Testamentum Domini 1:41
(Prayer of the Widows who Sit in Front)

Late 4th/early 5th Century, probably Syria.

Note: The Testamentum Domini includes prayers for the ordination of all the clergy, including women clergy. Following are instructions for the ordination of a widow and the prayer the bishop says in ordaining her.

The ordination (*ordinatio*) of a widow should occur like this. While she is praying at the entrance to the altar and looking downward, let the bishop say quietly (*surmisse*), so that only the priests may hear:

Holy and lofty God, who sees humble women, who has chosen the infirm and the powerful, who has created, O honored one, even these who are scorned, impart, O Lord, a spirit of power upon this your servant, and in your truth strengthen her so that, fulfilling your commandment and laboring in your sanctuary, she may be for you an honored vessel and may give glory on the day, O Lord, on which you will glorify your poor ones.

Give to her power of happily practicing the teachings prescribed by you in the rule of your handmaiden. Give to her, O Lord, a spirit of humility, of power and patience and kindness, so that she might, bearing your burden with ineffable joy, sustain her labors. Truly, Lord God, who knows our infirmity, perfect your handmaiden for the glory of your house; strengthen her for edification and as a shining example. God, sanctify her, make her wise and comfort her, because, God our Father, your kingdom is blessed and glorious . . .

The people: Amen.