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From Sinai to California: The Trajectory of Greek NT Codex 712 from the UCLA Young Research Library’s Special Collections (170/347)

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Abstract
The eleventh- or twelfth-century parchment codex 170/347 is one of the rarities archived in the UCLA Young Research Library Special Collections. It has much to offer to a student of paleography: illuminations, a scribe's colophon, calligraphic minuscule script, later inscriptions and modifications, inserted paper quires, missing folia, study notes, and even a cryptographic table. One of the most fascinating aspects of this New-Testament-turned-lectionary manuscript, however, is its history as a world traveler, for the most part incognito. Although the manuscript's mysterious disappearance from St. Catherine's metochion in Cairo obscured its trajectory, the analysis of its graffiti and the comparison of catalogs' data help reestablish its provenance and narrate its journey beyond the walls of a monastic scriptorium. The resulting travelogue not only tells the story of how Sinai-born MS 170/347 landed in Los Angeles; it offers insight into the fate that befell many other rare books in the height of the nineteenth-century collecting and scholarship rush.

Keywords
manuscript studies, Greek, colophon, New Testament, St. Catherine's Monastery, Mt. Sinai, Konstantine Alexsandrovish Uspenski (1804-1885), Greek paleography, codicology, book theft, University of California Young Research Library, Greek NT Codex 712

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The manuscript and iconographic treasures of the Holy Monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai have always been of particular interest to scholars of early Christian history and Biblical studies. Since the late medieval period, the monastery has attracted both humble pilgrims and adventurous scholars. Despite best efforts of the latter, the strict supervision of St. Catherine’s brethren over the library hindered manuscript examination and research for centuries. The monks kept strangers away from their library and tried to mislead visitors, convincing them that there were no valuable manuscripts at St. Catherine’s. In the nineteenth century, the intensified textual study of the Bible made the Sinai scriptorium and library a manuscript Mecca for those searching for ancient textual versions. Dedicated learned men and women traveled to Sinai from far away to document and describe as many manuscripts as the Sinaite monks would consent to disclose. The most persistent and resourceful, not to mention unscrupulous, of this adventurous lot tried not only to get access to the valuable manuscripts but to spirit them away for the sake of scholarship and, of course, collecting.

The mystery surrounding St. Catherine’s manuscripts was also fueled by the fact that even the monks themselves did not have a clear idea of all the books that their monastery harbored. Things changed in the second
half of the nineteenth century when several catalogs and descriptions of the monastery’s manuscripts were produced and published. Among the earliest descriptions—although it was not published until much later—was that compiled by Archimandrite, and later bishop of Chigirin, Porfirii (Uspenskii), the head of the First Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem (1847–1853) and a connoisseur of Greek letters. A prominent orientalist, Byzantinist, archaeologist, ethnographer, paleographer, art historian, and theologian, Konstantin Aleksandrovich Uspenskii (1804–1885) is particularly known for his adherence to the new historical critical method in his studies of Oriental and Slavic manuscripts and his revision of Mt. Athos’s monastic history. In addition to penning scholarly publications, Porfirii kept a diary of his rather extraordinary life and travels. When his autobiographical notes, spanning forty-three years of his life, were published in 1891, they amounted to eight volumes of unique information about his activities in the Orient: Constantinople, Mt. Athos, Palestine, Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor. An ardent collector of Greek manuscripts, Porfirii amassed a personal collection of dated samples of writing covering each and every quarter century starting as far back as AD 900.

