CHAPTER 3.

THE UNDERTEXT WRITING (D.C. PARKER)¹

It is appropriate to begin with a brief description. It has usually been stated that the catena manuscript of Codex Zacynthius is written in two scripts.² The biblical text is in biblical majuscule. The catena is written in upright pointed majuscule. To this we may now add that a third script, sloping pointed majuscule, is used for the preface on folio 1r. The largest work on the development of biblical majuscule is that of Cavallo.³ While it may be argued that he attributed all difference to chronological progression and overlooked the possibility of regional variation, and that he had too stylised a theory of the hand's growth and decline, he still provides a valuable collection of comparative material. His later, joint work with Maehler provides a similar body of illustration for the early Byzantine period.⁴ The use of the upright pointed script in conjunction with another form is a pairing found elsewhere, most notably in Codex Rossanensis (GA 042, Rossano, Museo Diocesano, s.n.). Emerging in the second or third centuries, it was in use for a long period of time. Unfortunately, however, there is a paucity of extant examples from the period in which we are interested.⁵ The dating of sloping pointed majuscule is, if anything, even harder.⁶

¹ This chapter, although written by Parker, makes extensive use of observations provided by Amy Myshrall and Georgi Parpulov.

² The use of the word 'hand' for script in the article by Birdsall and Parker may have led some to believe that they were claiming that the manuscript was written by two copyists. That was not our intention. Although it is possible that one person could have written each part, it seems highly improbable, given the practical difficulties of aligning the text. There are plenty of examples of scribes using two or more different scripts in producing a manuscript. However, as will become plain below (pages 25–31), the current project has opened up the possibility that more than one copyist was at work.

³ G. Cavallo, *Ricerche sulla maiuscola biblica*. Studi e testi di papirologia 2 (Florence: Le Monnier, 1967). See further P. Orsini, *Studies on Greek and Coptic Majuscule Scripts and Books*. Studies in Manuscript Cultures 15 (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2019), 57–97.

⁴ G. Cavallo and H. Maehler, *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period A.D. 300–800*. Bulletin Supplement 47 (London: University of London Institute of Classical Studies, 1987).

⁵ For a study, see E. Crisci, 'La maiuscola ogivale diritta. Origini, tipologie, dislocazioni,' *Scrittura e civiltà* 9 (1985): 103–45.

⁶ One recalls the debate concerning the dating of the Cologne Mani codex and the Freer Gospels. See Ulrich B. Schmid, 'Reassessing the Palaeography and Codicology of the Freer Gospel

While the use of three scripts is further evidence of the scribal skill and complexity of layering in the codex, it does not at present help us to date it more closely.

THE DATING OF THE SCRIPTS

Writing in 2004, I suggested that the biblical majuscule of Zacynthius lacks the squareness associated with such models as Codex Vaticanus, the Vienna Dioscorides (ÖNB, Med. Gr. 1) and others:

By contrast, a number of letters in Codex Zacynthius are compressed: *mu*, *epsilon*, *delta*; the crossbar of *tau* is shorter. Secondly, one or two letters depart markedly from the classical shapes of biblical majuscule. *Upsilon* in particular has lost its symmetry, and its descender has become very fine; the junction of the upper strokes can even be below the line. The two strokes of *lambda* sometimes meet at the very apex of the letter.⁷

In the broadest terms, Codex Zacynthius seemed to sit between those models and the far more elaborate forms that began to emerge from the eighth century onwards. But more accurate dating of majuscule hands written between the sixth and ninth centuries is notoriously difficult. The only two securely dated manuscripts give us a framework between about 512 (the Vienna Dioscorides) and 800 AD (a copy of Gregory's *Dialogi de Vita et Miraculis Patrum*, Vat. gr. 1666).⁸ This provides an explanation for the variety of dates that has been suggested for Codex Zacynthius.

The problem is clearly set out at the very beginning of research by Tregelles, who wrote that

The *Text* is in round full well-formed Uncial letters, such as I should have had no difficulty in ascribing to the *sixth* century, were it not that the Catena of the same age has the round letters (EΘOC) so *cramped* as to appear to belong to the *eighth* century. There are but few occurrences of accents or breathings; and the fact of their omission must be weighed against that of the form of the letters in the Catena; for in the eighth century their occurrence might have been expected.

