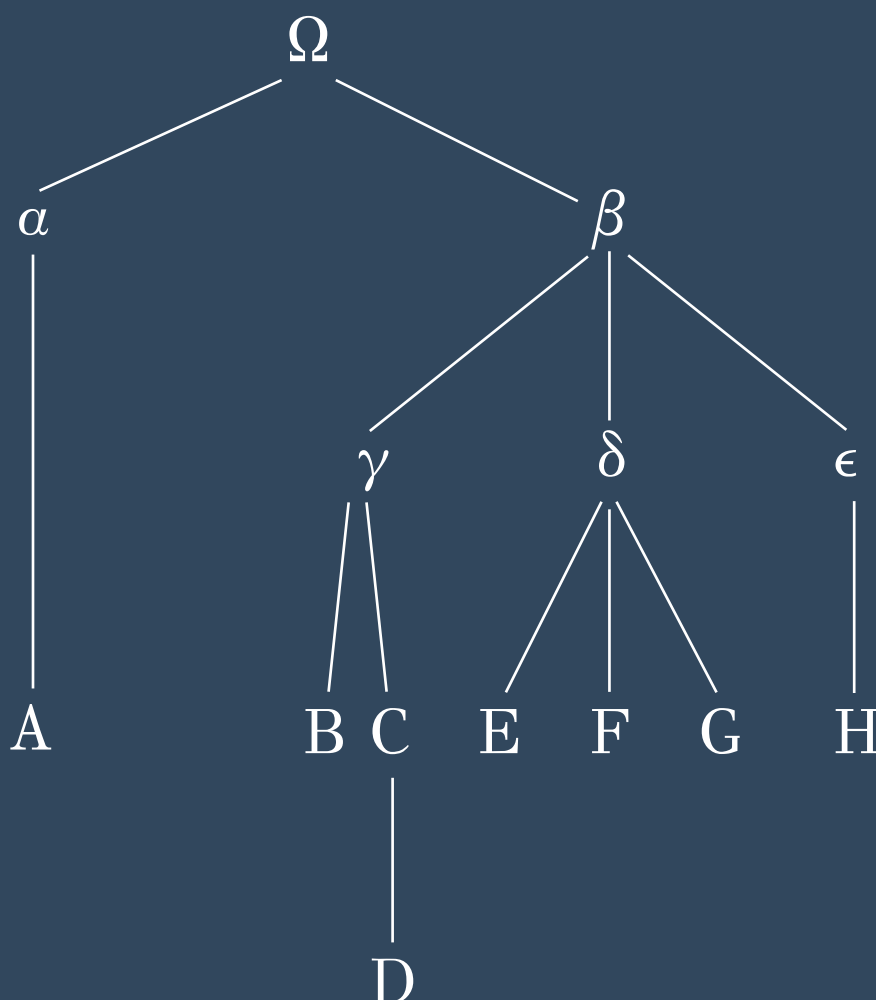


Newsletter

DIGITAL MANUSCRIPTS OF CYRIL'S LEXICON

D·M·C·Lexi



ΔΗΜΟΚΡΙΤΕΙΟ
ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ
ΘΡΑΚΗΣ

DEMOCRITUS
UNIVERSITY
OF THRACE



ΜΟΡΦΩΤΙΚΟ
ΠΑΡΥΜΑ
ΕΘΝΙΚΗΣ
ΓΡΑΜΜΕΥΣΗΣ



H.F.R.I.
Hellenic Foundation for
Research & Innovation

This project is carried out within the framework
of National Recovery and Resilience Plan Greece
2.0, funded by the European Union – NextGenera-
tionEU (Implementation body: H.F.R.I.)
Duration: 01/01/2024 - 31/12/2025

Greece 2.0
NATIONAL RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE PLAN



Funded by the
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The DMC Lexi Project!

