

‘According to the Egyptians’: Mark 16 in GA 72*

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Harley 5647 (GA 72) is an eleventh-century Tetraevangelion manuscript, held at the British Library. This codex has been considered as a member of family II. Its Matthean part is a catena commentary, while the other three Gospels include Gospel text only. Yet, the last chapter of the Gospel of Mark (Mark 16) stands out with special textual and paratextual features. In this article, I will analyse the character of Mark 16’s text. I will argue that this chapter has been revised against an exemplar close to the core group of Family 1 type of text. I will also study its extended Eusebian canons assigned to the Long Ending, and the tradition behind the two scholia that appear in the margin, and notably the one that gives Jesus’ age and date of ascension ‘according to the Egyptians’, which has not been studied before. Finally, I will provide an apparatus and translation of these scholia, based on their newly identified witnesses.

1. Introduction

An ‘*elegantissime scriptus*’¹ codex, GA 72 is a Four Gospel manuscript, currently held in the British Library (London, British Library, Harley 5647). It was owned by the monastery of St Symeon the Wonderworker on the Orontes river of the Levant, as an Arabic note reveals (f. 267v). The note does not indicate whether the codex was produced in the monastery or it was brought to it, but we know that this monastery was at the centre of an active process of translation between Greek, Syriac and Arabic languages, and particularly in the eleventh century.² We also do not know when it was completed, but a *terminus ante quem* can be the destruction of this monastery, which took place during the military campaign on Antioch, by the fourth Egyptian Mamluk Sultan Baybars, in 1268 CE.³ Given the scale of the destruction of Christian sites during this campaign, this codex must have been fortunate enough to survive it. Another Arabic note (f. 1r) informs us that it was acquired by a priest called David, the son of Mikhail the Metropolitan of Bostra (southern Syria). A fourteenth-century Greek colophon in f. 267r tells us that the monastery of St Theodore purchased it from a certain nun called Eirene. Curiously, we have

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1 British Library Department of Manuscripts 1808, 284. Griesbach 1785, 181.

2 This monastery had been active in producing Greco-Arabic manuscripts at this time. See Treiger 2020.

3 Noble and Treiger 2014, 32.

no records of how it reached the West. The British Library's summary catalogue preserves a note that records its appearance in England; it was lent to a certain Wetstein, by a bookseller called Thomas Johnson.⁴ Griesbach's entry to this codex states that it was in fact known by the name *Codex Johnsoni*.⁵ Most probably, this is in association with that bookseller. The turning point of its history was its acquisition by the first Earl of Oxford, Sir Robert Harley, to become part of his large collection of manuscripts. The diary of his bookkeeper, Humfrey Wanley, does not mention this manuscript amongst the purchases done between 1715 and 1726,⁶ which was the same period of Thomas Johnson's activity.⁷ This leaves us wondering about the date and means of its acquisition. The first firm date in the journey of this codex is when King George II decreed the Act of Parliament number 26 of the year 1753, which established the British Museum. He dedicated £10,000 to purchase Harley's manuscripts, as one of the three foundational collections.⁸ Our codex resided there until it was transferred to its final place in the manuscript room of the British Library, under shelfmark Harley 5647, when it was built in 1973, and the foundational collections were transferred to it.

2. Text

Based on palaeographical assessment, scholars agree on dating it to the eleventh century.⁹ It includes the four Gospels: Matthew (ff. 4r–81v), Mark (ff. 86r–133r), Luke (ff. 138v–213r), and John (ff. 216r–267r). This codex had been routinely added to the large group Π.¹⁰ Silva Lake's extensive study of Mark's text in this family showed that GA 72 agrees with Π's representative text by nearly 82%.¹¹ Lake provided important tables in his appendix, showing the attestation of the group's readings in its members. These tables show that family Π's unique readings as well as variants with little support are missing from Mark 16 in GA 72.¹² In the readings of individual manuscripts that are not supported by other members of the family, we note that a change in the readings of GA 72, starting from 15:3 onwards: Family 1 readings feature

4 British Library 1999, 155.

5 Griesbach 1785, 181.

6 Humphrey 1966.

7 British Library 1999, 155.

8 House of Commons 1805, 7–45.

9 Gregory 1908, 50. Von Soden 1911, 138. Aland and Wachtel 2011, 50.

10 Von Soden 1911, 1160–70. Wisse 1982, 103–5.

11 Lake, 1936, 15.

12 Lake 1936, 117–8.

prominently.¹³ Of these readings, two are exclusively shared with Family 1: the rendition of the name Mary (the mother of Jacob) in 16:2 to be *Μαριάμ*, and the omission of *περιπατοῦσιν* in 16:12.

