brothers, fathers, and sons who desire instruction do not criticize me, the daring one, but try to enjoy it and be prepared to listen. [...] Therefore I, the humble one, urged, as I said, to translate the interpretation of the Holy Gospel from Greek into Slavonic and as I saw words so much above my understanding and powers, feared and trembled. However, [...] I began with [...] the Sunday Gospels (Petkov 2008: 58-59, with some modifications)”.

# THE GREEK SOURCES



1. Greek exegetical homilies: Alexander Gorskiy and Kapiton Nevostruev (1859)
2. Greek New Testament Catenae: Anthony Vadkovskiy (1885) and Maria Tihova (2012)
3. Both: Ivan Petrov, Dobriela Kotova, and Georgi Mitov (2022)



<p>UCHITEL'NOE EVANGELIE (Homilia XIV, 71c2–71d4)</p>	<p>Catena in Matthaeum. (Cramer 1844: 64)</p>	<p>Johanni Chrysostomi, In Matthaeum Homilia XXIX. (PG 57, col. 357, 39–45)</p>
<p>реце бо сице• ꙗко градъ его съде глетъ евангелстъ• капернаουμъ• вηθλεομъ бо пр ηнесе его• а назареѳъ въспитѣ• капернаουμъ же нмѣаше жнвоуца въннου • подоваатъ же съмоτρητη• η ποκορενннѣ владѣцѣ• η νεβεληυανннѣ• ꙗко въ коравль вълѣзъ прѣидаше• мογγηη πѣшь πρεχαждатη• η ꙗко γαδαρηνηηη οτѣγγηηανъ ηε προτηβη σα• ητѣ οτѣηδε ηε далече же•</p>	<p>Ἰδιαν δὲ αὐτοῦ πόλιν τὴν Καπερναοῦμ λέγει ἐνταῦθα ἢ γὰρ Βηθλεεμ ἦνεγκεν αὐτὸν, ἢ δὲ Ναζαρέτ ἔθρεψεν. ἢ δὲ Καπερναοῦμ εἶχεν οἰκοῦντα διηνεκῶς. Χρῆ δὲ σκοπεῖν καὶ τὸ ἐπιεικὲς τοῦ δεσπότη καὶ ἄτυφον, ὅτι εἰς πλοῖον ἐμβὰς, διέβαινε, δυνάμενος καὶ πεζῇ διαβαίνειν καὶ ὅτι ὑπὸ τῶν ἐν Γαδάροις ἐκβληθεὶς, οὐκ ἀντέτεινεν, ἀλλὰ ἀνεχώρησε μὲν, οὐ μακρὰν δέ.</p>	<p>Ἰδίαν αὐτοῦ πόλιν ἐνταῦθα τὴν Καπερναοῦμ λέγει. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἦνεγκεν αὐτὸν, ἢ Βηθλεεμ· ἢ δὲ ἔθρεψεν, ἢ Ναζαρέτ· ἢ δὲ εἶχεν οἰκοῦντα διηνεκῶς, ἢ Καπερναοῦμ.</p>

# DISCUSSION: RESHAPING THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT CATENAE

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!**

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