**Maria
Konstantinidou,
P.I.**

**Grigorios
Papagiannis,
Head of the
Department**

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Lessico di Cirillo*

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Bussès,
Head of the
Research Team**

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Cautionary Tale*



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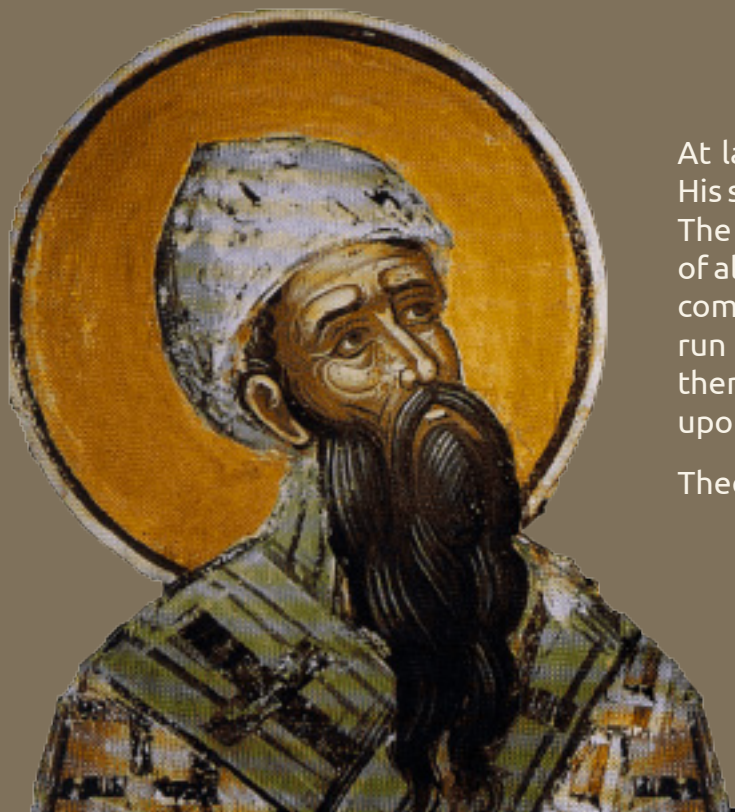


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At last and with difficulty the villain has gone. ... His survivors are indeed delighted at his departure. The dead, maybe, are sorry. There is some ground of alarm lest they should be so much annoyed at his company as to send him back to us, or that he should run away from his conductors. ... Great care must then be taken ... to lay a very big and heavy stone upon his grave, for fear he should come back again.

Theodoret of Cyrus, *Letter 180* (PG 83, 1489C - 1491A), trans. Prestige (1940)

Cyril has been a controversial figure since his own time. Theodoret, who was clearly no fan of Cyril, might have been appalled to see that Cyril is rising again, albeit not in the way he feared. Rather than terrifying bishops in the dead of night, he is re-emerging as a dataset, curated, analysed and openly available for the world to see.

Cyril's *Lexicon* has been the subject of scholarly attention for centuries. Unlike other works of antiquity that faded into obscurity, **Cyril's *Lexicon* was one of the most widely used dictionaries in Byzantium**, shaping Byzantine learning for centuries. Nevertheless, it remains largely unpublished, waiting for a team bold (or foolish) enough to work through its many layers of transmission.

Enter the **DMC Lexi Project!** The goal is to **lay the foundations for the first comprehensive edition of Cyril's *Lexicon***, compiling and comparing the Greek manuscript witnesses preserved in Greece. This isn't just about producing an edition; it's about building a **digital platform** that will allow scholars to explore the text in innovative ways. The project also integrates **HTR (Handwritten Text Recognition)** and computer-aided **stemmatic analysis**.

The Project is funded by the **Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation**. Hosted by **Democritus University of Thrace** and **the University of the Aegean**, this project is also made smoother by the invaluable guidance of the **Special Accounts for Research Grants (ELKE)** of both **Universities**. But no infrastructure can compare to the dedication and enthusiasm of our **research team**, especially those in the early stages of their careers, who painstakingly transcribe, analyse, and bring digital innovation to ancient texts and this is what truly breathes life into this project.

None of this would be possible without the **many manuscript collections—libraries, museums, and monasteries**—that are eagerly collaborating with us, facilitating manuscript imaging and generously granting access to their holdings. We are not alone in this endeavour. Our Italian colleagues at the **PartirarX Project** are working on manuscripts from other parts of the world, and our collaboration ensures that this research takes place in a truly international and collaborative framework, exchanging experiences and know-how.