Since the publication of Kirsopp Lake's study of *Codex 1 of the Gospels and its Allies*,¹⁴ substantial advances took place, complicating our understanding of this family. The discovery of Codex 1582 in the Greek monastery of Vatopedi supported Lake's view of the existence of an archetype represented by the text found in GA 1, and attested to by GA 1582.¹⁵ However, the most substantial development towards accurately mapping the members of this family was accomplished by Amy Anderson and Alison S. Welsby in two consecutive doctoral dissertations supervised by David C. Parker in Birmingham. Anderson and Welsby provided systematic collations and analyses of the family's text in the Gospels of Matthew and John, respectively.¹⁶ Later, Anderson expanded her analysis of Family 1 to cover the Gospel of Mark in two successive studies,¹⁷ which will be of particular importance for us. The results of these studies show that Family 1 is no longer represented solely by GA 1, but there is a group of three manuscripts that represent its core: GA 1, 1582 and 2193.¹⁸

The outcome of this research has created a richer and more dynamic image of this family. Beside these advances in Family 1 research, we also have GA 72 digitised and made available for further examination.¹⁹ Beside GA 1, microfilm images of the other members of the core group were also made available through the New Testament Virtual Manuscript Room (NT-VMR). Therefore, an examination of GA 72's text against Family 1's core group would offer further data with consequences for our understanding of this text.

In order to see how close Mark 16 in GA 72 is to Family 1, we need to conduct a comparison on the level of its readings against a reference text. If we list these readings against NA28, then we will find that GA 72 has 16

13 From 15:3 to the end of Mark, Lake lists 6 readings common with Family 1, against only one reading before 15:3. See Lake 1936, 131.

14 Lake 1902.

15 Streeter 1930, 80. This discovery sparked important debates regarding the nature of this family. On this matter see Lake et al. 1928; Kim 1950, 167–175. See also Wisse 1982, 105–107.

16 Anderson 2004. Welsby 2011. Later, Parker used the results of these findings in his important study on the use of the CBGM method and other editorial tools in the study of Family 1. See Parker 2019.

17 Anderson 2014. Anderson 2015.

18 Anderson 2004, 110.

19 See <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_5647>, this and other URIs in this article last accessed 20 December 2022.

readings deviating from the text of NA28. Of these 16 readings 13 are in agreement with Family 1 (81%), while 8 only are in agreement with GA 72's own family Π (50%).²⁰ Of these agreements, GA 72 does not have any of family Π's unique readings or even readings of little support outside this family.²¹ On the other hand, GA 72 has several strong Family 1 readings in Mark 16, including the characteristic Μαρίαμ (of James) of 16:1, and the omission of περιπατοῦσιν. If we look at the three readings of GA 72 that disagree with Family 1, we will find that two of them are extremely rare, and not shared with family Π either. These two are εἶπον (instead of εἶπεν) in 16:7, and τοιαῦτα (instead of ταῦτα) in 16:17. The latter appears almost nowhere else.²² The third is the only single reading where GA 72 agrees with family Π against Family 1, which is using τῆς μίας (instead of μία) in 16:2.

If we look at readings where GA 72 agrees with NA28 against either of the two families, we find some interesting features. First, GA 72 agrees with NA28 in two readings against family Π. These are ὅστερον δὲ in 16:14 and the omission of Ἰησοῦς in 16:19. In these cases, Family 1 core members are divided. So, in the first reading, GA 72 agrees with GA 1 and 1582 against GA 2193. In the second reading, GA 72 has the opposite alliance: it agrees with GA 2193* against 1 and 1582. Interestingly, a corrector of GA 2193 added the missing Ἰησοῦς. Second, GA 72 agrees with NA28 against Family 1 in the other two readings. In 16:1, Family 1 core members read Mary (the Magdalene) as Μαρίαμ, and adds ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ ἰδοῦ in 16:7. GA 72 lacks these readings. These two readings are not unique to Family 1.²³ However, it is curious to note that both readings are harmonisations to Matt 28:1 and 7, respectively, as the *Editio Critica Maior* itself draws the reader's attention to.²⁴ This observation leads us to enquire whether GA 72 removed these harmonic readings, or whether GA 72 actually attests to the text that the archetype of Family 1 harmonised to Matthew? It is beyond the scope of this study to offer a detailed account of harmonisation in Family 1, but it is noteworthy to refer to a study done by C. Dvoracek, which offered a quantitative analysis of the harmonic readings in Mark's text of Family 1. He noticed the 'propensity in Mark to harmonise to Matthew, and often that harmonization is agreed upon by D, W, 28 and the Old Latin', as the statistics he offered show.²⁵

20 In this comparison, I used Lake's apparatus of family Π in Lake 1936, 115–116.

21 See Lake's two tables of these readings and their attestation in family members, in Lake 1936, 117–118.

22 As we will see, GA 809 exceptionally shares them.

23 See these readings in Strutwolf 2021, 820, 7.

24 ECM adds the Matthean references as well. See readings 16:1 / 10 ao, 7 16: 7 / 20 d in Strutwolf 2021, 820, 827.

25 Dvoracek 2012, 31, 118.

In the light of the aforementioned data, the second possibility appears to be likelier.

