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# Liturgy and Beyond: Byzantine Prayer Books (*Euchologia*) and their Study. An Introduction

Claudia RAPP, with Eirini AFENTOULIDOU, Achraf BRAHIM,  
Daniel GALADZA, Ágnes T. MIHÁLYKÓ, Georgi MITOV, Giulia  
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*The Vienna Euchologia Project and its Aims; The Earliest Euchologia on Papyrus; Greek Euchologia and their Manuscripts; Manuscripts of Melkite Euchologia in Arabic and Syriac: Preliminary Observations; Attestations of (euchologion) Prayers in Hagiography; Prayers for Blessing Food on Pascha in Byzantine Greek Euchologia (8th–13th cent.); Prayers for Childbirth; Prayers for Brother-Making (adelphopoiesis) and Pious Confraternities*

Among the essential items for the liturgical life of a community, whether in a village in Cappadocia or the city of Constantinople, was the *euchologion*. Typically, a *euchologion* includes the eucharistic liturgies of Saint Basil of Caesarea and/or Saint John Chrysostom, and occasionally that of Saint James. It also comprises the “sacramental liturgies” that accompany an individual’s life cycle: for engagement and marriage, baptism, and funerals.

Additionally, *euchologia* contain short prayers for special occasions (thus termed “small prayers” or “occasional prayers”) which offer a glimpse into private family life and concerns, as well as agricultural activities, from sowing seeds to harvesting. These prayers cover a wide range of situations: a woman’s miscarriage, the churching of an infant, a child’s first day at school, the cutting of a boy’s first beard, prayers creating fraternal bonds between two individuals and larger groups, preparations for the grape harvest, the blessing of cheese (and eggs) on Easter, or adjusting the altar in a church after an earthquake. These

occasional prayers provide rich material for social history and the study of daily life, offering a keyhole view into the lives of the vast majority in Byzantium or, to use the terminology currently preferred by many, medieval East Rome. Individual scholars have mined this material for specific aspects of social history, but a systematic study of the entire body of evidence in manuscript form requires a larger collaborative effort.<sup>1</sup>

Since 2015, the Vienna Euchologia Project (VEP) has begun a systematic exploration of these occasional prayers and the manuscripts in which they are preserved. This project, based at the Department of Byzantine Research within the Institute for Medieval Research of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and partially funded by the Austrian National Research Fund (FWF),<sup>2</sup> is led by Professor Claudia Rapp (University of Vienna and Austrian Academy of Sciences) and includes team members Dr. Eirini Afentoulidou (Austrian Academy of Sciences), Dr. Ilias Nesseris (formerly Austrian Academy of Sciences, now independent scholar), Dr. Giulia Rossetto (Austrian Academy of Sciences), Dr. Elisabeth Schiffer (Austrian Academy of Sciences), and more recently Dr. Renate Burri (now University of Fribourg, Switzerland), as well as Mag. Achraf Brahim (University of Vienna) and Mag. Georgi Mitov (Austrian Academy of Sciences).

- 1 Examples of the scholarship on specific *euchologia* prayers are: Jane Baun, *Coming of Age in Byzantium. Agency and Authority in Rites of Passage from Infancy to Adulthood*, in Pamela Armstrong (ed.), *Authority in Byzantium*, Ashgate, Surrey 2013, 113-135; Gabriel Radle, “When Infants Begin to Toddle: A Liturgical Rite of Passage in the Greco-Arabic Manuscript Sinai NF/MG 53”, in *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* 11 (2014), 159-168; Claudia Rapp, *Ritual Brotherhood in Byzantium: Monks, Laymen and Christian Ritual*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016; Gabriel Radle, “The Veiling of Women in Byzantium: Liturgy, Hair, and Identity in a Medieval Rite of Passage”, in *Speculum* 94/4 (2019), 1070-1115; Nina Glibetic, “Orthodox Liturgical Rites at Pregnancy Loss: Ritual Miscarriage, Stillbirth, and Abortion in Late Byzantium”, in *Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies* 4/2 (2022), 151-179. To these should be added the studies by Eirini Afentoulidou, Ilias Nesseris, Elisabeth Schiffer and Claudia Rapp in the context of the Vienna Euchologia Project, as further explained below.
- 2 FWF Project P 34090 Liturgy, Libraries and Learning. The Evidence from Byzantine Euchologia (ongoing); FWF Project P28219-G25 Daily Life and Religion. Byzantine Prayer Books as Sources for Social History (2015-2019).

