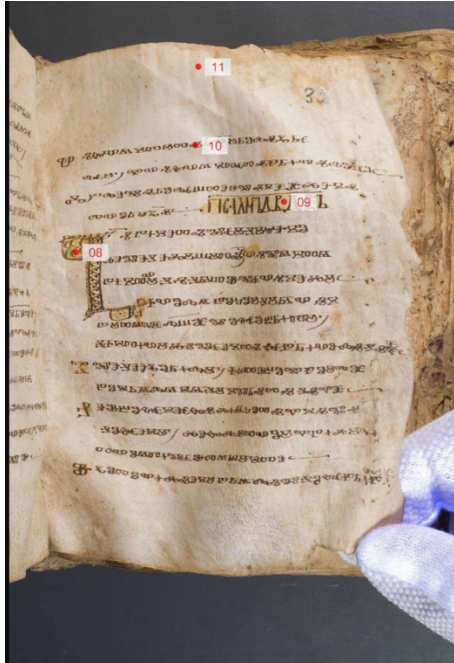


Teaching Sinai Module

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Sinai Glagolitic Manuscripts: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Multilingual Liturgical Heritage



“New Finds” codex Sinai Slav. 5/N, alternative titles: Sinai Liturgiarium; Sinai Missal

Parchment codex, 100 ff., typical folio dimensions: 137 x 105 mm

Second quarter of the eleventh century

Glagolitic script, Old Church Slavonic

Poor condition, frequently illegible, some erasures, palimpsested folios

Brief Description

This single-class module introduces advanced undergraduate or graduate students to the *Sinai Liturgiarium*, a Glagolitic manuscript preserved at St Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai. As a rare witness to early Slavic Christianity and Byzantine liturgical transmission, this codex offers a distinctive entry point into manuscript culture, multilingualism, and the convergence of Eastern and Western liturgical traditions in the distant setting of Sinai. Students will also explore the interdisciplinary methods used in the study of this manuscript, gaining a fuller appreciation of how diverse fields contribute to reconstructing the manuscript’s origin and use.

Class Objectives

- Introduce the *Sinai Liturgiarium* and the Sinai Slavic manuscript collection
- Explore key interdisciplinary methods used to study medieval manuscripts
- Consider what can be learned by combining textual, material, and scientific data

No prior knowledge of Glagolitic or Church Slavonic is required. This module is ideal for graduate or advanced undergraduate seminars in Byzantine studies, Eastern Christian liturgy, manuscript studies, or digital humanities.

In-Class Activity: Method Mapping the *Sinai Liturgiarium*

Objective: To explore and evaluate the various methods used in the study of the *Sinai Liturgiarium*, and to reflect on how these methods, taken together, help reconstruct the manuscript's history and liturgical context.

Instructions:

1. Begin with a 10-15 minute instructor overview of the *Sinai Liturgiarium*, its condition, and its significance.
2. Divide the class into small groups. Assign each group one of the following methodological lenses and provide them with an article excerpt or website on their topic:
 - Multispectral imaging (MSI)
 - Codicology and paleography
 - Ink and material analysis (spectroscopy, microbiology, DNA)
 - Liturgical/philological content analysis
 - Historical contextualization (e.g., scribal mobility, cultural contact)
3. Each group will:
 - Identify what kind of data their method yields
 - Provide one insight it offers for the *Sinai Liturgiarium*
 - Note one limitation or uncertainty of the method
4. Regroup for a class discussion. Prompt questions:
 - What new understanding emerges when these methods are combined?
 - How do different kinds of evidence (textual, material, biological) complement each other?
 - What can we say with confidence about the *Sinai Liturgiarium*? What remains uncertain?

Follow-Up Option: Students could write a short (1–2 page) reflection after class summarizing the strengths and limits of their assigned method and how it contributes to the study of Sinai manuscripts.

Further Reading

- Brenner, Simon, and Robert Sablatnig. "Reading Between the Lines: Multispectral Imaging of Ancient Manuscripts." In *Cifrovaja humanitaristika: resursy, metody, issledovanija. Materialy naučnoj konferencii (g. Perm', 16–18 maja 2017 g.)*, 166–68. Perm, 2017.
This short article introduces multispectral imaging (MSI) as a non-invasive technique for recovering faded or erased text in ancient manuscripts. It provides a useful entry point for understanding one of the most powerful tools applied to the Sinai Glagolitic corpus.
- Miklas, Heinz. "Mount Sinai and the Cyrillo-Methodian Heritage." In *Sparagmata Byzantinoslavikēs Klēronomias*, edited by Konstantinos Nichorites, Eleni Evangelou, and Andreas Athanasiades, 35–53. Thessaloniki, 2011.
Miklas explores the presence and legacy of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition at Mount Sinai. This piece situates the Slavic manuscripts within broader historical and cultural trajectories and introduces students to questions of linguistic and liturgical heritage.

- Piñar, Guadalupe, Hakim Tafer, Manfred Schreiner, Heinz Miklas, and Katja Sterflinger. “Decoding the Biological Information Contained in Two Ancient Slavonic Parchment Codices: An Added Historical Value.” *Environmental Microbiology* 22, no. 8 (2020): 3218–33. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1462-2920.15064>.
 This study applies DNA and microbial analysis to parchment, revealing previously unknown aspects of manuscript materials and provenance. A cutting-edge piece for discussions on the interface between science and historical studies.
- Taft, Robert F. “Worship on Sinai in the First Christian Millennium: Glimpses of a Lost World.” In *Approaching the Holy Mountain: Art and Liturgy at St. Catherine’s Monastery in the Sinai*, edited by Sharon E. J. Gerstel and Robert S. Nelson, 143–78. *Cursor Mundi* 11. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.
 Taft’s classic reflection on liturgical life at Sinai introduces students to the broader religious and ritual setting in which these manuscripts once functioned. It serves as a theological and historical anchor for the rest of the materials.
- Tarnanidis, Ioannis. *The Slavonic Manuscripts Discovered in 1975 at St. Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai*. Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1988.
 The foundational catalogue of the 1975 “New Finds” at Sinai, this volume offers codicological descriptions and historical context for each Slavonic manuscript. Essential reference material for anyone working seriously with the corpus.