To conclude, these findings show that the exemplar behind Mark 16 in GA 72 is closer to the archetype of Family 1, quantitatively and qualitatively, than to Family II. Beside its agreement with the core group on characteristic readings, their disagreement is not wider than disagreements between the core of Family 1 and other members of that family. This invites us to explore further the paratexts that offer the context for this text.

3. Paratext

The Eusebian Canons

The Eusebian canons were devised to assist the reader of the Gospels to see the connection between an ‘Ammonian’ section in one Gospel and its parallels in the other Gospels, if any, using its ten tables.²⁶ In the standard Eusebian tables, the Gospel of Mark was divided into 233 sections, with the last section (§ 233) covering the last verse of the Short Ending (verse 16:8). Thus, Eusebius did not include in his canon tables any sections that cover the Long Ending (verses 16:9–20). This created a gap for later scribes to fill, by segmenting the Long Ending’s 12 verses into new sections that vary in number and size. One of the earliest and best documented solutions to the problem was breaking the Long Ending into eight sections (§234–§241), without assigning these new sections to any canon tables,²⁷ which is the largest segmentation in Greek manuscripts known so far.

GA 72 does not have the Eusebian tables at the beginning of the codex. However, the scribe added the sections with table numbers in the classic form (*Ammonian Section* / *Eusebian Canon*), in the margins of the four Gospels. The Long Ending was divided into 7 sections, assigned to table numbers, increasing the total number of sections in Mark to 240 sections. Breaking the Long Ending into seven sections with Eusebian canon numbers is an unusual case in Greek manuscripts that I surveyed during my research. In Greek manuscripts, the closest case is the ninth-century GA 013, which has 7 sections that differ in their structure from GA 72 and lack canon numbers. Otherwise, this structure is found in

26 There is a large body of literature on this important tool. The most recent comprehensive publications are Crawford 2019. Wallraff 2021. Coogan 2022.

27 This solution can be found as early as in the fifth-century Codex Ephraemi (GA 04). An exception is the eighth-century GA 07, which has the 8 sections assigned to canon tables. There is also the ninth/tenth-century GA 1424 catena, which follows it. On the development of the extension of the Eusebian apparatus see Smith 2022.

some witnesses of the Harklean Syriac Gospels.²⁸ One interesting difference between the two lists is that §238 is assigned to table 6, while the Harklean witnesses have it assigned to table 2. This section comprises Jesus' commission of the disciples to preach the whole world (16:15–16). GA 72's decision to assign that section to table 6 means that it has only one parallel, which is Matt 28:19 (§359 in folio 81v) and excludes the Lukan parallel that the Harklean witness included: §346 (24:45–48). So, where did this difference come from?

GA 72 has extra sections for the Long Ending without revising or editing the sections of the other Gospels.²⁹ Therefore, it has the normal Eusebian number of sections (342) for Luke. On the other hand, the Harklean canon edited the sections of the other Gospels to create nuanced parallels with the Long Ending. So, the Harklean witnesses have the extra sections 343–346 created out of the large final Eusebian section 342, for this purpose. Therefore, one possibility is that GA 72's 7-section division without revising the other Gospels could indicate that this is based on a tradition shared with the Harklean arrangement, yet in a more primitive form. Interestingly, assigning 16:15 to table 6 is also found in another Syriac tradition, which is the Peshitta's revised version of the Eusebian tables (§288/6).³⁰

The first subscriptio of Mark in GA 72 mentions the number of sections (σμ).³¹ This subscriptio underscores the extended number of Eusebian sections. The other three Gospels do not have a similar subscriptio. The stipulation of the new number of sections emphasises the canonicity of the Long Ending. Curiously, the core group of Family 1 observes the problem of canonising the Long Ending and leaves us a note after the Short Ending, warning us that this is the verse 'up to which Eusebius Pamphile canonised'.³² This could be seen in contrast to the emphatic attitude of GA 72 that normalises the extra sections in the margins and in the subscriptio.

28 The Harklean witnesses are divided, with some witnesses having the Peshitta's revised tables (for example MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. sir. 268) while other editions have a seven-section division of the Long Ending, such as MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 1.40 (see <http://mss.bmlonline.it/s.aspx?Id=AWODkH_-I1A4r7GxL9nX#/oro/176>). See also the edition of Yohanna 2015, 4–7.

29 On revising the other Gospels to create new parallels, see Monier 2022, 13–14.

30 See the Peshitta's edition in Pusey and Henry 1901.

31 Mark has two subscriptions (f. 133r). Beside the aforementioned one, there is another one similar to what is found in Matthew's subscriptio.

32 See the note in purple ink, in GA 1 f. 220v: <<https://mr-mark16.sib.swiss/show?id=R0Ex>>. On the development of this note across Family 1's subgroups see Monier 2022, 6–8.