Of course, one must tread carefully when working on Cyril's *Lexicon*. **The Curse of Cyril** is more than a scholar's joke—it's a troubling pattern. Whether this is the result of sheer bad luck, scholarly exhaustion, or something more sinister, we have decided to proceed **with caution** (and a defiant sense of humour). And cautious we remain, knowing that this is only a humble beginning to the colossal task that a full edition of Cyril's *Lexicon* is. So, to borrow from Theodoret: **Cyril IS back. Hopefully, this time he is welcome.**

Maria Konstantinidou, PI

Newsletter

Digital Manuscripts of Cyril's Lexicon

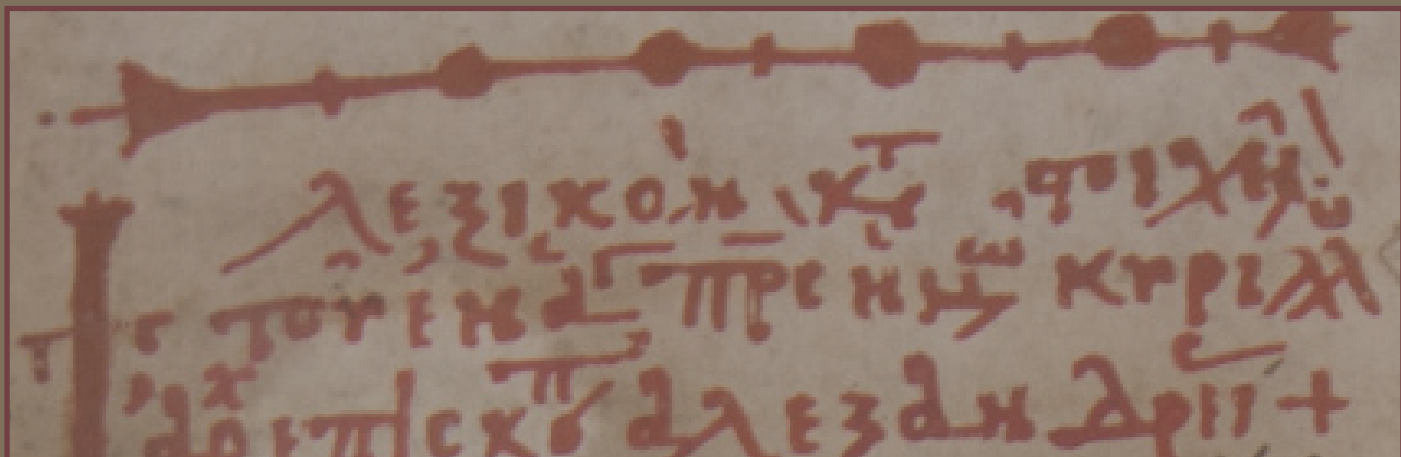
Words of Welcome: The Department's Vision for DMC-Lexi and the Revitalisation of Greek Lexicographical Heritage

Grigorios Papagianis, Head of the Department of Greek Philology, Democritus University of Thrace

It is with great pleasure that our department hosts the Digital Manuscripts of Cyril's Lexicon Project, an initiative that reflects the Department of Greek Philology's commitment to high-level research, academic collaboration, and innovation in the study of the ancient and Byzantine world. This project stands at the crossroads of philology and digital humanities, by developing a database of manuscript editions of Cyril's Lexicon,

a lexicon widely used in Byzantium, yet so far unedited. As our department moves toward an increasingly digital-oriented research environment, projects like DMC – Lexi remind us that technological advancements and classical scholarship can go hand in hand, ensuring that ancient and medieval texts remain accessible, comprehensible, and meaningful for future generations of scholars. The work of the project's team—ranging

from the production of the first comprehensive critical bibliography of the project's progress, explore its findings, and participate in Cyril's Lexicon to its methodological innovations in computational analysis of its manuscript tradition—demonstrates the continued relevance of philological expertise in the digital age. I look forward to seeing the results of the project and I invite you all to stay engaged with the discussions raised by this research.



