

Preface

THE IDEA for the compilation of a *Lexicon of Abbreviations & Ligatures in Greek Minuscule Hands* had its genesis in May 1992, when it became apparent to the editors, during their research in notarial documents, that it was time that Greek Palæography should have its Cappelli. The aim of the present Lexicon, as in its Latin counterpart, is to incorporate as full a number of abbreviations, ligatures and symbols as possible, so that it becomes a useful aid to students and scholars, especially classicists, Byzantinists and mediævalists, who wish to study texts preserved in Greek Mss. copied between around the eighth to the sixteenth century, including fifteenth- and sixteenth-century incunabula.

The material comes from Mss. and early printed books housed in major libraries in Europe and the United States, and covers a variety of subjects from literature, law and notarial documents to mathematics, physics and alchemy, astronomy and astrology, weights and measures, and medicine among others, as well as tachygraphy, cryptography and monocondylia. No instances of musical notation have been included, however.

An important aspect of this dictionary is the method adopted for reproducing the letters and signs. While in the past these were reproduced by hand — either by the scholar himself, or (one assumes) by a craftsman — with varying degrees of success, we are now able to reproduce them directly from facsimiles of Mss. by the use of an electronic scanner. The reproduction of these abbreviations, ligatures and symbols, therefore, not only gives an exact representation, but it also highlights the stylistic idiosyncrasies of scribes and scriptoria.

The *Lexicon* comprises a brief Introduction which discusses the various methods and forms of abbreviations in Greek minuscule hands, with examples. This is followed by a list of (a) conventional abbreviations, ligatures and symbols, (b) cryptographic and (c) tachygraphical alphabets, and (d) fonts in early printed books. *** DO

WE HAVE INSTANCES OF THESE ? *** The material is displayed in four columns *** THEY'RE NOT ACTUALLY COLUMNS : WE NEED TO FIND A BETTER WORD *** and follows a strict alphabetical order, based on the first column, which contains the reproduction of the abbreviated word; the second column gives the transcription of the letters contained in the abbreviated word; the third contains the complete word, while the fourth column gives the manuscript's precise or approximate date, or provenance in case of rare or unique abbreviations *** ARE WE USING PROVENANCE IN THIS WAY ? ***. Where both transcription and complete word appear, the former is enclosed in parentheses. In abbreviated words, only the recognisable letters appear in the transliteration. Letters represented by abbreviation signs are omitted. Similarly, accents placed over, or joined to, abbreviated signs are omitted. In the case of ligatures the third column is omitted, while the reproductions of symbols is followed only by the third and fourth columns. The Lexicon closes with facsimiles of Greek Mss. copied by various hands in different styles in the period under discussion, with their transcription. Given the number of extant Greek minuscule Mss. and in addition the different styles and personal hands of their scribes, it would be impossible to cover fully the vast range of material available. Nevertheless, we have tried to represent various periods and areas of interest. The fact that, from the ninth century onwards, the pure minuscule is mixed with majuscule forms explains the incorporation in the list of certain majuscule letterforms in abbreviations and ligatures.

In compiling the Lexicon, the following method was used. Each image from the selected material was scanned from a facsimile of a Ms. or incunabulum by means of a computer scanner as a monochrome bitmap image file at 1200pci resolution. It was then electronically edited using PaintShop Pro with the help of a lightpen, to isolate the image where it was combined with other unwanted elements, or to reduce or eliminate defects resulting from the quality of the facsimile. The final image was then saved in Adobe Portable Document format (PDF). Information on the image — including its filename, transliteration, transcription, date and reference data — was stored in a separate Microsoft Excel file using \TeX markup, with Greek letters following Silvio Levy's encoding scheme. The edited image was then incorporated in the Lexicon as a graphic element in an otherwise \TeX document. The research project for the compilation of the Lexicon, under the name PORPHYROGENITUS, became possible in its initial stages thanks to the support of the History Department of Royal Holloway, University of London, which provided us with the necessary equipment in order to proceed from the manual to the computerised compilation. A Leverhulme Emeritus Readership Award and a British Academy Research Grant towards its progress were granted to its director J. Chrysostomides for the academic years 1995–96 and 1997–98, respectively. The project was completed thanks to a grant by the Arts and Humanities Research Board (2001–04). The Lexicon is a work born out of co-operation, each of the participants contributing their own speciality and

enthusiasm. This co-operation not only created a spirit of fellowship, but opened new ways that might not have been envisaged before by any one of us separately. P.E. East-erling, former Regius Professor at Cambridge University, wrote the Introduction, Julian Chrysostomides and Charalambos Dendrinou conducted the research and compiled the entries, and John Chrysostomides helped with software applications in the initial stages. Philip Taylor, of Royal Holloway Computer Centre, devised the Computer programme which enabled us to put this project into practice, and advised us on varied technical matters such as \TeX programming, computer networking and preparation of printed and electronic documents. Without his help and advice this project would not have been possible. Among the scholars who have helped us to collect material from various Libraries we wish to thank in particular Dr Sophia Kapetanaki.

Our initial aim of using manuscript material from as wide a pool as possible has enabled us to concentrate on analyzing and recording those Mss. that present the greatest challenges. In the course of our research, it has become ever more apparent that the publication of our research can form only the foundation on which future scholars will build: the sheer number of manuscripts dating from the period of investigation, and the variations in both content and style, will ensure that this Lexicon could be continually enriched as further material is analysed. Its computerized compilation makes this task as simple as possible. Therefore, any contribution towards our effort to collect as much and useful material as possible would be greatly appreciated. Given the vast numbers of extant Greek Mss., the abbreviations, ligatures and symbols included in this first edition represent only a sample of the existing material. It is the hope of the editors that subsequent editions, both printed and electronic, would incorporate further material.

The Editors