The Irenaeus Scholion

GA 72 has been recently categorised as a catena.³³ This is true to the part of Matthew only. By looking into the Matthean part, we find that it indeed starts with an announcement that this is the Gospel of Matthew as ‘written in Jerusalem’, and ‘commented upon by John Chrysostom’.³⁴ This is indeed the case; as we read through the commentary, we can see that most of it is an anthology of excerpts drawn from John Chrysostom’s homilies on Matthew, starting precisely from *Hom.* 1.5 (f. 4r). On the other hand, the other three Gospels have no commentary at all. This renders the categorisation of the whole codex as a commentary problematic for future conclusions that would erroneously attribute any observation in these three Gospels to ‘a catena’.

While the other three Gospels have no marginal notes, Mark’s ending is an exception. There are two scholia that appear next to Mark’s last section (§240), which is on Jesus’ ascension (16:19–20). The first scholion has been spotted before, and it was referred to by scholars who debated the inclusion of the Long Ending in Mark, such as William Burgon.³⁵ This note appears next to verse 16:9 (f. 132v, fig. 1).

It informs us of Irenaeus’ use of this verse in his ‘third book *Against Heresies*’. The value of Irenaeus’ use was highlighted in the scholion which says that he was ‘near (the age of) the apostles’. In fact, until today we know of no reference to a verse in the Long Ending *with an explicit* mention of its place in

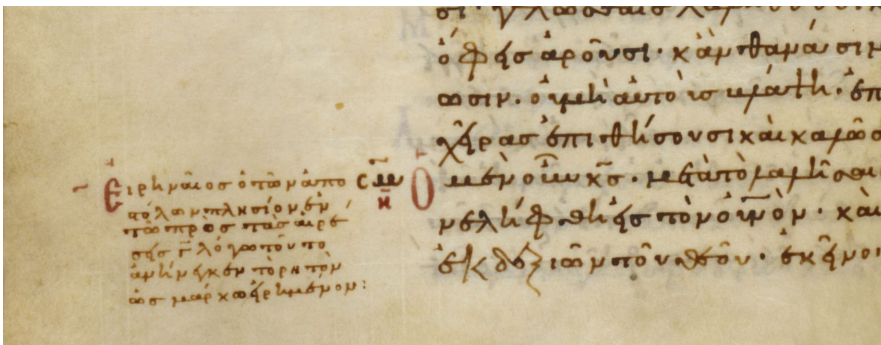


Fig. 1. London, British Library, Harley 5647 (GA 72), f. 132v: the scholion. © British Library Board.

33 Parpulov 2021, 97.

34 Το κατά Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον συνεγράφη [...] ἐβραΐδι διαλέκτω ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ τῆς Παλαιστίνης, ἐρμηνεύθη δὲ ὑπὸ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρ(υσοστόμου).

35 Burgon 1871, 24 n.34; Kim 1950, 169.

the Gospel of Mark earlier than Irenaeus' testimony.³⁶ Indeed, Irenaeus quoted verse 16:19, stating that he found it in Mark, 'towards the conclusion of his Gospel' (*Haer.* 3.10.5). By noting this scholion, Family 1 appears again on the surface. In fact, GA 1582, which is the best representative of the archetype amongst the core group members, has this scholion next to Mark 16:19 as well (fig. 2).³⁷

Beside GA 72 and 1582, I can also confirm that this scholion appears in 809 (149v), 1313 (100r) and 2517 (57v).³⁸ The latter three manuscripts are of the same catena category (e.7.i).³⁹

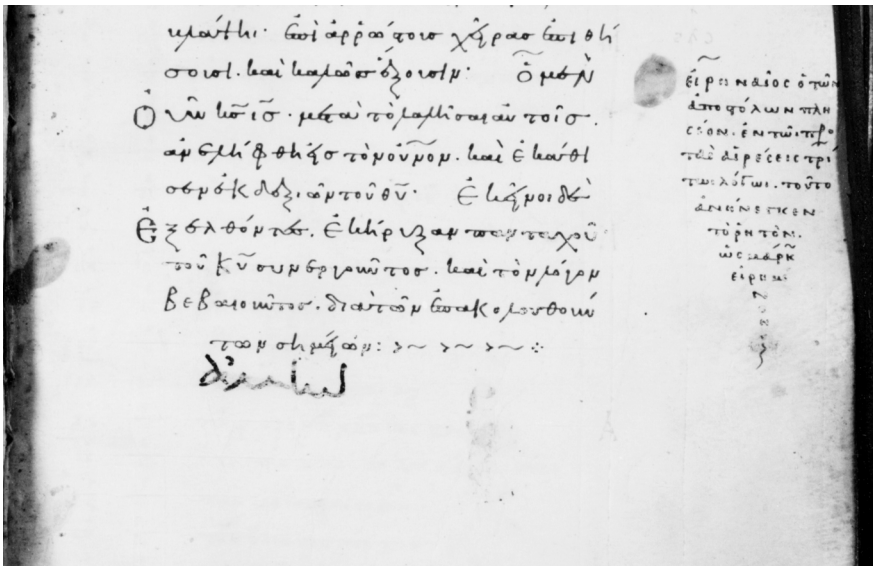


Fig. 2. Athos, Vatopedi 949 (GA 1582), f. 134r. The scholion of Irenaeus (right) next to verse 16:19. Licence: Public Domain. Credit: Library of Congress Collection of Manuscripts from the Monastery of Mt Athos.