2 Porfirii (Uspenskii) and V. N. Beneshevich, Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum graecorum qui in monasterio Sanctae Catharinae in Monte Sina asservantur, Tomus I: Codices manuscripti notabiles bibliothecae monasterii Sinai tici ejuque metochii Cabirensis, ab archimandrita Porphy rio (Uspenskio) descripti, ed. V. N. Beneshevich (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1965 [1911–1917]).
4 “Ценность Порфириевского собрания греческих рукописей заключается преиму-
щественно в его богатстве рукописями определенных лет (датированными). Нет столетия, начиная с 9, ни даже полстолетия, а начиная с середины 10 века, нет чет-
верти столетия, из которой в Порфириевском собрании не было бы датированных
образцов письма.” V. K. Ernshtedt, Spisok datirovannykh grecheskikh rukopisei Porfirievskogo sobranija (St. Petersburg: V. S. Balashev, 1885), 1.
During his scholarly expeditions, Porfirii visited St. Catherine’s Monastery on Mt. Sinai twice, in 1845 and 1850. In 1861, he spent several months studying manuscripts in the monastery’s metochion (dependency) in Cairo, called Juvania. Porfirii’s records are especially valuable as he had documented manuscripts that were already missing by the time later catalogs were compiled. Unfortunately, Porfirii did not live to see the publication of his work. The edition of his catalog was completed by Vladimir Beneshevich (1874–1938), another prominent Russian Byzantinist, paleographer, and specialist in canon law. Beneshevich not only carried out extensive editorial work on Porfirii’s notes but also made some important additions and revisions. He traveled to Sinai to verify Porfirii’s descriptions and compared them to other catalogs. Alas, several decades after Porfirii’s last visit, Beneshevich found that many manuscripts were no longer in the monastic collection. In the introduction to his edition, Beneshevich complains that many manuscripts described by Porfirii had already disappeared from the monastery and he expresses the hope that some of them might be found or rediscovered with the help of Porfirii’s detailed information. He was right, and the story that I am going to share on the following pages is about one such manuscript—a New Testament Greek Codex that once belonged to St. Catherine’s monastic library and that, after being passed along by a number of owners, found its home at the UCLA Young Research Library’s Special Collections Department.

In 1998, as a student in a Greek paleography graduate seminar, I chose as my final project to describe a manuscript from the UCLA Special Collections (170/347), which was then identified as a late twelfth or early thirteenth-century Greek New Testament (ca. 1200). No other information about the provenance or the date of this manuscript was on record. I started with paleographic description.

5 In the account of his first visit in 1845, Porfirii described the most important manuscripts in St. Catherine’s monastic library, including the famous Codex Sinaiticus. His description of the latter covers both the 86 leaves that Tischendorf found and left behind and the 260 leaves that he did not.

6 Porfirii and Beneshevich, Catalogus codicum manusciptorum graecorum, 90–93 (no. 73).
A Brief Codicological and Paleographic Description of the Manuscript

The core of the manuscript is written on parchment (240 folios [15.5 x 12.7 cm], 5 folios missing) in one column, 33 lines, ruling type 44 C1 according to Leroy8 (type I 40c according to the Lake system). The handwriting is upright with letters pendent, words mostly separated, traditional ligatures, iota subscript absent, and n-movable never found before a consonant; angular breathing signs, arched circumflex, high and low points, and comma are used; interrogation point is rare. Abbreviations include nomina sacra and the ends of words at the end of a line; kai may appear abbreviated in S-form or K-form (mostly at the bottom), or unabbreviated (fig. 1).

The ornamentation of the codex is fairly minimalistic. Most initials are in purple, except initials on the first page of each gospel, which are gold over purple. There are geometrical ornaments with floral or plant images at the beginning of each book in purple, blue, gold, red, and green colors (fols. 2, 36v, 58v, 92, 128); simple ornaments (gold over purple) at the beginning of each of Pauline Epistles (fols. 160v, 163v, 167, 169, etc.); and an illuminated letter A (gold over purple) on folio 36v. There are four miniatures of the Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (fols. 1v, 35v, 57v, 91v).

The scribe of the main portion of the codex—one monk Ioannikios9—copied the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Pauline Epistles, as well as the preface to Acts by the Alexandrine deacon Euthalius (AD 462)

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7 A more detailed description of this manuscript, which consists of (1) the history of the codex, (2) the codicological and paleographic description of the writing, paper watermarks, graffiti, inserted notes, and cryptographic table, (3) a table of contents, (4) a transcript of selected Psalm verses, and (5) the collation of the Gospel of Mark, was composed by Julia Verkholantsev (1–3) and Jie Yuan (3–5) in 1999. The description is kept at the UCLA Special Collections along with the manuscript.


9 It is possible that the same monk Ioannikios also added pericopes to an Evangeliarium that Gardthausen dated to the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. Victor Emil Gardthausen, Catalogus codicum graecorum sinaiticorum (Oxford: Clarendon, 1886), 53 (no. 255); Marie Vogel and Gardthausen, Die griechischen Schreier des Mittelalters und der Renaissance (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1909), 213–14.
in calligraphic accurate minuscule using brown ink for the main text and purple for initials, chapter titles at the beginning of each book, and the colophon. However, five folios, containing the end of Jude and Euthalius’s preface to the Acts of Apostles, are missing from the codex. The codex does not have and never had the Book of Apocalypse: Ioannikios did not consider it a part of the canon, as was not unusual at his time. On the last folio, 239v, he left a colophon (fig. 2):

As sweet as a quiet harbor is to sailors,
So sweet is a last verse to scribes.
Ioannikios the monk.