As an international cooperation partner, Professor Daniel Galadza (Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Rome) offers valuable insights from the perspective of liturgical studies, while Dr. Ágnes T. Mihálykó (St Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological Institute, formerly University of Oslo) with her expertise in the early tradition, as evidenced by prayers preserved on papyrus, has joined the team as a cooperation partner, funded by the Norwegian Research Council.

On 11 May, at the kind invitation of Fr András Dobos and Fr Miklós Gyurkovics, we were able to present the project and some of our preliminary results at the St. Athanasius Theological Seminary in Nyíregyháza, in the presence of His Eminence the Metropolitan Fülöp Kocsis, His Grace the Bishop Atanáz Orosz, and His Grace the Bishop Ábel Szocska, where we experienced generous hospitality and a warm welcome. Our presentations resulted in lively discussions that demonstrated the value of such scholarly exchanges and pointed to further topics of mutual interest that might be worth exploring in the future.

The following is a summary of our presentations, beginning with an overview of the work of the VEP, followed by presentations of the thematically focused work of individual team members.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Vienna Euchologia Project and its Aims*

The entry point of the VEP is social history and manuscript studies, as we approach the material from a cultural history perspective, with Daniel Galadza providing essential expertise in liturgical studies. Our collaborative project has two main goals: (1) to demonstrate the importance of *euchologia* as a source for daily life and social history through a series of individual, thematically focused studies, and (2)

3 Renate Burri's work for the VEP has concentrated on late Byzantine manuscripts containing *euchologia*. Ilias Nesseris, who was unable to join us on this occasion, specializes on prayers within the context of education, prayers said in the first person, and prayers by known authors.



to establish a solid foundation of materials and methodologies for studying Byzantine *euchologia* in manuscript form, including creating a census of manuscripts and a database of prayers. At the focus of our project are *euchologia* manuscripts written in Greek from the late 8th century, when the tradition sets in, until 1650, when the printed tradition began (though copying by hand continued). As we make our materials accessible, we aim to ensure that they can be of use to scholars in a wide variety of specializations, not only social and cultural history, but also including manuscript studies and liturgical studies.

Prayer books are made for the use of priests. They are simple, utilitarian objects, often written on palimpsest, as Giulia Rossetto explains further below. The manuscripts tend to be of small (155x115 mm) or medium size (200x145 mm), so that the priest can hold the codex in his hands as he performs the prayers. Depending on the occasion, the *euchologion* could be used inside a church, either in the bema or in the congregational space, or in other locations, such as the private home in the case of childbed prayers, or in the fields under the open sky for prayers relating to agricultural activity.

The oldest extant manuscript, known as the Barberini *euchologion*, was transcribed in majuscule letters during the late eighth century in Southern Italy (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barberinus graecus 336 [Diktyon: Diktyon 64879]).<sup>4</sup> The first printed *euchologion* appeared in Venice in 1526,<sup>5</sup> but it was not until the early 17th century, amid counter-reformation scholarship, that Byzantine liturgical texts saw widespread circulation in print, largely due to the Dominican scholar Jacques Goar. Goar's work was based on manuscripts he examined in the Vatican library and the Monastery of Grottaferrata near Rome that had been

4 Digital copies of the manuscript are available here: [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Barb.gr.336](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Barb.gr.336). Most recent edition: Елена Велковска – Стефано Паренти, *Евхологий Барберини гр. 336. Издание текста, предисловие и примечания*, Голованов, Омск 2011.

5 The *euchologia* printed in Venice in the 16th century are the subject of the dissertation of Samuel Bauer at the University of Regensburg, entitled "From Jerusalem and Constantinople to Venice and Rome: Towards a History of 16th Century Byzantine Liturgical Printing".

founded by Nilus of Rossano in Calabria in 1004, i.e. before the split between Rome and Constantinople. Goar's *Euchologion* was meant for scholarly study rather than liturgical use, with the first edition printed in 1647 in Paris.<sup>6</sup> In 1895, Aleksei Dmitrievskii published extensive descriptions of numerous *euchologia*, occasionally including the full text of individual prayers. His work drew on manuscripts from Athos monasteries, Saint Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai, the Monastery of Saint John in Patmos, and other Eastern Mediterranean sites.<sup>7</sup>