Pocock, writing twenty years later, accepted the same possible age range and then went on to present two arguments in favour of the sixth century.⁹ The first was its similarity to Codex Rossanensis (which had been known since 1831); the second was the small number of contractions and their character. But other nineteenth-century scholars preferred the

Manuscript,' in *The Freer Biblical Manuscripts: Fresh Studies of an American Treasure Trove* (ed. L.W. Hurtado, Text-Critical Studies 6, Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 227–49, esp. 238–48.

⁷ Parker and Birdsall, 'The Date of Codex Zacynthius,' 119 (115).

⁸ The date of the Dioscorides has itself been challenged: A. Müller, 'Ein vermeintlich fester Anker. Das Jahr 512 als zeitlicher Ansatz des "Wiener Dioskurides",' *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 62 (2012): 103–9.

⁹ Nicholas Pocock, 'The Codex Zacynthius,' *The Academy* 19 (1881): 136–7, esp. 137 col. 1.

eighth century, of which Gregory is a notable example.¹⁰ Scrivener also preferred this, although he did draw attention to several features suggesting an earlier date (similarities to 024, paucity of accents and breathings).¹¹ In 1937, W.H.P. Hatch produced a challenge to this consensus, arguing again for the sixth century.¹² There are weaknesses to his case. One is that he seems only to have considered one of the scripts in which the manuscript is written. The second is the argument that the inclusion of passages from Severus in the catena must indicate a date after 518, while the supposed subsequent erasure of his name must point to a date after his condemnation in 536. Hatch considered that a point between these two dates was most likely. In spite of these problems, subsequent authorities accepted his arguments, and the sixth century continues currently to be given as the date in the *Kurzgefasste Liste*.

It was partly the weaknesses in Hatch's case, and also an observation with regard to the catena, that led the present writer and J.N. Birdsall to take up the question. Birdsall remarked in private correspondence that

Fortunately, from Hatch in F/S Lake, CPG 4 s.v. Catenae put me on the track. The book to look at is Max Rauer, *Der dem Petrus von Laodicea zugeschriebene Lukaskommentar* (NTA VV.2) Münster 1920 ... It is the view of R. that the catena commentary of which Xi is a representative derives from an earlier, which originated in the sixth century. The catena of commentary of Xi was compiled in the seventh or eighth century. You will see that this must have a bearing upon the judgement about the hand of Xi. If R. is correct, Xi could only be seventh century even if it were the autograph of its class.¹³

The subsequent study of this problem from the two angles of palaeography and catena research led to the following conclusion: on the former grounds, a comparison of the two hands with other examples suggests a seventh-century date; on the latter, the eighth century is required by the time needed for the catena type to develop.¹⁴ The balance of probability and the desire to reach a shared conclusion led to the suggestion that a date of around 700 might meet both requirements.

How may this view be assessed today? The further research we have been able to undertake with regard to the catena underlines the accuracy of Birdsall's arguments with regard to Hatch's theories, and the likely date of the manuscript on these grounds. The

¹⁰ C. Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, ed. octava critica maior, Vol. 3, *Prolegomena*, scripsit Caspar René Gregory (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1884), 406–8; Caspar René Gregory, *Textkritik des Neuen Testaments*, Vol. 1 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1900), 90–1.

¹¹ F.H.A. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, Fourth edn. (London, New York, and Cambridge: Bell & Sons, 1894), Vol. 1, 161.

¹² W.H.P. Hatch, 'A Redating of Two Important Uncial Manuscripts of the Gospels – Codex Zacynthius and Codex Cyprius,' in *Quantulacumque. Studies Presented to Kirsopp Lake* (ed. R.P. Casey, S. Lake and A.K. Lake; London: Christophers, 1937), 333–8.

¹³ Letter from Birdsall to Parker, 16 May 1996.

¹⁴ For evidence that Zacynthius is derived from older catenae, see pages 53 and 65.

palaeographical arguments are more complicated, for several reasons. The first has already been mentioned, namely the lack of dated examples of manuscripts in the three hands of the manuscript. The tendency to conservatism in majuscule scripts must also encourage caution. Not even the presence of some diacriticals can be taken as very helpful, since it has recently been pointed out that at least two sixth-century manuscripts, the Florentine copy of Justinian's Digest and GA 015, contain diacritics in the original scribe's hand.¹⁵ So diacritics do not necessarily imply a late date. It may be worth noting that the majority of the diacritics in Codex Zacynthius are restricted to a single letter: of the seventy-four breathings indicated in the gospel text, sixty-five are instances of a rough breathing (*daseia*) on *upsilon*. A *daseia* on *eta* appears just six times; the three other forms are *ἀνεστη* at Luke 10:25, *ὄταν* at Luke 11:2 and *ἐγενετο* at Luke 11:30. The letters *iota* and *upsilon* are often written with a diaeresis, especially when they are in the initial position.