Later, someone added hexameter poems celebrating Luke (fol. 57) and John (fol. 90v) in red ink. Another scribe added a lectionary apparatus: he
wrote new chapter titles on the upper and lower margins in red ink over the old tarnished brown titles, added indications of the beginning and the end of daily readings, and added indications of Old Testament quotations. He also amended washed out text in several places and made a few corrections.

A number of insets have been added to the codex. These are two fifteenth-century Italian paper quires with two kinds of watermarks containing readings from Psalms, synaxarium, and menologion (from the time
when the codex was adapted to the liturgical use) and two quires of new parchment at the beginning and the end (most likely at the time of re-binding in the 1870s).

Having compared the script to the published samples of handwriting of this period, I concluded that the codex could have been written in the eleventh or twelfth century but I did not feel confident enough to narrow down the date.

The Trajectory of the NT Codex 712

After conducting the preliminary paleographic analysis, outlined above, I began leafing through the classic catalogs of Greek manuscripts, hoping to find a clue that would lead me deeper into the codex’s history and verify my paleographic analysis. In the 1963 edition of Aland’s Kurzgefasste Liste der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments, which I first consulted, two manuscripts show similar physical parameters: a Greek NT that Aland identifies as belonging to the Berkeley Library (Gregory-Aland 712) and a five-folio fragment from the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg.10

Remembering that five folios were missing from my codex, I decided to follow this lead and look in Granstrem’s catalog of Greek manuscripts of the Russian National Library.11 The five folios turned out to be from the collection of Porfiriei Uspenskii and of Sinaitic provenance, and, to my absolute delight, they contained the end of Jude and Euthalius’s preface to the Acts of Apostles that were missing in the UCLA manuscript. From there it was a short step to Porfiriei’s catalog and the realization that this manuscript was a world traveler of noble descent: it had come from the library of the Holy Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai.

10 In the 1994 edition of Aland’s catalog, the Berkeley Library is already changed to the UCLA Library.
I could have stopped my sleuthing there, but the enigmatic inscriptions and the catalog adventure inspired me to continue the reconstruction of the manuscript’s traveling itinerary. From Porfirii’s catalog and his diary, I learned that when Porfirii saw this manuscript it was stored in one of the bookcases in the Cairo metochion of St. Catherine’s Monastery, called Juvania. A circle-shaped shelfmark (O) is probably an indication of its place there (fig. 3). The monastery possessed many metochia all over the Christian world, but in the nineteenth century the Cairo metochion was as prominent as the monastery itself: it was the seat of the abbot of St. Catherine’s Monastery.
and the archbishop of Sinai, and the majority of the Sinai brethren in fact resided there. In 1861, Porfirii traveled through Egypt and Sinai, and stayed for a couple of months in the Juvanian metochion in order to examine its Greek manuscripts. As he notes in his diary, he started studying the manuscripts on 10 January and finished his task on 14 February. It was probably then that Porfirii, a fervent admirer of Greek handwriting and—truth be told—a shameless collector, tore out of the codex a fragment of five folios and added it to his personal collection of Greek handwriting. Shortly before his death, Porfirii sold his whole collection, including the five-folio fragment, to the Imperial Public Library at St. Petersburg (now the Russian National Library), where it remains until present under the call number Greek 320.

Unfortunately, I cannot tell at this time for how long after 1861, when Porfirii last held it in his hands, the codex remained in the possession of St. Catherine’s monks. Prior to its disappearance, the codex might have been taken to Sinai for better care: by 1881 the entire Cairo library had been transferred to Sinai, and in 1911 Vladimir Beneshevich reports that among the manuscripts of Juvania there were none left of value since all important manuscripts had been taken to “the mountain.”