It is reasonable to assume that over the centuries, each priest, church, and monastery owned at least one, and often several, prayer books. The inventories of many monasteries list *euchologia* among their holdings, often in multiple copies, that must have come into their possession as bequests or as gifts. Within our project, we have gathered information for well over 1100 manuscripts, based on printed catalogs. At the present moment, we know of 165 codices which are dated and contain further relevant information about the circumstances of their production. Of these, 123 also have the name of scribe, and 33 indicate the place where they were copied. This group is the subject of ongoing research within the VEP that was begun by Ilias Nesseris and continued by Renate Burri.

While our work with individual manuscripts takes a holistic approach, treating each codex as a cultural object in its own right, the focus of the VEP lies on the occasional prayers. These are typically brief, usually around 70 to 150 words, and often follow a three-part structure. They start with an address to God, followed by an *anamnesis* that recalls God's interventions in the Biblical past. This is succeeded by a supplication for the current concern (*epiklesis*) and ends with a declaration of God's goodness (*ekphonesis*). The final doxology praises

6 Jacques Goar, *Euchologion sive rituale Graecorum*, Piget, Paris 1647. The second, corrected edition (Javarina, Venice 1730) was reprinted (Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, Graz 1960).

7 Алексей Дмитриевский, *Описание литургических рукописей, хранящихся в библиотекахъ православнаго востока*, 2: Еудолбуца, Типографія Г.Т. Корчакъ-Новицкаго, Кіевъ 1901.

the triune God, often with an eschatological perspective. Although these prayers are recited by a priest, they are frequently voiced in the first person plural, representing the collective faithful (“we”). The *anamnesis* often includes references to Scripture, while the *epiklesis* may mention Biblical figures, Christian saints, or martyrs. Along with the Holy Trinity, the doxology might also reference the Theotokos (“Mother of God”).

It is essential to differentiate between the prayer text (identified by the *incipit*) and the prayer concern (identified by the prayer title: *euche eis...*). Multiple prayers can address the same concern, appearing in different manuscripts or even within the same manuscript. Complicating matters further, the same prayer text may be reused and adapted for different concerns over time.<sup>8</sup> There is no definitive classification or edition of the occasional prayers to date, and the full range of issues they address remains unknown. Based on our current knowledge, we estimate that there are at least 800 different prayer texts for about 200 different prayer concerns, which we have further categorized using more than 400 keywords.

The VEP’s working methods and published results are accessible on our website at the Austrian Academy of Sciences.<sup>9</sup>

One of our achievements is that the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG), at the University of California, Irvine, a searchable electronic database of Greek texts from classical antiquity to about 1500, has decided to add liturgical texts in medieval Greek to their database, based on core texts the Euchologia Project has made available, with other materials now being added thanks to further collaborations. Scholars who are searching for Greek words and phrases are now also guided to the rich heritage of liturgical writing. More recently, thanks to a fruitful collaboration with colleagues in Ukraine at a time

8 G. Radle, “When Infants Begin to Toddle”, 159-168.

9 <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/imafo/research/byzantine-research/communities-and-landscapes/euchologia-project> (Access: 30.07.2024).

of war and adversity, we were able to publish an English version of Dmitrievskii's *Euchologia*, with new prefatory materials, both online and in print.<sup>10</sup> Next will be the publication of a *Checklist of Occasional Prayers in Printed Editions* (COPE), that lists the occasional prayers by incipit and further identify them by prayer title that indicates the prayer concern. A list of keywords offers orientation regarding the content of each prayer.

Beyond these immediate goals, the team is working on a systematic study of the manuscripts that can be localized in time and space, and on a database of prayers that allows for searches about specific concerns. In this manner, we hope to contribute both to a more profound understanding of the rich tradition of *euchologia* manuscripts, and to making the occasional prayers accessible for further study of the social history of the Greek middle ages.

In the longer perspective, our endeavors are intended to lay the groundwork for an expansion of these investigations into non-Greek traditions and into the post-Byzantine periods, where there is rich material awaiting further collaborative study.