36 Several scholars confidently locate allusions to verses in the Long Ending in Justin Martyr and *Epistula Apostolorum*. See Robinson 2008, 70. Stein 2008, 82. However, these views offer only indecisive evidence on such dubious allusions such as the three words common between Mark 16:20 and Justin's Apol. 1.45.5 (ἐξεληθόντες πανταχοῦ ἐκήκραξαν). In the best case, it would be largely inferential. Cf. Kelhoffer 2000, 170. Metzger 2005, 124. As for the *Diatessaron* of Tatian, Justin's student, it has most probably used the Long Ending but, again, we cannot consider that as a certainty without further research on its translations, since the original text was lost.

37 Anderson 2014, 119. See also her same conclusion in light of Matthew's collation in Anderson 2004, 146.

38 Tommy Wasserman (2022) has also reported its presence in GA 2954.

39 See Parpulov 2021, 95–7.

‘According to the Egyptians’

Despite the fact that the Irenaeus scholion was spotted in GA 72 by earlier writers, a curious silence falls upon scholarship regarding the scholion that appears after it.⁴⁰ This scholion appears on the top margin of f. 133r, above the last verse (16:20; fig. 3).

It states that Jesus ascended to heaven when he was thirty-two years of age, and that the ascension took place on the tenth of Pachon, ‘according to the Egyptians’. Then, it continues unfolding what happened, as Jesus is enthroned in heavens, and will eventually come back to judge everyone. The language of the text appears to be influenced by the New Testament. The use of ‘the Only-Begotten one’ and Jesus’ ascension to ‘his God and Father in heaven’ are reminiscent of John 1:18 and 20:17, respectively. Further, we have a verbatim agreement with Eph 1:21, while the concluding words (ἀποδοῦναι ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ) are close to Matt 16:27. However, the nature of the scholion and its details are not as clear as these New Testament citations might lead us to think. As a whole, the scholion does not offer an explanation to the Markan text. Neither is it a liturgical note or a spiritual teaching. It appears as a narrative or a sequel to what happened to Jesus after he ‘had spoken to them’ (Mark 16:19): Jesus ascended (ἀνελήφθη), enthroned (σύνθρονον γενέσθαι), and will return (ἐλεύσεται). So, the question of what it is may not be clear. Interestingly, this scholion is not entirely uncommon. I found it in at least nine witnesses.⁴¹ These witnesses do not represent a single

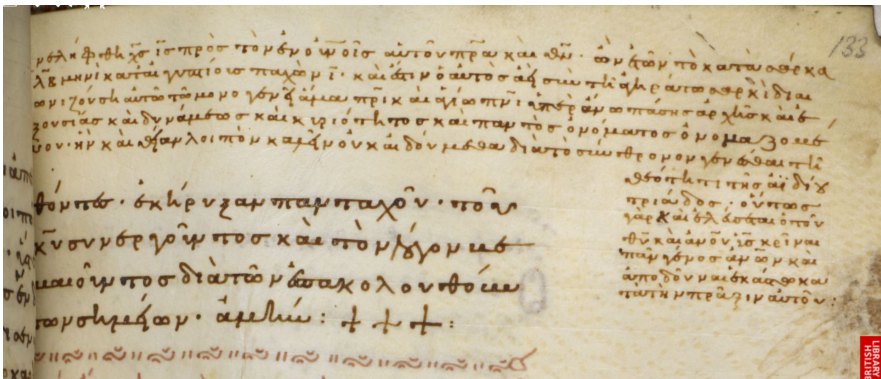


Fig. 3. London, British Library, Harley 5647 (GA 72), f. 133r: the scholion. © British Library Board.

40 In 1950, K. W. Kim noticed that scholion and briefly registered his intrigue, quoting the first line only, and suggested that it seemed to be a ‘free quotation’. Kim 1950, 170.

41 GA 19, 63, 72, 222, 391, 800, 809, 989 and 1313.

type of commentary, or a continuous text, but they all have this scholion next to the end of Mark 16:20 or next to its subscriptio, despite the fact that the ascension is mentioned in Luke as well. There is no attribution of this **scholion** to any author, which makes tracing its origins difficult.