An important witness to the whereabouts of our codex is a catalog that was compiled in 1870 by Archimandrite Antonin (Kapustin) (1817–1894), also a head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem (1865–1894). Like Porfirii, Antonin kept a diary in which he documented his work and travel, and although his catalog has never been published, his diary gives a good idea about the scope and quality of his project. During his stay of

12 Porfirii, Kniga bytiia moego, 3:337.
14 Granstrem, “Katalog grecheskikh rukopisei,” 239 (Greek 320); Porfirii and Beneshevich, Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Graecorum, 616 (no. 73).
forty days at St. Catherine’s, Antonin examined 1310 of the Greek manuscripts and composed what seems to be the most detailed catalogue of St. Catherine’s Greek manuscripts at the end of the nineteenth century. Antonin left two copies of his work. Their fate is both remarkable and characteristic of the time. The copy that Antonin took back to Russia never circulated and is now in the Vladimir Beneshevich Collection at the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, still awaiting its publication. The copy that Antonin left at the monastery was afterwards lost. However, it was still at St. Catherine’s when a German paleographer, Victor Gardthausen of Leipzig University (1843–1925), stayed there in 1880 (also for forty days) while working on his Catalogus codicum graecorum sinaiticorum. It appears that Gardthausen utilized Antonin’s work extensively, as a comparison of the two catalogs demonstrates. Yet he fails to give credit to Antonin and only mentions the work of his predecessor, whose numbering system he admits to having adopted, as that of a nameless “Russian monk.” In his diary, Antonin records his unpleasant surprise at the discovery of Gardthausen’s plagiarism. Antonin’s descriptions are not


16 A. A. Dmitrievskii, Puteshestvie po Vostoku i ego nauchnye rezul’taty (Kiev: Korchak-Novitskogo, 1890), 121–48. Dmitrievskii is very critical of Gardthausen’s work and gives preference to Antonin’s more cautious description.

17 “Numeri, quibus codices notavi, ii sunt quos ipsi prae se ferunt libri, quibusque notatis sunt in catalogo manuscripto bibliothecae Sinaiticae, quem monachum Russicum olim fecisse dicunt. Quo libro ut uterer semel per singulam diem mihi concessum est.” (“The numbers, by which I have recorded the books, are the same as those in front of the books recorded in the manuscript catalog of the Sinai library, which a monk of Russian origin is said formerly to have created.”) Gardthausen, Catalogus codicum graecorum sinaiticorum, viii.

18 A note from 19 April 1887 says: “leafing through a catalog of Sinai manuscripts of one Gardthausen, who used my work without my name, blindly following my established order and giving manuscripts my numbering system, which, according to him, long time ago olim monachum Russicum . . . facisse dicunt.” (“. . . перечитывание Синайского каталога рукописей некого Gardthausen’a, воспользовавшегося моим трудом безименно, слепо следовавшего установленному мною порядку, и оставившего рукописям данную им мною нумeração, которую, по его словам, впоследствии, давно—olim monachum Russicum

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comprehensive: he notes the material and the size of manuscripts, the number of leaves and lines, main content, ornament and illuminations, if any, and the names of scribes, if known. But the information that Antonin provides is sufficient to conclude that no description in his catalog corresponds to that of the UCLA Greek NT codex 712. This means that by 1870 our manuscript had already been missing from the library at St. Catherine’s. It is even possible that it never made it to “the mountain” and went missing during the transfer of manuscripts from the Cairo metochion.

Back to the manuscript inscriptions, a hardly legible pencil note on fol. 3 of the new parchment inset lead me to the manuscript’s next sojourn: “Quaritch considered this manuscript the gem of his collection of Greek manuscripts.” Checking a number of catalogs of the prominent London antiquarian bookseller Bernard Quaritch revealed our manuscript to have been listed for sale in A General Catalogue of Books for the year 1874. By then it had acquired a new red-brown Morocco leather binding ornamented with gold from “Francis Bedford,” and it was offered for the price of £200.

In 1876 the manuscript was acquired for £120 by Alexander Peckover (1830–1919), the first and last Baron Peckover of Wisbech, banker, philanthropist, and collector of ancient manuscripts. His coat of arms is featured on a bookplate on fol. 1v of the new parchment inset (fig. 4). An inscription on fol. 4v made in black ink also indicates Peckover’s name and refers to F.
H. A. Scrivener’s catalogue of Greek manuscripts in his *Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament* (fig. 5).  

**Codex. Burgon & Scrivener**

Gospel Acts Paul

Peckover 560 222 228

An inscription on the left upper corner of fol. 1v (fig. 4) bears a sign of sale at a Sotheby’s auction, which most likely took place on 4 April 1949.