Franco Montanari

La millenaria lessicografia greca e il Lessico di Cirillo

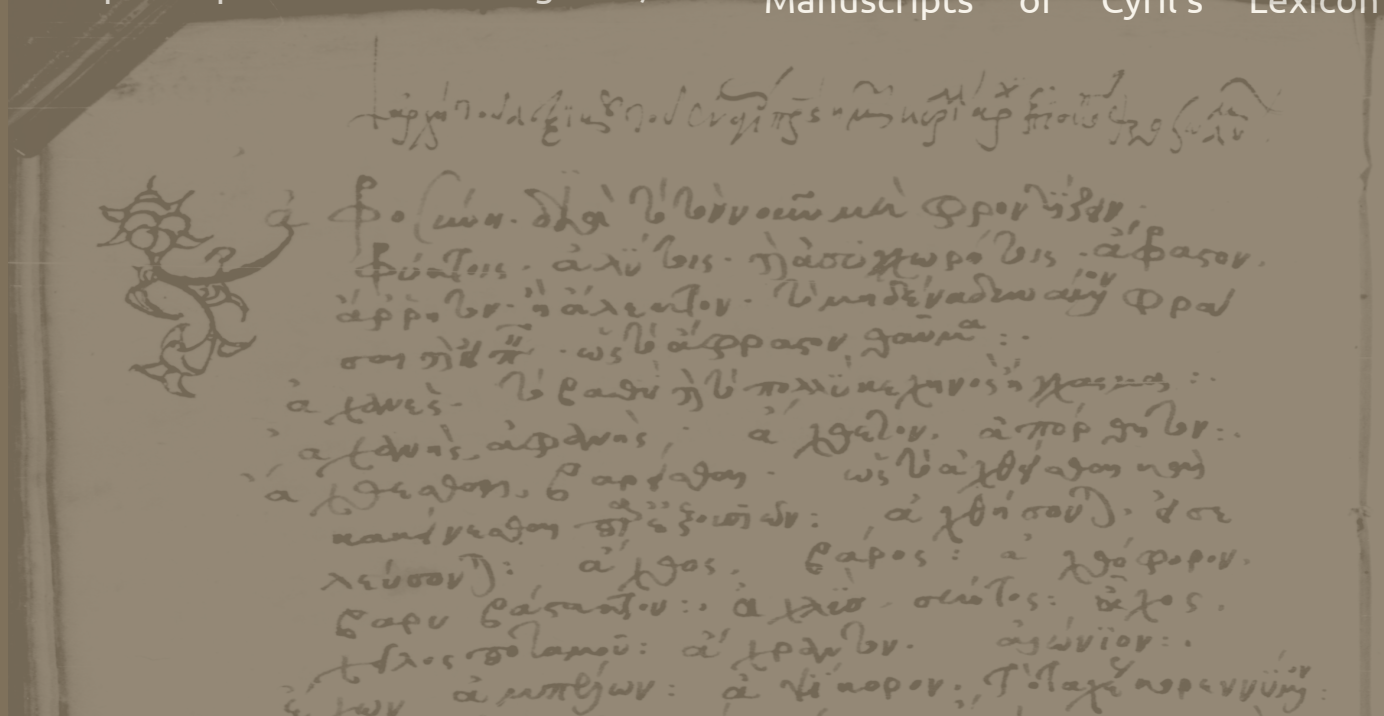
Le radici della lessicografia greca risalgono alla più antica glossografia elementare, testimoniata fino dal V sec. a. C., e continuarono dagli albori della filologia Alessandrina con le opere di Filita e di Zenodoto. Una innovazione decisiva segnarono le imponenti *Lexeis* di Aristofane di Bisanzio, articolate in diverse sezioni tematiche, che costituirono un modello per metodo, vastità di conoscenze e ricchezza dei materiali. Fino a Didimo e poi in tutta l'età imperiale, tardoantica e bizantina, l'attività lessicografica non cessò di svilupparsi e la produzione fu enorme: lessici dialettologici (fra cui spiccano quelli atticisti), sinonimici, etimologici, di singoli autori (come quelli omerici di Apione e Apollonio Sofista, I sec. d. C.) o di generi (tragici, comici, storici, retorici), onomastici (come quello di Giulio Polluce, II sec. d. C.), compilazioni su argomenti particolari (come il lessico etnico-geografico di Stefano Bizantino, VI