Perhaps the most mysterious aspect of its content is the tradition behind Jesus' ascension age and date, being attributed to the Egyptians: 'Ἀνελήφθη Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς πρὸς τὸν ἐν οὐρανοῖς αὐτοῦ Πατέρα καὶ Θεόν, ὧν ἐτῶν τὸ κατὰ σάρκα Λβ', μηνὶ κατ' Αἰγυπτίους Παχῶν ι'' (see Appendix below for the edition and translation). The first possibility to strike one's mind is that it was taken from the Egyptian calendar: the 10th of Pachon (ΠΑΧΩΝ - بَشْنَس). However, there is no known evidence that a fixed date was given to the feast of ascension. The date of celebrating the feast of ascension moves along with Easter, which has been calculated using the Epact Computus, proposed by Demetrius the bishop of Alexandria, since the late second century.⁴² This creates other questions; Was it drawn from a very early tradition that precedes Demetrius' computus? Why was this calendrical note used in such a number of copies done across the Mediterranean, and not just Egypt? Usually, when a reference to a date that falls in the Egyptian calendar is made, it is coupled with its equivalent date in the local calendar, notably 'of the Romans'.⁴³ Why does such a calendar 'according to the Egyptians' matter to the Greeks and Antiochenes i.e. why would the Melkite scribe of GA 72 add this scholion, despite the fact that he did not add any other scholia in Mark (except Irenaeus' scholion), Luke or John? And if the source comes from Egypt, which remains as a speculation, why would the writer remind his fellow Egyptians that the date was 'according to the Egyptians'?

It appears to me that reading it as a note driven from a calendrical or liturgical source might be the reason for such complications. This leads us to explore the possibility that another text, either known to be *According to the Egyptians*,⁴⁴ or simply an Egyptian text, be the source. While we cannot identify the source document, a certain work that survives in one papyrus sheds light on the existence of a similar type of a gospel: *Papyrus Cairensis* 10735.

42 In fact, if Easter is celebrated after the 21st of Parmouti (ΠΑΡΜΟΥΤΕ), ascension goes beyond Pachon to fall in Paoni (ΠΑΩΝΙ). On the method of calculating ascension and the traditions of the Coptic church see Mosshamer 2008, 109–129. See also Atiya 1991, 433–436.

43 Numerous examples of how the Egyptian calendar is used next to other calendars can be found in the documents of Byzantine historians. See for example the chronicles of George Syncellus and Nicephorus in *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*. See Niebuhr 1829, 40–41.

44 Of course we already know of the Gospel of the Egyptians, which was used in second-century Alexandria.

Based on palaeographical assessment, this papyrus fragment was dated to the sixth or seventh century, and it is currently preserved in the Egyptian museum of Cairo, but the Gospel itself should be dated earlier.⁴⁵ The fragment contains a text on the nativity of Jesus, with material common with Matthew and Luke, but the striking *hapax legomena* and extra details make it difficult to simply assert that the Gospel was based on the canonical accounts. For this reason, J. K. Elliott included it as one of his sources for his synopsis of the nativity narratives.⁴⁶ Deissmann's careful construction, which has been followed by later scholars, helps us see a similar case. In the verso we have the following:

ὁ [δὲ ἀρχιστράτηγός] φησι τῇ παρθένῳ. ἰδοὺ Ἐλισάβετ ἡ συγγενὴς σου κ(αι) αὐτὴ συνέληφε καὶ ἔκτο[ς] ἐστὶ μὴν αὐτῇ τῇ κα[λουμένη] στειρά. ἐν] τῷ ἔκτω, ὃ ἐστὶν [θῶθ, μηνὶ ἢ μ(ή)τηρ ἄρα Ἰω]άννην συνέλαβε.

Then the leader of hosts said to the virgin, 'Behold Elizabeth your relative has also conceived and it is the sixth month for her who has been called barren'. In the sixth month of the year, which is (called) Thoth, the mother of John conceived him.⁴⁷

In this passage, we see that the author adds an explanatory reference to the name of the month in the Coptic calendar, which is in this case Thoth (Θωογτ). Thoth is indeed the month in which the Coptic church celebrates the angel's annunciation to Zechariah the priest of the birth of John the Baptist until today. Assuming that the construction of this passage is correct: what is the coincidence that two Egyptian traditions share this peculiar dating style in a narrative? Could a similar Egyptian Gospel, if not that one itself, be the source of the tradition about Jesus' ascension age and date? The source(s) behind this scholion remains a mystery.

It is also worth noting that the text of the first sentence is relatively unstable amongst the nine witnesses. Of these cases, the most peculiar one is the reading of GA 800 (f. 105v), recently spotted by Zachary Skarka,⁴⁸ which says:

Ἀνελήφθη Χριστός Ἰησοῦς πρὸς τὸν ἐν οὐρανοῖς αὐτοῦ Πατέρα, ὧν ἐτῶν τὸ κατὰ σάρκα Λβ', μὴ κατ' αἰγυπτίους ια'.

Christ Jesus was lifted up to his Father in heaven, being of age 32 according to the flesh, not 11 according to the Egyptians.

45 Deissmann 1910, 441–445. The papyrus was first listed in Grenfell and Hunt 1903. The most recent analysis can be found in Kraus et al. 2009, 240–251. The author is grateful to Dan Batovici for providing some of this material that was otherwise inaccessible to me.