*The Earliest Euchologia on Papyrus*

*Ágnes T. Mihálykó (St Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological Institute, Nyíregyháza)*

The earliest *euchologia* that have been physically preserved are fragments of codices and leaflets written on papyrus and parchment found in the dry sand of Egypt. The earliest among them can be dated on palaeographical grounds to the fourth century, when instead of the

10 Ilias Nesseris – Daniel Galadza – Elisabeth Schiffer – Eirini Afentoulidou – Giulia Rossetto – Claudia Rapp (eds.), *Dmitrievskii's Euchologia. A Modified English Version of Volume II of Aleksei Dmitrievskii's Description of Liturgical Manuscripts Preserved in the Libraries of the Orthodox East (Kyiv 1901)*, Kyivan Christianity Series 32, Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv 2023, Open Access: <https://er.ucu.edu.ua/handle/1/4126> (Access: 30.07.2024)

previous custom of improvised prayers, the bishops promoted written prayer collections to ensure that their priests celebrate the services with grammatically correct and theologically sound prayers.<sup>11</sup> These early *euchologia* were probably short leaflets with a couple of prayers; the only one preserved intact in a fourth-century miscellaneous codex, P. Monts. Roca inv. 154b-156a, contains only four prayers, which may have constituted a complete eucharistic service.<sup>12</sup> However, prayers were also written individually on single papyrus sheets, potsherd and limestone ostraca, or wooden tablets;<sup>13</sup> indeed, these individual, *ad hoc* recordings constitute the majority of the preserved material. Altogether 91 copies of prayers are known so far. The early ones were in Greek, but from the sixth century onwards prayers started to be translated into the Sahidic and Fayumic dialects of Coptic.<sup>14</sup> The majority contain prayers for the liturgy of the eucharist (44 copies), and several others are for the cathedral liturgy of the hours (12 copies) or for monastic private prayer (9 copies), whereas other occasions, such as baptism, monastic initiation, the churching of the infant, the anointing of the sick, or venomous bites, are attested by one or two copies. Many prayers are preserved in only one papyrus and not known otherwise, though some are recited up to this day in the Coptic service. Currently I am working on a new edition of these fragmentary but precious testimonies in a two-volume corpus. The first volume, containing the prayers of the Eucharist, will appear in the *Mittheilungen aus der Sammlung der Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer* series.

11 On the change from improvised to written prayers, see Allan Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula: The Evolution of the Eucharistic Prayer from Oral Improvisation to Written Texts*, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. 1983; Achim Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora: Text – Kommentar – Geschichte*, Jerusalem Theologisches Forum 7, Aschendorff, Münster 2004, 553-559; Ágnes T. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri: An Introduction*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2019, 224-241.

12 On these prayers, see now Nathan Chase, *The Anaphoral Tradition in the “Barcelona Papyrus”*, *Studia Traditionis Theologiae* 53, Brepols, Turnhout 2023.

13 On the formats of liturgical papyri, see A. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 153-187.

14 See A. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 259-265.

*Greek Euchologia and their Manuscripts*

Giulia Rossetto (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna)

The object of our investigation in the context of the Vienna Euchologia Project is the *euchologion* in its handwritten form, copied on parchment or paper before the 1647 printed edition by Jacques Goar.<sup>15</sup> The oldest Byzantine *euchologia*, up to the ninth century, were written with majuscule letters, the most famous one being the Barberini *euchologion* (Vatican Library, Barb. gr. 336 [Diktyon 64879]).<sup>16</sup> However, the greatest majority is written with minuscule letters. By whom? When present, colophons inform us that copyists of *euchologia* were priests or priestmonks, deacons, monks, bishops. One interesting example is the *euchologion* Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 259 (Diktyon 46507), written by the priest John with the help of his mother Zoe in the year 1257. Usually, *euchologia* manuscripts are not luxurious books. They are rather pocket format, so that priests could easily carry them; they are written filling most of the available space in the page, show heavy signs of wear, and are copied on bad quality parchment (with holes and creases, but also on recycled parchment). On the basis of the manuscripts analysed by the team, the percentage of recycled or palimpsest parchment sides in *euchologia* manuscripts is around 25% of the total parchment sides, a considerable number.<sup>17</sup>

15 Jacques Goar, *EYXOΛOΓION sive rituale Graecorum*.

16 See footnote 3 above.

17 Claudia Rapp et al., “Byzantine Prayer Books as Sources for Social History and Daily Life”, in *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 67 (2017), 183-191; Giulia Rossetto, *Greek Palimpsests at Saint Catherine’s Monastery (Sinai): Three Euchologia as Case Studies*, Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung 44, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna 2023, 13.