Si realizzarono nuove sillogi di *lexeis*, sempre più volte a raccogliere i frutti dei lavori precedenti: celebre quella di Panfilo Alessandrino (I sec. d. C.), in 95 libri, che sta degnamente accanto all'opera di Didimo come *summa* delle conoscenze accumulate. Panfilo fu epitomato da Giulio Vestino (II sec. d. C.), che poco dopo fu utilizzato, assieme ad altre fonti, da Diogeniano di Eraclea (II sec.); Diogeniano a sua volta servì come base principale per Esichio di Alessandria (V-VI sec.), il cui lessico ci è pervenuto in forma da una parte epitomata e d'altra considerevolmente interpolata: nella forma attuale, con i suoi oltre 50.000 lemmi, è una delle più ricche miniere di notizie lessicografico-erudite che abbiamo. Le nostre possibilità di informazione sono dunque affidate alle grandi raccolte tardoantiche e bizantine, che hanno ereditato i materiali della precedente tradizione, spesso accumulando intorno a un lemma notizie varie, con intenti enciclopedici. Sono soprattutto il *Lessico* cosiddetto di Cirillo (oggi oggetto di un importante progetto editoriale multinazionale), il *Lessico* di Fozio (IX sec.), la *Suda* (X sec.), il lessico dello pseudo-Zonara (fine XII sec.), i quattro maggiori *Etimologici* e numerosi altri testi simili di minore mole.

sec. d. C.), epimerismi. In questa sede voglio soffermarmi sul *Lessico* di Cirillo (*Lex. Cyr.*). Al progetto editoriale in corso partecipano studiosi italiani e greci, supportati da finanziamenti di ricerca sia in Italia che in Grecia. Una ben informata sintesi è stata pubblicata di recente da Elena Esposito nella rivista bolognese *Eikasmos* XXXV / 2024, alle pp. 297-311. Il *Lessico* è attribuito nei manoscritti a Cirillo (370-444 d.C.), patriarca di Alessandria, ma non ci sono elementi per dire che Cirillo stesso abbia avuto un ruolo nella sua compilazione o che il primo nucleo sia stato formato da lemmi tratti dalle opere del Patriarca. Il *Lessico* pare invece risalire alla prima metà del VI sec. d. C. (epoca a cui risale il più antico testimone: un piccolo frammento di papiro) ed essere nato all'interno di una comunità cristiana, verosimilmente di Alessandria, per servire alle sue esigenze. In seguito il *Lessico* fu variamente e frequentemente accresciuto e oggi lo conosciamo in diverse redazioni tramandate da numerosi manoscritti. Nella redazione che pare più vicina all'originale,

Lex. Cyr. comprende circa 9.000 voci ed è la prima opera della lessicografia greca che include termini da autori sia pagani che cristiani. Le varie presenze e assenze fra gli autori sia pagani che cristiani offrono ampi spazi di interpretazioni, ma non possiamo qui dar conto delle ipotesi formulate dagli studiosi.

La struttura elementare del lessico — al lemma è accostata una esegesi minimale — lo rende di facile uso e ha certamente favorito la sua ampia diffusione a partire dalla tarda antichità. Il suo impatto sulle opere della lessicografia greca fu enorme e si riflette anche nel grande numero di manoscritti nei quali è testimoniato: dal sec. IX fino al XVII sono censiti 116 codici, ma le ricerche in corso probabilmente ne porteranno in luce altri. I codici noti disegnano una tradizione molto complessa e ramificata, che spiega perché fino ad ora ogni progetto di edizione critica non abbia avuto successo. Il prossimo appuntamento del progetto sarà a Atene il 29-30 Agosto per una conference "Digital Manuscripts of Cyril's Lexicon".



Introduction

What is known as the "*Lexicon of Cyril*" is an exceptionally extensive Greek lexicon that was likely compiled between the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth century AD. It is preserved in about 200 manuscripts, many of which attribute the Lexicon to Saint Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria (370-444 AD). The Lexicon remains essentially unpublished in the many (and often interpolated) lines of its tradition.

The aim of the proposed Project is to lay the foundations for the first comprehensive edition of the "*Lexicon of Cyril*", which will record the manuscripts circulating over the centuries and found in—what is today—Greece. In the past, only partial editions have undergone complete or partial processing, and there is no scholarly consensus regarding the precise relationship of the surviving manuscripts. Therefore, the Project's objectives represent the first steps towards a full-scale edition. The Project plans to create an annotated database of Cyril's manuscripts covering the documents preserved within the borders of modern Greece.