46 Elliott 2006, xvi.

47 Text and translation of Ehrman and Pleše 2011, 243. Elliott 2005, 36–37.

48 See <http://www.csntm.org/Blog/Archive/2020/5/26/FTL_GA800>.

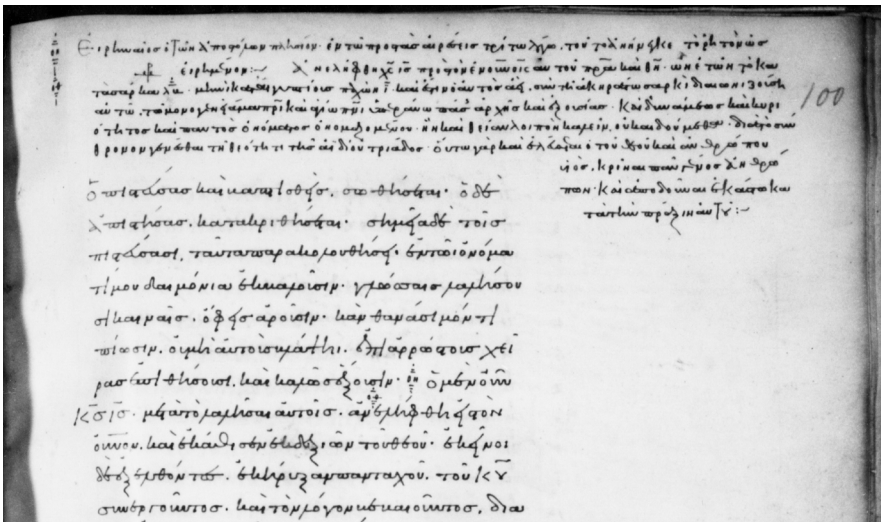


Fig. 4. Jerusalem, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, Panagios Taphos 28 (GA 1313), f. 100r: the two scholia appear together. Licence: Public Domain. Credit: Library of Congress Collection of Manuscripts in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

This version of the scholion generally reflects changes in words that have Christological connotation,⁴⁹ and in this sentence we can see that *καὶ θεόν* was omitted. Further, we also note that *μή* replaced *μηνὶ* (month), *Παχών* was removed and number 10, which was supposed to be the day of the ascension, became 11. One explanation for the change of ‘month’ to ‘not’ is a scribal mistake. In fact, a later corrector corrected this reading by adding the missing letters *vi*. However, this cannot be the reason for the omission of the name of the month, and the change of the date from 10 to 11, let alone the other changes through the scholion. Did the scribe edit the scholion to address an apocryphal tradition regarding Jesus’ ascension date? As it stands, the scribe denies a tradition ‘according to the Egyptians’ stating that Jesus was eleven years old when he ascended, by giving the correct age (32). The childhood of the ascended Jesus might seem odd, but it is not entirely unusual in apocryphal literature.⁵⁰ Therefore, this version could also bear traces to an ancient tradition we are yet unaware of.

49 See the apparatus in the Appendix below.

50 See for instance Jesus appears as a boy in Acts of Peter 21, Jesus appearing to John as a child in the prologue of the Apocryphon of John, the child Jesus guiding Paul in the Revelation of Paul 18, etc. On the rationale behind Jesus’ depiction as a young boy, see Taylor 2018, 85. I will not investigate it further in this article since it is beyond its scope.

Finally, it is worth noting that the two scholia in GA 72 appear together as well in two more witnesses: GA 809 and GA 1313 (see fig. 4). GA 809 and GA 1313 are correctly registered as catena manuscripts. If this catena was the source for GA 72's readings and the two scholia, one should wonder why the scribe did not use the catena elsewhere at all, contending himself with these two scholia on Mark 16? Not only do these three manuscripts share the presence of the two scholia together, they also share close readings.

The text of GA 809 is almost identical with GA 72. This includes the rare GA 72 readings of εἶπον (16:7) and τοιαῦτα (16:17) mentioned before. Further, the most interesting common reading between GA 72 and GA 809 is the omission of περιπατοῦσιν in Mark 16:12 (see fig. 5). As noted above, this omission is only found in the core members of Family 1. Further, GA 809 adds περιπατοῦσιν in the right margin as an alternative reading with the symbol ΓΡ (f. 149r, see fig. 5), just as it is found in the Family 1 core member GA 2193 (f. 124v).

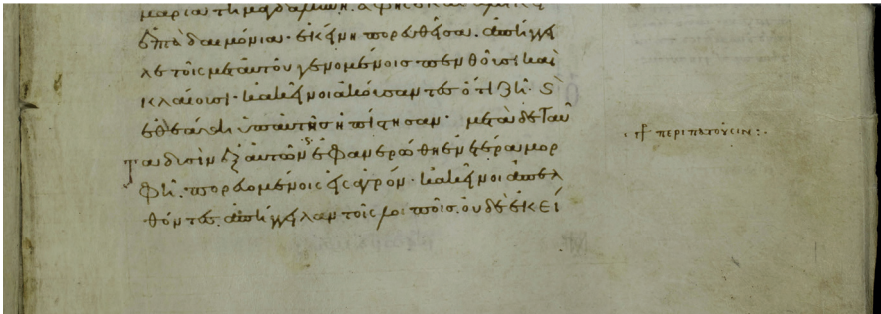


Fig. 5. Athens, Ἐθνικὴ βιβλιοθήκη τῆς Ἑλλάδος, 2364 (Codex Atheniensis, GA 809), f. 149r. © National Library of Greece.