*Euchologia* were used daily, and therefore they are rich of signs of use: wax drops, wine stains, annotations in Greek or other languages. In our team we pay special attention to such signs, because they can help us to understand how these manuscripts were used over time, could be adapted to local needs, and used – for instance – by non-native Greek speakers.<sup>18</sup>

*Manuscripts of Melkite Euchologia in Arabic and Syriac:  
Preliminary Observations*

*Achraf Ibrahim (University of Vienna)*

Whereas the study of Greek-language *euchologia* is ever-growing, there is yet no study of pre-modern Melkite *euchologia* in Syriac and Arabic. These Aramaic- and Arabic-speaking Chalcedonian Christians from the Patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, likely started producing *euchologia* manuscripts between the ninth and tenth centuries, mostly in Syriac. A preliminary survey of thirty digitized non-Greek manuscripts from the Monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai classified under the category “*euchologion*” and covering the period between the eighth and 17th centuries reveals that most such manuscripts are in Syriac alone, with only five written partially or fully in Arabic.<sup>19</sup> Aside from this linguistic trend, half of the manuscripts are dated to the 13th century, a period characterized by an influx to the Sinai of refugees from Syria-Palestine during the Crusader-Mamluk wars and the Mongol invasion that also saw an increase of copying activities on Mount Sinai under the tenure of Bishop Arsenios. Melkite

18 On this topic see for instance: Giulia Rossetto, *Multilingual Annotations, Scribes and Owners in the Byzantine Euchologia of Saint Catherine's Monastery*, in Adrian Pirtea (ed.), *Monastic Literature in Early Islamic Palestine and Sinai*, Special Issue of the COMSt Bulletin (forthcoming).

19 The Sinai Digital Manuscript Library <https://sinaimanuscripts.library.ucla.edu> (Access: 30.07.2024). The classification and dating of some of these manuscripts, particularly those of the New Finds collection, requires further investigation.

*euchologia* manuscripts are preserved in many libraries even outside the Levant. They often feature complex patterns of multilingualism, with alternations in the use of Syriac, Arabic, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, and/or Greek. Although there have been general studies on multilingualism in Melkite liturgy, an investigation of this phenomenon in Melkite *euchologia* manuscripts, which represents a stark difference with Byzantine Greek *euchologia*, remains a desideratum.<sup>20</sup> The marriage sacrament from the *euchologion* Paris Syr. 100 is an interesting example.<sup>21</sup> While classified under the category of Syriac manuscripts, it showcases a frequent alternation between Syriac and Arabic, with a few phrases in Greek Garshuni, i.e., Greek written using the Syriac alphabet. Here, Syriac is used for prayers not directly involving the couple and congregation, while Arabic is used for prayers and sermons intended to be understood by the attendees. This pattern, however, cannot be generalized. A thorough survey of Melkite *euchologia* manuscripts in Syriac and Arabic may shed light on the diversity of multilingual trends and how they vary depending on the difference between monastic and cathedral rites and based on period and region. My dissertation aims to investigate these phenomena in order to gain a better understanding of the many adaptations of religious practice that the *euchologia* manuscripts can reveal.

20 Daniel Galadza – Alex C. J. Neroth van Vogelpoel, “Multilingualism in the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom Among the Melkites”, *ARAM* 31/1-2 (2019), 35-50; Johannes Pahlitzsch, *Greek - Syriac - Arabic: The Relationship Between Liturgical and Colloquial Languages in Melkite Palestine in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, in Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (ed.), *Languages and Cultures of Eastern Christianity: Greek, The Worlds of Eastern Christianity, 300-1500*, vol. 6, Routledge, Abingdon-on-Thames 2015, 495-505.