The Imperative of Digitizing "*Lexicon of Cyril*": Preservation, Access, and Cultural Continuity

The digitization of historical texts is a cornerstone of modern scholarship, bridging the past with the future. Among such endeavors, the digitization of "*Lexicon of Cyril*" emerges as a critical initiative. Its digitization is vital for preservation, global accessibility, academic innovation, educational enrichment, and safeguarding of cultural heritage, ensuring its relevance in the digital age.

Preservation Against the Ravages of Time

Physical manuscripts are inherently fragile, susceptible to decay, environmental damage, and accidental catastrophic events. The conversion of "*Lexicon of Cyril*" into a digital format, the text is "immortalized", safeguarding it against irreversible loss. High resolution scans and metadata, capture not only the content but also their material essence of the original, preserving marginalia, script styles, and historical annotations. The digital preservation acts as a failsafe, complementing, but not replacing, physical conservation efforts, ensuring that future generations inherit a tangible link to their linguistic roots.

Democratizing Access for Global Scholarship

Digitization dismantles geographical and institutional barriers. Scholars in under-resourced regions gain unprecedented access to primary sources, eliminating the need for costly travel to specialized archives. The project exemplifies this by offering open access to the lexicon online. Such democratization fosters inclusivity, enabling independent researchers, educators, and global academics to engage directly with the text. In an era where knowledge equity is paramount, digitization ensures that "*Lexicon of Cyril*" transcends elitism, becoming a universal academic resource.

Enabling Advanced Research Methodologies

Digital tools revolutionize textual analysis. Searchable text functionalities allow researchers to track linguistic patterns, trace etymological evolutions, and conduct comparative studies with unparalleled efficiency. Hyperlinks to related manuscripts and interoperable databases further contextualize the lexicon within a broader scholarly network, catalyzing interdisciplinary discoveries in linguistics, history, and theology.

Educational Transformation

Digitization transforms pedagogy by bringing primary sources into classrooms. Students can interact with *"Lexicon of Cyril"* through annotated translations and interactive glossaries, enhancing engagement and comprehension. Such accessibility nurtures critical thinking, allowing learners to analyze historical texts first hand rather than relying on secondary summaries. For Greek studies, this direct engagement is invaluable, fostering a deeper connection to linguistic heritage and inspiring future philologists.

Countering Skepticism

Critics may cite costs or the impersonal nature of digital interaction. However, the long-term benefits—preservation, accessibility, and scholarly advancement—far outweigh initial investments. Digitization does not diminish the value of physical texts; instead, it amplifies their reach and utility, ensuring they remain dynamic rather than static museum pieces.

Conclusion

The digitization of *"Lexicon of Cyril"* is not merely a technical project but a moral and academic imperative. It safeguards humanity's collective memory, empowers global scholarship, and nurtures cultural continuity. As we advance into an increasingly digital future, such initiatives ensure that historical treasures like *"Lexicon of Cyril"* remain living texts, inspiring curiosity and unity across generations and borders. Through this lens, digitization becomes an act of cultural stewardship, echoing the visionary spirit of Cyril of Alexandria himself.

Antonios Tsolomitis
P.I., Head of Collaborative
Organisation

The Curse of Cyrill: A Scholar's Cautionary Tale

The history of scholarship is filled with unfinished projects, but few works have proven as elusive as *Cyrill's Lexicon*. For over a century, scholars have devoted themselves to the task of producing a critical edition, only to see their efforts interrupted—often in the most definitive way possible.

The first serious attempt was made by Anders B. Drachmann in the 1930s. His edition was nearly complete when, in 1935, his untimely passing halted the project indefinitely. His manuscript remains in the Royal Danish Academy's archives, as if waiting for someone brave enough to take it up again. Later, scholars such as Kurt Latte and Jakob Benediktsson contributed significant insights into the manuscript tradition, yet their work, too, remained incomplete.