A further manuscript comparable to Codex Zacynthius has been proposed by our colleague Georgi Parpulov. This is Vatican City, BAV, Vat. gr. 1291, a manuscript of Ptolemy's *Tabulae astronomicae* containing a list of Byzantine emperors (Folio 17r) that dates it to between 828 and 842. The hand has some similarity to that used in Zacynthius for the catena.

It is further worth noting that the complete set of new images of the undertext have provided evidence not previously available, namely ornamentation in the manuscript.¹⁶ These consist of:

Fol. Ir	Interwoven band under the preface (Image 3.1)
Fol. IIIr	Enlarged initial <i>epsilon</i> with a sun/flower (Image 3.2)
	Penwork initial <i>epsilon</i> beginning gospel (Image 3.3)
Fol. XXIIr	Enlarged initial <i>rho</i> with a leaf (Image 3.4)
Fol. XLv	Four (or five?) dot symbol
Fol. LVr	Hedera decoration at the end of a scholium (see Table 5.2)
Fol. LIXr	Enlarged initial <i>sigma</i> with penwork
Fol. LXv	Hedera decoration at the end of a scholium (see Table 5.2)
Fol. LXIV	Four dot symbol before enlarged initial <i>kappa</i> (see Table 5.2)
Fol. LXIIr	Four dot symbol
Fol. LXVIIv	Four dot symbol
Fol. LXIXr	Four dot symbol (see Table 5.2)
Fol. LXXIIr	Red decoration above OΓ in margin (Image 3.5) ¹⁷
	Further red decoration, very faded but the same pattern
Fol. LXXXv	Enlarged initial <i>alpha</i> with penwork
Fol. LXXXIr	Enlarged initial <i>tau</i> with penwork
Fol. LXXXIVr	Enlarged initial <i>epsilon</i> with penwork

¹⁵ Florence, BML, s.n. and Paris, BnF, Suppl. gr. 1074: see Nigel G. Wilson, 'A Greek Palaeographer Looks at the Florentine Pandects,' *Subseciva Groningana* 5 (1992), 1–6; Elina Dobrynina, 'Considerations on the dating of *Codex Coislinianus*,' Paper given at the IX^e Colloque international de Paléographie grec, Paris, September 2018.

¹⁶ There is also rubrication in the overwriting, but there a thicker nib is used.

¹⁷ All references in this chapter to folio numbers in Codex Zacynthius refer to those of the original manuscript.

Such prominent decoration is unknown in sixth- or seventh-century manuscripts: for the seventh century, see the Zürich Psalter¹⁸ or the Sinai manuscript of John Climacus' Ladder discovered in 1975.¹⁹ It does occur, however, in a manuscript attributed to the ninth century, Paris, BnF, Gr. 2389 (a copy of Ptolemy's *Syntaxis mathematica*), where the text is written without diacritics.²⁰

Image 3.1: Interwoven band below catena preface (fol. 1r)

Image 3.2: Sun/flower and enlarged initial at start of catena (fol. 111r)

Image 3.3: Enlarged initial with pen work at beginning of biblical text (fol. 111r)

Image 3.4: Capital rho with leaf design (fol. 221r)

¹⁸ Zürich, Zentralbibliothek RP1. Also known as the Psalterium Turicense purpureum.

¹⁹ Sinai, St Catherine's Monastery, NE gr. MI 71.

²⁰ See Marina A. Kurysheva, 'The Oldest Uncial Script Manuscript of the *Mathematike Syntaxis* by Claudius Ptolemy. Paris. Gr. 2389: The Problems of Dating,' *Vestnik drevny istorii (Journal of Ancient History)* 79.2 (2019): 335–42. The ninth-century date argued by Kurysheva is plausible but not certain.

Image 3.5: Traces of red decoration in the gutter above marginal number OT (fol. LXXIIr under normal light and as a multispectral image)

While it is now possible to rule out the sixth and seventh centuries, it is harder to use the ornamentation to provide something more precise. In their size and prominence the tailband and the initial letters (more important to consider than the individual motifs) suggest a ninth-century date but do not preclude an eighth-century one. This style may well have originated in the eighth century, about which we still know very little. Further evidence may or may not be provided by the few abbreviations used (excluding the scholia titles, which are the only part of the manuscript in which text is regularly abbreviated). Myshrall observed these and compiled the examples presented in Table 3.1.