21 <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b100877347.r=syriaque%20100?rk=42918;430.07.2024> (Access: 30.07.2024)



*Attestations of (euchologion) Prayers in Hagiography*

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Apart from *euchologia* manuscripts, prayers are also attested in hagiographical texts. The *Life of Nicholas of Sion* (BHG 1347), written in the middle of the sixth century, is one example.<sup>22</sup> Vincenzo Ruggieri demonstrated that a prayer taken verbatim from the service for monastic initiation, found in some later Byzantine *euchologia*, has been incorporated into the hagiographical text.<sup>23</sup> Some more examples of the inclusion of prayers can be found in the *Life of Symeon the Holy Fool* (BHG 1677), written by Leontius, the bishop of Neapolis in Cyprus, in the middle of the seventh century. It should be noted that in most cases the prayers were composed by the hagiographer who followed the structure and the language formulae of prayers, as they are attested in the *euchologion*.<sup>24</sup> A typical structure consists of an invocation, followed by *anamnesis* (reminder of God's action in related situations in the past), *epiklesis* (specific request), *ekphonesis* and concluding with a doxology. However, one of the prayers (inc.: “Ἐπίβλεψον ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς ὁ Θεὸς”) closely resembles the anaphora from the liturgy of Basil of Caesarea.<sup>25</sup> Thus, on the basis of their connection with prayers from the *euchologion*, a preliminary typology of prayers attested in hagiographical texts can be established. Firstly, prayers from the *euchologion* verbatim incorporated

22 Gustav Anrich (ed.), *Hagios Nikolaos: Der heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche*, vol. II: Prolegomena, Untersuchungen, Indices, Teubner, Leipzig – Berlin 1917, 214-217.

23 Vincenzo Ruggieri, “Vita Nicolai Sionitae: Tracce eucologiche e ambiguità teologiche”, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 104/2 (2011), 705-718.

24 Derek Krueger, *Biblical Quotations and Liturgical Echoes in Leontios of Neapolis's “Life of Symeon the Fool”*: *Scriptural Familiarity and the Culture of Reference in Seventh-Century Cyprus*, in Θεόδωρος Ξ. Γιάγκου – Χρυσόστομος Νάσης (eds.) *Κυπριακή Αγιολογία: Πρακτικά Α' Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου, Παραλίμνι, Αγία Νάπα 2015*, 276-80. See also André-Jean Festugière – Lennart Ryden (eds.), *Léontios de Néapolis: Vie de Syméon le fou et vie de Jean de Chypre*, Paul Geuthner, Paris 1974, II.

25 D. Krueger, *Biblical Quotations and Liturgical Echoes in Leontios of Neapolis's “Life of Symeon the Fool”*, 279.

into hagiographical texts (e.g., the *Life of Nicholas* and the anaphora in the *Life of Symeon the Holy Fool*). Secondly, “hagiographical prayers”, which were composed by the hagiographer on the basis of borrowing of phrases and passages from other prayers attested in *euchologia* manuscripts, as in the case with most of the prayers in the *Life of Symeon the Holy Fool*. The identification of “hagiographical prayers” is one of the early findings of my dissertation, which intends to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the prayer practices and their written attestations in Byzantium.

*Prayers for Blessing Food on Pascha in Byzantine Greek Euchologia  
(8th–13th cent.)*

*Daniel Galadza (Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome)*

The practice of blessing foods on the day of Pascha is a common aspect of many local Byzantine Rite liturgical traditions, documented from about the eighth century and practiced until today.<sup>26</sup> The focus of Holy Week and Pascha on the passion, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ was connected with the preparation of those preparing for illumination and baptism at Pascha.<sup>27</sup> Although patristic sources acknowledge that animal sacrifices were made as a requirement to fulfill vows or to feed people in connection with meals after great feasts of the liturgical year,<sup>28</sup> the Council of Trullo (691–692) forbids animal sacrifices brought into the church and at the same time notes a decline

26 See, for example, Peter Galadza et al. (eds.), *Divine Liturgy: An Anthology for Worship*, Sheptytsky Institute, Ottawa 2004, 1114.

27 For more detailed information on the patristic period and later developments in Byzantine euchologia, see Daniel Galadza, “Prayers and Blessings for Holy Week in the ‘Occasional Prayers’ of the Byzantine Euchologion”, in Markus Vinzent – Claudia Rapp (eds.), *Studia Patristica* CVIII, vol. 5, *Euchologia*, Peeters, Leuven 2021, 33–54, which was based on the research conducted as part of the Vienna Euchologia Project, with preliminary results presented in a poster at the International Society of Orthodox Church Music Conference in Joensuu, Finland, in 2023.