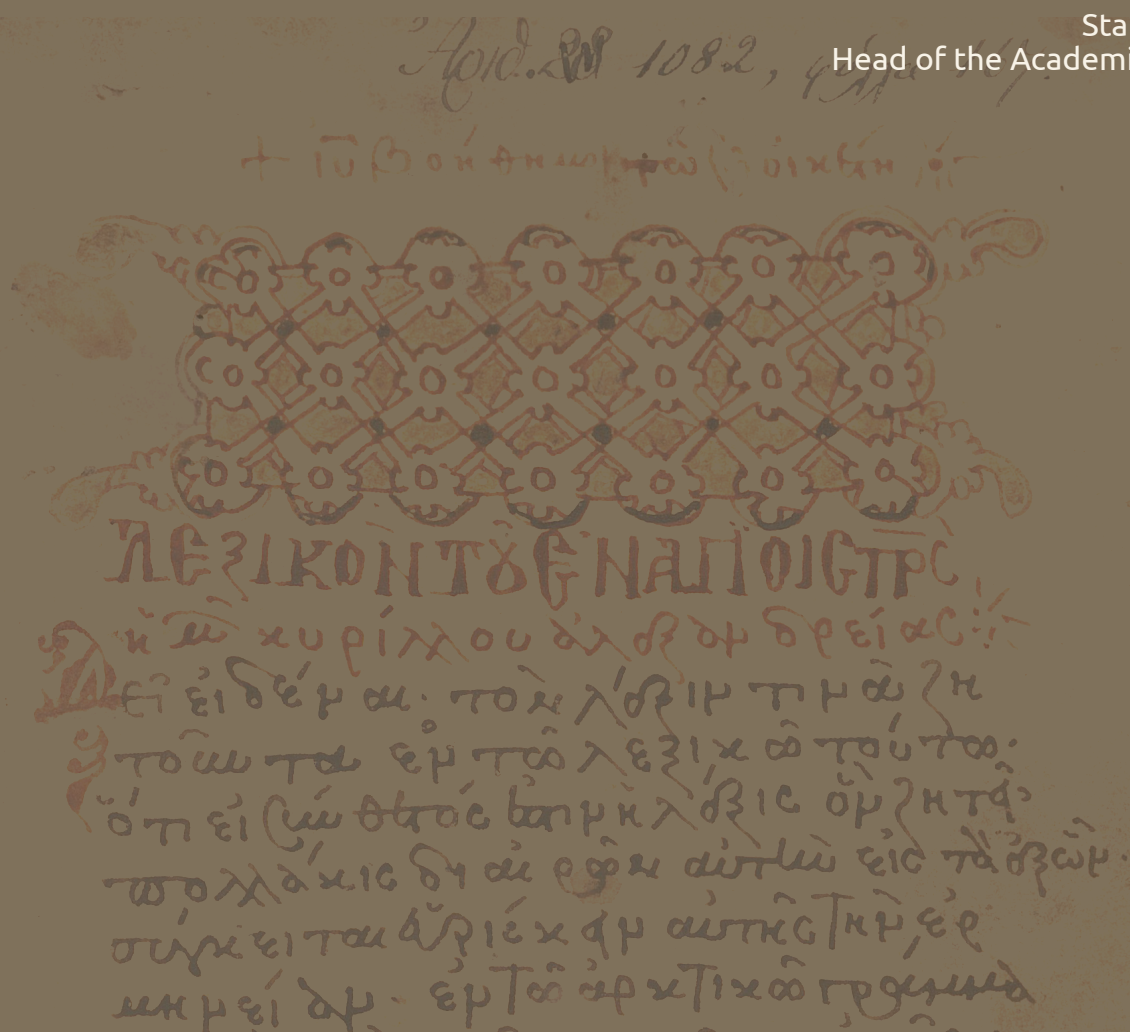
Then came Mark Naoumides, who in the 1960s and 70s made considerable progress in reconstructing the text from over 200 manuscript witnesses. His introduction was nearly finished, and the critical text was well underway. But in 1977, just before publication, he too passed away. By now, one might begin to notice a pattern.

Of course, one hesitates to speak of curses in academic circles—surely the challenges of manuscript editing, rather than any supernatural force, are to blame for these unfinished editions. And yet, the fate of those who have worked on *Cyrill's Lexicon* does give pause for thought.

Perhaps the real lesson here is not one of superstition but of scholarly persistence. Each generation has brought us closer to understanding this complex text, even if no single scholar has lived to see a definitive edition. The lexicon remains, its mysteries intact, waiting for the next courageous scholar willing to take up the task.

One can only wish them good health.

Stamatis Bussès
Head of the Academic committee



Newsletter

Digital Manuscripts of Coptic Lexicon



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