In this section, we saw that the paratext of Mark 16 in this codex contained peculiar materials. The extended sections of the Eusebian canon are not amongst the common solutions to the Long Ending's canonicity, as found in other Greek manuscripts. While the Gospel of Mark, Luke and John have no commentaries or scholia on their text, Mark 16 stands out as a unique case with two scholia on the ascension of Jesus. These scholia have drawn my attention to other manuscripts that also share readings of family 1, such as GA 809.

4. Concluding Remarks

This article has reviewed what we know about the transmission history of MS London, British Library, Harley 5647 (GA 72). Then, by providing data on the

variants and readings of its text in Mark 16, it showed that the last chapter of Mark in this codex stands out with a peculiar character. This data showed how the readings agree with Family 1's core-group readings, in terms of quantity and quality (characteristic readings). By moving to its paratext, I explored the peculiar nature of its extended Ammonian/Eusebian numbers given to the Long Ending. We also saw the peculiarity of Mark 16 as it has two interesting scholia, despite the fact that the codex has no other comments on the rest of Mark (as well as Luke and John). Of these two paratexts, one appears in Family 1's prominent core-group member GA 1582, while the second, provides peculiar traditions that are hitherto unknown. This article provides a set of new witnesses for these two scholia. Finally, of these witnesses this article highlighted the text of GA 809 which is close to GA 72, with readings shared with Family 1 as well, which should be added to the witnesses of these readings, such as the omission of *περιπατοῦσιν* in 16:12.

From this data we can make the following remarks. First, there is a strong possibility that GA 72's text of Mark 16 comes from a different exemplar that is much closer to Family 1's core group. Was this exemplar used out of necessity? For instance, this part of Mark might have been damaged in the main exemplar, which prompted the copyist to consult another copy. However, this scribe may have also used that exemplar for fact-checking parts of the Gospels with disputed canonicity, like the Long Ending. The reason is because we can see that the scribe dropped out the *pericope adulterae* from his copy of John. The omission of this pericope is not exclusively associated with Family 1,⁵¹ but the cumulation of observations strongly supports the case for drawing our attention to Family 1.⁵² This should also be put in the context of Lake's observation of how the readings of Mark in Family 1 are close to Old Syriac.⁵³ Was Ephraim, the established scribe of GA 1582 whose typically Antiochian name was uncommon in tenth-century Hellenic circles,⁵⁴ the bridge between the exemplar of GA 72 and the archetype of Family 1? This potential connection should be left as an open case for future enquiry.

We should also learn from this data that a codex could fall victim to scholarly generalisations. In GA 72's case, we can see that the generalisation of putting this codex in the less favoured 'Byzantine' family II, must have drawn the scholars' attention away from its rich content. Further, labelling it as a catena made it seem to be *another commentary* manuscript. This has eclipsed the scholia of Mark 16, and particularly the one that preserves tradi-

51 On its attestation and omission see Knust and Wasserman 2020.

52 I have already discussed the correlation between the Long Ending and the pericope adulterae across the sub-groups of Family 1. See Monier 2022.

53 See the lists of readings in Mark and Lake's comment in Lake 1902, 1–lxiii.

54 Anderson 2004. Welsby 2011, 24.

tions ‘according to the Egyptians’. The case of Mark 16 in GA 72 warns us against these generalisations.

This article invites future scholarship to provide a full and careful collation of the entire codex of GA 72 and to analyse the codices that share its paratexts, and particularly GA 809. This could provide further context to readings and variants found elsewhere and may also shed more light on the history behind the readings of Family 1. Another aspect of no less importance is to pursue the possibility to bridge our knowledge gap in its transmission history. Namely, how it reached the shores of England and in what way it was received in the collection of Sir Robert Harley. The ethical and historical questions regarding how Middle Eastern codices found their way to the private collections of wealthy Europeans has been subject to heated debates and dedicated projects.⁵⁵ This question is not simply a matter of the past, but it remains as relevant as ever, in the light of similar circumstances that surround other codices in places like contemporary Syria and Iraq.⁵⁶ Finally, by providing an apparatus of the scholia in the following appendix, the author hopes that it will help future scholars to pursue the tradition(s) behind this unusual paratext.⁵⁷

55 There are numerous projects working on similar cases. Most notably, Brent Nongbri is leading project EthiCodex which tracks the history and ethical standing of the acquisition of early Greek and Latin manuscripts in European archives. See <<https://earlyhistoryofthecodex.com/>>. See also Stefaniw 2021.

56 For example, on what happened to the Arabic Diatessaron manuscripts held in Aleppo during the war, see Monier and Taylor 2021, 210.

57 I used the text of GA 72 as the base text, unless the other eight witnesses agree against it in a specific variant, such as the case of ἀγγράτω. I implemented the critical signs used in NA28. See Aland et al. 2012 (NA28), 56–57.

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