28 Ekaterina Kovalchuk, “The Encaenia of St Sophia: Animal Sacrifices in a Christian Context”, in *Scrinium* 4 (2008), 158–200.

in adult baptism at Pascha.<sup>29</sup> Less than a century later, the first extant prayers for offering lambs are known,<sup>30</sup> with numerous additional prayers in *euchologia* from the eighth to the 13th century for the blessing of sacrifices on Holy Saturday,<sup>31</sup> blessing eggs on Holy Saturday, and blessing meat, eggs, and cheese on the day of Pascha.<sup>32</sup> From a regional perspective, prayers for sacrifices are found in all types of *euchologia* (i.e. Constantinopolitan, Palestinian, and South Italian), while the prayers for blessing foods are only in South Italian *euchologia*.<sup>33</sup> Overall, the decline in Paschal baptism is replaced by a focus on objects and foods, witnessing to a post-patristic transformation of the *euchologion*.<sup>34</sup>

### *Prayers for Childbirth*

*Eirini Afentoulidou (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna)*

*Euchologia* contain valuable information about women, childbirth and the status of newborn infants. The prayers related to childbirth and the subsequent forty-day period of childbed underwent significant transformations over time. Liturgical instructions transmitted in the manuscripts (rubrics) can offer further valuable information about religious attitudes and practices. An instructive example is churching,

29 See especially can. 99 in George Nedungatt – Michael Featherstone, *The Council in Trullo Revisited*, Kanonika 6, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Rome 1995, 179-180.

30 Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Barberini gr. 336 (8th cent., Diktyon 64879), Εὐχή ἐπὶ τοῖς προσφέρουσιν ἄμνον, fol. 229r.

31 Sinai Gr. N.E. ΜΓ 53 (8th–9th cent., Diktyon 61091), Εὐχή τῶν θυμάτων ἐξαιρέτως τῷ ἁγίῳ σαββάτῳ, fol. 46r–47v.

32 For example, Grottaferrata Γ.β. IV (10th–11th cent., Diktyon 17896), Εὐχή εἰς τυρόν καὶ ὠὰ τῷ ἁγίῳ σαββάτῳ, fol. 104r–104v, and Εὐχή εἰς τὸ ἐλόγησαι κρέας τοῦ Πάσχα, fol. 104v.

33 South Italian connections with Latin practices, where blessing Easter foods is also well known, remains to be adequately studied. For more on a regional approach to the evolution of the sources of the Byzantine Rite, see Stefano Parenti, “Towards a Regional History of the Byzantine Euchology of the Sacraments”, in *Ecclesia Orans* 27 (2010), 109-121.

34 See Harald Buchinger, “Text - Matter - Ritual: A Historical and Comparative Perspective on Select Occasional Prayers for Holy Week and Easter”, in Markus Vinzent – Claudia Rapp (eds.), *Studia Patristica* CVIII, vol. 5, *Euchologia*, Peeters, Leuven 2021, 17-32.

that is, the rite of introducing a child into the church for the first time on the fortieth day after birth. The rubrics are not unanimous as to whether there is a gender differentiation between male and female babies in the performance of the rite. However, we must be cautious about how to interpret rubrics or the absence of rubrics, since much liturgical knowledge was transmitted outside of books. Moreover, the practice could change in the course of the use of a single liturgical manuscript – which could extend to several centuries, with rubrics added or altered at later stages. In general, rubrics show that the performance was not homogenous, but there was a clear trend to establish a gender hierarchy in the space of the church. Even as infants, males had greater access to the altar than females.<sup>35</sup>

*Prayers for Brother-Making (adelphopoiesis) and Pious  
Confraternities*

*Claudia Rapp (University of Vienna and Austrian Academy of  
Sciences, Vienna)*

Some of the “occasional prayers” in the *euchologia* refer to social interactions and can thus provide valuable evidence to complement historical sources. One example are the prayers for “brother-making” (*adelphopoiesis*, *adelphopoia*) said by a priest to strengthen a bond between two men. Such ties are attested between monks and monks, monks and laymen, and laymen and laymen (sometimes also lay women), who were usually married. Byzantium is the only Christian