<div>Fol. Ir <i>και</i></div>	<div>Fol. IXr Final <i>nu</i></div>
<div>Fol. Xv <i>ου</i> compendium</div>	<div>Fol. XXVIIr <i>αι</i> abbreviation in biblical text</div>
<div>Fol. XXXVIIr <i>υμων</i> in biblical text</div>	<div>Fol. XXXVIIIv <i>ου</i> compendium in biblical text</div>
<div>Fol. LXXIIIv Superscript omega</div>	<div>Fol. LXXIVv <i>-αι</i></div>

<p>Fol. LXXIVv -ος written as a compendium</p>	<p>Fol. LXXVIIIv -ας</p>
<p>Fol. LXXXVIr -ας</p>	<p>Fol. LXXXVIIIv -ας</p>

Table 3.1: Abbreviation marks in the undertext.

The $\alpha\iota$ and $\alpha\varsigma$ abbreviations may suggest, *prima facie*, a relatively late date. But further research would be required to ascertain whether they are found in earlier witnesses such as the Vienna Dioscorides and the Psalterium Turicense. According to Cereteli, the $\alpha\iota$ abbreviation occurs in the Fragmentum Mathematicum Bobiense (Milan, Ambrosiana L 99 sup. [Martini-Bassi 491]), dated by Cavallo to the middle of the sixth century.²¹ Further comparative work on the abbreviations would be required to ascertain whether more precise conclusions could be reached.

THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PRESENTATION

In addition to permitting the systematic examination of abbreviations and decoration, the new images of all surviving pages of the palimpsest raise a further new research question which enables us to consider the creation of the undertext in a totally fresh light. Myshrall has noted and compiled detailed evidence which suggests that at least two copyists were responsible for the writing of this manuscript. While the same two scripts are used for biblical and catena text throughout, the details of their presentation and style show considerable variation. The following sets of images present seven different types of evidence for variation in scribal practices. These comprise five elements of paratext (decorative strokes on the extract titles; punctuation of extract titles; punctuation at the end of a scholium; the four-dot symbol; the indication of quotations by *diplai*), letter variation in the biblical text (with particular reference to *rho*, *xi*, *phi*, *alpha*, *beta* and *upsilon*) and letter variation in the catena text (especially enlarged *omicron* and *psi*).

²¹ G.F. Cereteli, *Sokraščenija v' grečeskich' rukopisjach' preimuščestvenno po datirovannym rukopisjam S.-Peterburga i Moskvy*. 2nd edn. (St Petersburg: I.N. Skorokhodova, 1904); for a discussion of the date, see Orsini, *Studies on Greek and Coptic*, 134. The overwriting of the palimpsest fragment provides a *terminus ante quem* of the middle of the eighth century.

1. Decorative marks above the extract titles (Image 3.6)

Image 3.6a: Straight strokes (fol. XXXViv)

Image 3.6b: Strokes with serifs (fol. VIIIr)

Image 3.6c: Straight strokes with decorative marks to fill in the gaps (fol. LIVr)

2. Punctuation of excerpt headings (Image 3.7)

Image 3.7a: Colon (fol. XIIIr)

Image 3.7b: Colon with long dash (fol. XXIv). Note also the initial cross resembling a *psi*.

3. Punctuation at the end of an excerpt (Image 3.8)

Image 3.8a: Colon and dash (fol. XVIIv)

Image 3.8b: Colon and wavy line (fol. LVIv)

Image 3.8c: Colon and split dash (fol. XLv)

Image 3.8d: Colon and split dash (fol. LXXXr)

Image 3.8e: Hedera (fol. LVr)

4. Paragraph indicators (Image 3.9)

Image 3.9a: Thin overline
(from fol. XXXVIr onwards) Image 3.9b: Four dots —
occasionally used (here fol. LXIV)

5. *Diplai* (Image 3.10)

Image 3.10a:
Single *diplai*
(fol. XXIIIv) Image 3.10b:
Double *diplai*, very
rare in this
manuscript
(fol. XXIIIv) Image 3.10c:
Diple within the text
(fol. LXXXIir) Image 3.10d: Loose
marginal *diplai*
(probably a different
hand) (fol. XXXVIIv)

