



The New York Cruciform Lctionary (College Art Association Monograph)

Jeffrey Anderson

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For elegance and beauty, the Constantinopolitan scribes set standards rarely surpassed. The Gospel lectionary was among the books that attracted the most enthusiastic attention of scribes, illuminators, and their patrons. As an important liturgical item, the lectionary was often exquisitely decorated. The subject of this study, the lectionary in the Pierpont Morgan Library, is unusual even among such luxury manuscripts because its scribe laboriously copied every page of text in the shape of a cross. It is one of just three such manuscripts made in Constantinople around the middle of twelfth century, and it is the only one that contains narrative illustration.

Jeffrey Anderson provides a full description of the manuscript, and he has translated and indexed its calendar of saints. Each of the miniatures is reproduced, described, and discussed, and Anderson relates some scenes to versions found in other Byzantine lectionaries and Gospels. The illustrations are attributed to two illuminators, and in a separate chapter Anderson situates their contributions with regard to the ruling, writing, and illumination of the pages. He also relates, through style, the cruciform lectionaries to dated twelfth-century monuments to establish their place in the history of Byzantine art.

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