*Sothebys (Maggs)*

£600 + 60 = £660 *Isaac Foot*

At this sale, Maggs Bros. book dealers purchased the manuscript on commission for Isaac Foot of Callington (1880–1960), a British politician and solicitor and a book collector. On the bottom of the same folio, a black and white bookplate (a person is sitting in a chair and reading a book) with the name *Isaac Foot* is attached with glue (fig. 5). The codex remained until 1962 in Foot’s collection when, after Foot’s death, it was acquired by the University of California. Unfortunately, the first edition of Aland’s catalog inaccurately places it in the Berkeley Library (and not UCLA), probably due to a complicated process of distribution of the Foot collection among the UC libraries, which obscured the path of this manuscript. By the time it arrived at UCLA it had lost its association with the 1963 edition of Aland’s catalog and any other reference material in general. When I started working

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24 Catalog (London: Sotheby’s, 1949), 23 (no. 198).

Figure 5. Isaac Foot’s book plate and Scrivener’s inscription, Greek NT Codex 712, flyleaf. Photographed by the author.
on the description, virtually nothing was known to the UCLA manuscript curators about this manuscript.

What is remarkable is that the knowledge of its Sinai provenance was lost at the very beginning of its journey. The description in the Quaritch catalog, otherwise so detailed, makes no reference to St. Catherine’s. This raises suspicion about how the manuscript got to London. Was it stolen from Cairo or Sinai? Was it sold by a mischievous monk? This link being broken, the manuscript’s connection to the five-folio fragment in Porfirii’s collection (Greek 320) also temporarily vanished. On 30 September 1903, Caspar Gregory examined the five-folio fragment in St. Petersburg and failed to associate it with the NT codex that he had examined back on 22 June 1883. He even dated them differently: the codex to the eleventh century and the St. Petersburg five-folio fragment to the thirteenth century (after Porfirii’s own dating).26 In the fourth edition of his catalog (1894), Scrivener does not mention the five-folio fragment at all and dates the codex to the eleventh century.27 In 1911, Beneshevich saw the link between the codex and the five-folio fragment in Porfirii’s notes but he was unable to find the codex itself. In his edition of Porfirii’s catalogue, he dated both to the eleventh or twelfth centuries on the basis of the five-folio fragment (Greek 320).28

Thus, the most interesting question is how did the manuscript disappear from St. Catherine’s, which happened sometime between 1861 (when Uspenskii described it) and 1870 (when Antonin compiled his catalog)? At that time not many people from the West were allowed to visit and examine libraries at St. Catherine’s monastery and its metochion in Cairo. In 1858, the German scholar Constantin von Tischendorf (1815–1874), through the assistance of the Russian government, received special permission from the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Archbishop of Sinai to take from the Eastern monasteries manuscripts and fragments that were no longer in use

26 Gregory, Textkritik des Neuen Testaments, 215 (no. 712), 1197 (no. 2164).
27 Scrivener, A Plain Introduction, 1:225 (no. 560).
or did not serve as a special decoration. In return, he promised to bring to the Russian government manuscripts in different languages important for study, and indeed the Public Library in St. Petersburg purchased many manuscripts from him when he came back from his expedition.\textsuperscript{29} He also succeeded in taking one of the oldest and most valuable manuscripts from the monastery, the famous \textit{Codex Sinaiticus}, and presenting it to the Russian Emperor, first as a loan, but eventually, as it turned out, forever.\textsuperscript{30} Like many other scholars, Tischendorf regarded the Sinai monks as unworthy of keeping valuable ancient manuscripts because he was convinced that the monks did not take proper care of them. This event was widely discussed in the Orthodox circles, and Tischendorf was censored by many. Incidentally, Porfiriï Uspenskii, himself not quite innocent in pocketing manuscript relics, took Tischendorf’s side. In his diary from 28 November 1860, Porfiriï relates a conversation with the Patriarch Kallinikos of Alexandria in which he tried to justify the relocation of the \textit{Codex Sinaiticus} to Russia: “From your library this ancient treasure can disappear, or get into the English, French, or German hands, but in our possession it will be safe. Our Catholic Church is one big home.”\textsuperscript{31} Ironically, this codex did end up in the British Museum in 1933, when it was sold by the Soviet government for £100,000. However, whether or not guilty of the theft of the \textit{Codex Sinaiticus},

\textsuperscript{29} Edouard de Muralt, \textit{Catalogue des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque impériale publique} (St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1864).