6. Letter variation in the biblical text (Image 3.11)

Image 3.11a: Large bowl
on *rbo* (fol. XXVIIIv)

Image 3.11b: Small
bowl on *rbo* (fol.
XVIr)

Image 3.11c: Normal *xi*
(fol. XVIr)

Image 3.11d: Curly *xi*
(fol. XXIIIv)

Image
3.11e:
Balanced
phi (fol.
XXVIIIv)

Image 3.11f: Round *phi*
(fol. XLv)

Image 3.11g:
Asymmetric
phi (fol. IXr)

Image 3.11h: triangular
alpha (fol. XLv)

Image 3.11i:
Alpha with
pointed bow
(fol.
LXXXVIIv)

Image 3.11j: *Beta*
with separate bows
(fol. XXVIIIv)

Image 3.11k: *Beta*
with bows joined
(fol. LVr)

Image 3.11l: *Upsilon* with base
(fol. XXXVIIIr)

Image 3.11m: *Upsilon*
without base
(fol. LXXXVr)

Image 3.11n: *Psi* with
angled arms (fol. XLv)

Image 3.11o: *Psi*
with horizontal
arms (fol. XLIVv)

7. Letter variation in the catena (Image 3.12)

Image 3.12a: Oblique
enlarged *omicron* (fol.
XXIIIv)

Image 3.12b:
Round enlarged
omicron (fol.
XXXIVv)

Image 3.12c: *Psi* with angled
arms (fol. XXXVIIr)

Image 3.12d: *Psi* with
horizontal arms (fol.
XXIIr)

It will be seen that this evidence is of various kinds. It has not proved possible to provide a theory that takes it all into account. This is a task for the future. But the following observations and questions may provide a start.

1. Most of the changes coincide with changes of page. One example contrary to this appears on folio Xv. The last scholium from Origen at the bottom of the page does not have the same general appearance as the catena text above it. It differs in letter spacing and lacks the slight rightwards lean of text higher on the page. Could an Origen reference have been added to this page later, or did a scribe abandon a partially-copied page and return to it at a different time, resulting in the subtle change?
2. Some evidence corroborates the view (see note 2 above) that the biblical and catena texts were generally written by the same person: occasionally the scribe pens a round enlarged letter instead of a pointed one for the catena (see Image 3.11b for an example of a round o starting the catena text). Exceptionally, on folio XXXVIIv, the final line of biblical text is written in the script used for the catena.
3. There may also be a relation between the scripts of the preface and catena. While the former is in sloping pointed majuscule and the latter in upright, on folio IXv the script of the catena has a distinct hint of a slope. Is this due to distortion of the parchment or a hint of the sloping hand?
4. Accents are not found consistently throughout the manuscript, but appear extensively on some pages (notably Ir, XVIIIv and LXXr) as well as occasionally in the marginalia.²²
5. The manner of treating runovers of a few characters at the end of a page (or a section of biblical text) differs. On most occasions, these are assigned a line of their

²² Although Greenlee claims that accents are a regular feature of the marginal notes (page 285 below), Image 5.2 and 5.3 show that this is not the case. Note, however, the suggestion on pages 69–70 that the additional line with accents at the bottom of fol. XXr may be a possible scriptorium correction.

own aligned with the left margin (e.g. folios XXXr, XXXVr, LVIIIr, LXIXr, LXXXIVv). On at least nine folios, the extra letters are tucked under the right-hand end of the final line (folios XVIr, XXXv, XLVIv, XLVIIv, XLIXr, LXIVr, LXVIr, LXXVv, LXXXVIr). On others still, it is centred (XXXVIr, XXXVIIIv, Lr, LIIIr, LXVIIIr, LXXIIr, LXXXIIIr, LXXXIXr). Unless this was prompted by the practice of the exemplar, might such an otherwise insignificant variation be connected with different scribal hands?

The most compelling evidence for differing forms of presentation is to be seen in the paratext and its layout. While it is not clear whether all of the paratext was written by the main scribe or whether some of it was added later, the combination of multiple features enables the identification of at least two points of disjuncture within the manuscript during the initial stage of the copying process. It remains important to remember that the pages which survive constitute discontinuous portions of the original document: they therefore provide only a part of the evidence for evaluating consistency in its production and it is impossible to tell whether any changes coincide with the beginning of new quires.