35 For more information about childbed-related prayers and the questions of gender they raise, see Eirini Afentoulidou, *Childbed Prayers: Historical Development, Discourses, Chances*, in Susan Ashbrook Harvey – Ashley Purpura – Thomas Arentzen (eds.), *Rethinking Gender in Orthodox Christianity*, Pickwick Publications, Eugene, OR 2023, 149-168; eadem, „Wenn ein Kind von einer frommen Frau geboren wird“: *Laien, Priester und das Wochenbett in Byzanz*, in Harald Buchinger – Benedikt Kranemann – Alexaner Zerfaß (eds.), *Werk des Volkes? Gelebte Religiosität als Thema der Liturgiewissenschaft*, (Quaestiones disputatae), Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau 2023, 143-162; N. Glibetic, “Orthodox Liturgical Rites at Pregnancy Loss”, 151-179.

society of the middle ages to have preserved the liturgical prayers for such relations. Beginning with the earliest surviving *euchologion* manuscript from the late 8th century (Vatican Library, Barb. gr. 336 [Diktyon 64879])<sup>36</sup> and down to the middle of the 17th century, at current count 77 manuscripts preserve a total of 17 different prayer texts for this purpose. They served to strengthen existing friendships, but also to neutralize enemies or to gain allies and supporters, by extending the circle of the family and household.<sup>37</sup> Expanding on these findings, current research is investigating the evidence from the *euchologia* regarding pious lay groups, *diakoniai*, that are also attested in narrative sources and in lead seals. The *euchologia* contain several prayers for joining a *diakonia* and can thus offer valuable further evidence for their formation and functioning.<sup>38</sup>

*Prayers for Historical Occasions in the Euchologion*

*Elisabeth Schiffer (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna)*

Within the framework of the Vienna Euchologia Project the term “prayers for historical occasions” is used to specify prayers that refer to events or persons in a historical context or to events of historical significance in a broader sense. This category includes prayers for occasions that were commemorated on both a fixed as well as on a moveable date. Most prominent among occasions on a fixed date is, for example, the commemoration of the inauguration of Constantinople on May 11, in remembrance of the event in the year 330. The prayers said by the patriarch for the emperor should also be mentioned here.

36 On this manuscript, see above, footnote 3.

37 C. Rapp, *Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium*; eadem, “Ritual Brotherhood in Byzantium”, in *Traditio* 52 (1997), 285-326.

38 Gabriel Radle, “Liturgy and Charitable Ministration in Late Antiquity. Diakonia Prayers in the Earliest Euchologion Manuscripts”, in *Ex fonte: Journal of Ecumenical Studies in Liturgy* 2 (2023), 259-296; Claudia Rapp, “Servants of God and One Another: Organizations of Lay Piety in Late Antiquity and Byzantium”, forthcoming.

Patriarch and emperor met regularly on various occasions like on the Thursday of Bright Week, or for the imperial grape harvest in August. The departure of a battle ship was also accompanied by prayers and could take place with or without the presence of the patriarch.<sup>39</sup> When thinking about the impact of natural phenomena, especially natural disasters, the commemoration of earthquakes is to be mentioned. Earthquakes which occurred in the fifth to the eighth centuries were regularly commemorated also in later Byzantine periods, as the transmission of their commemoration in *euchologia* manuscripts throughout the Byzantine periods shows. These earthquakes are also known from historiographical writings, which gives us the opportunity to place not only the events, but also the liturgical celebration in a historical context.<sup>40</sup> Other prayers that we study in this context are prayers for laying the foundation of church buildings and prayers for the dedication of church buildings, as well as prayers for renovation measures of the altar table. In addition to their liturgical purpose, the prayers grouped in this category are a valuable source for questions raised in historical and socio-historical research.

39 The prayer texts are available on the basis of the Constantinopolitan *euchologion* manuscript Paris, BnF, Coisl. 213 (AD 1027) [Diktyon 49354], included in Miguel Arranz, *L'eucologio costantinopolitano agli inizi del secolo XI: hagiasmatarion & archieratikon (rituale & pontificale): con l'aggiunta del Leiturgikon (messale)*. Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma 1996.

40 Mark Roosien, *Ritual and Earthquakes in Constantinople: Liturgy, Ecology, and Empire*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2024. See also Katherin Papadopoulos, "Remembering Earthquakes in the Late Antique Eastern Mediterranean", in Markus Vinzent (ed.) *Studia Patristica* CIV, Vol. 1, Historica, Peeters, Leuven 2021, 139-164.