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Codex Sinaiticus}, a manuscript of the Christian Bible written in the middle of the fourth century, is one of the most important documents for biblical textual scholarship because it contains the earliest complete text of the New Testament. The New Testament is in the vernacular language (koine) and the Old Testament in the version known as the Septuagint that was adopted by early Greek-speaking Christians. The texts of both the Septuagint and the New Testament are heavily annotated by a number of readers. For more information on the \textit{Codex Sinaiticus}, see David C. Parker, \textit{Codex Sinaiticus: The Story of the World’s Oldest Bible} (London: British Library, 2010); Scot McKendrick, David Parker, Amy Myshral, and Cillian O’Hogan, eds., \textit{Codex Sinaiticus: New Perspectives on the Ancient Biblical Manuscript} (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2015).

\textsuperscript{31} “У вас старина эта может исчезнуть и попасть в руки англичан, французов, немцев, а у нас она будет сохранна. Наша католическая церковь есть один большой дом.” Porfiriï, \textit{Kniga bytiia moego}, 284.
Tischendorf had no hand in stealing our manuscript since he did not travel to Sinai or Cairo after 1861.

But Tischendorf was not the only one pursuing Sinaitic treasures. Despite the vigilance of the monks, some lucky and/or thieving individuals succeeded in exporting manuscripts from Sinai to the West. In 1865, a Professor-Egyptologist Heinrich Brugsch, then consul in Cairo, and in 1871 his colleague Georg Ebers, traveled to St. Catherine’s on a manuscript hunt and tried to purchase some Greek manuscripts from the Sinai monks, reportedly without success. Yet in 1866 the Berlin Library recorded a substantial acquisition of manuscripts from Sinai brought by Brugsch. A note in the catalog description of an eighth- or ninth-century Greek lectionary manuscript fragment, no. 267 (as well as a number of other manuscripts), says: “These leaves have come to the library from the Sinai Monastery through the mediation of Consul Brugsch.” Yet, in his travelogue published in 1866, Brugsch again declares that he was unsuccessful in taking hold of any manuscripts during his visit to the monastery:

> While Tischendorf and others were so lucky in their acquisition of manuscripts for European libraries from this treasure house, now the Sinaites—as it seems at higher orders—approach the trade of manuscripts, even single leaves, with great caution, and all my

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33 “Hervorzuheben sind die grösseren Erwerbungen der von Brugsch auf dem Sinai gesammelten, 1866 in die Bibliothek aufgenommenen Handschriften.” (“Noteworthy are major acquisitions of manuscripts collected by Brugsch on Sinai, recorded in the library in 1866.”) Carl de Boor, Verzeichniss der griechischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin, vol. 2 (Berlin: Asher & Co, 1897), 121.
34 “Die Blätter sind im Mai 1866 durch Vermittelung des damaligen Consuls Brugsch in Cairo aus einem Kloster des Sinai in die Bibliothek gekommen.” (“The leaves came to the library from the monastery of Sinai in May 1866 through the mediation of the former Consul Brugsch in Cairo.”) De Boor, Verzeichniss der griechischen Handschriften, 139.
efforts to acquire some manuscripts suffered complete failure due to the determination of the monks not to give away anything.  

Only a privileged guest or an insider could have been given access to the manuscript library, which, according to Brugsch, was closely guarded and locked at all times. In another account, Brugsch elaborates on the spiritual attachment of the Sinatic monks to their manuscripts: “Some of these manuscripts can easily date from the fourth or fifth century; but attempts to buy them from the monks succeed neither by persuasion nor by gold. ‘Sir,’ says the Prior of the monastery, ‘these books are written by our brothers, who rest for centuries in the earth; they force us solemnly at the end of each manuscript never to give away any of these devout offerings for the sake of the salvation of our souls.’” Their sentiments are easily understandable: the infamous Tischendorf’s deceit taught monks to be particularly suspicious of scholars.

It is possible that further archival investigation will help determine exactly when and who acquired, stole, purchased, or received our manuscript as a gift between 1861 and 1870. This account of one student’s odyssey through old catalogs and diaries highlights the fate that befell the UCLA


Greek NT manuscript codex 712 and many other manuscripts and rare books during the height of the nineteenth-century rush to collect and study. Although these written treasures were taken from their homes and dispersed around the world, their pages retain marks of their itineraries, and their progress has been documented by the labors of assiduous and philanthropic scholars. It is to them that I devote this essay.