In the opening part of the catena, the marginal numerals indicating catena sections are approximately the same size as the letters of the commentary text and a space equivalent to one or two lines separates titles in the top margin from the first line of the text. A change in practice begins from folio XXXVIr, when the catena sections in the left margin of both the commentary and the biblical text suddenly decrease in size (compare Images 3.12a and 3.12b above) and the first *paragraphos* appears (see Image 3.9a), which is then used frequently in the latter part of the manuscript. In addition, titles in the top margin are no longer separated by a blank line from the text below. This paratextual variation is particularly striking given that the main text of the manuscript runs continuously from folio XXXVv to XXXVIr. Nevertheless, after five or six pages the size of the marginal numbers appears to increase again, and several pages further on the space between marginal titles and the main text becomes more variable. The second and most obvious disjunction is on folio LXXr where red ink—which had only previously appeared in the opening line of the gospel text—starts to be used for paratextual features such as the biblical *titloi*, the catena headings and the marginal numbers. This takes a few pages to become consistently established (black is still used for the catena headings on LXXr and LXXIV, as well as some of the marginal numbers on subsequent pages), but continues to the end of the extant manuscript. From folio LXXr, the position of the marginal numbers is also slightly higher in relation to the lines to which they refer.

Further inconsistencies in the paratext, however, militate against an easy separation of stages in the production of the manuscript. For instance, there are variations in the writing of the biblical *titloi*. On folio XVv and folio XVIIr, these are written in larger letters beside the gospel text, while the one on folio XXXr is in the top margin. On folio XLIIIr, the *titlos* appears in tiny letters beside the biblical text. Similarly, while the catena titles are generally written to match the biblical text, being square-shaped and well-spaced, there are a few differences, notably in the *upsilons* (some descend, some do not), and the *rhos* (some have long descenders, while some are shorter and end with a horizontal stroke). Additional kinds of variation may be illustrated from a single page, folio XLVIr (Image 3.13):

- a) the main heading in the top margin, *του αγιου τιτου*, leans left, but is generally in the style of the biblical text;
- b) on line 5 the heading *του αυτου* is written in the same style as that of the top margin;
- c) the heading partway down the thin column of the catena is written in the same style as the catena text, with longer descenders on the *upsilons*.

The Vatican paragraph numbers throughout the manuscript, which may have been added later, are also decorated in different ways.²³

All told, this evidence suggests that the hierarchy of scripts is not consistent so far as the paratext is concerned. In the end, however, this further evidence may prove valuable in providing further information about the development of biblical and upright pointed majuscule. It may even help us to refine the date range for the production of Codex Zacynthius. Nevertheless, it is beyond the scope of the current project to do more than to record the evidence and suggest its significance.

CONCLUSION

The evidence is clear that, in the joint article with Birdsall, I was correct to rule out a date before 700. The further palaeographical evidence, however, encourages us to consider anything up to the middle of the ninth century. The comparison made in the earlier piece between the script used for the catena and the Zürich Psalter is clearly weakened by the new evidence of the ornamentation. That article also argued that comparison with a hand such as Patmos 171, a catena on Job dated to the end of the eighth century, supported an earlier date for our manuscript. That may remain true so far as the script used for the biblical text is concerned, but does not apply so obviously to the catena script. Perhaps the form of biblical majuscule used in Codex Zacynthius is intentionally archaising. The use of Patmos 171 must itself be treated with caution, too: even when one considers the style of its miniatures, it remains rather difficult to date with precision.

Whether the development of the catena would encourage us to prefer a date before 800 is another matter. In retrospect, it seems clear that Birdsall would have preferred a date more unequivocally into the eighth century. This factor becomes somewhat less significant in the light of the evidence gathered in the present volume that Codex Zacynthius is not the archetype of this catena, but a copy of another catena manuscript.²⁴ Indeed, Lamb's account of the theological positions of the commentary suggest that it may have been compiled in the latter part of the sixth or early seventh century.²⁵

The conclusion of this survey should therefore be that the material created as part of the Codex Zacynthius Project has provided good reasons for maintaining the suggested date of the eighth century. But the purpose of the project is to provide better resources and to ask further questions. Careful reflection over a longer period will be required before fuller answers can be given about the date of the underwriting.

²³ On the Vatican paragraph numbers, see page 38 below.

²⁴ See pages 53, 54 and 119.

²⁵ See page 133–5.

Image 3.13: Folio XLVIr, showing different scripts in the headings.