

Dealing with the Stratigraphy of Coptic Codices: the Cases of MSS Pierpont Morgan Library M578 and Coptic Museum, inv. 13446*

Nathan Carlig, Sapienza Università di Roma

This paper proposes a codicological analysis of two Coptic manuscripts, illustrating how the accurate protocol of codicological description developed within the ERC Advanced Grant project ‘PATHs’, combined with the concepts and the models of the codex stratigraphy described in the recent book *La syntaxe du codex*, can lead to innovative results and new perspectives in understanding Coptic book production.

Introduction

A new detailed protocol of description of Coptic manuscripts has been developed within the ‘PATHs’ project.¹ This protocol takes into account all the physical features of a manuscript, such as the content, the language and/or dialect, the book form and writing support, the number of original and preserved leaves or fragments, the main characteristics of a page (columns, lines per column, characters per line), the dimensions, the quire collation, the presence of quire signatures, pagination, foliation (both ancient and modern), the writing, the manufacture of papyrus codex from papyrus rolls, the binding, the presence of decorations, the inks, ancient or modern restorations, etc. For almost every information recorded, there is the possibility to explain in detail the sources on which this is based and to provide bibliography. Moreover, every manuscript record can be linked to one or many works, identified by means of a *Clavis Coptica* (CC) ID,² places, titles, and colophons, all recorded in specific database tables developed by members of the ‘PATHs’ team.

A special section is also dedicated to the codex ‘stratigraphy’, in order to apply to Coptic manuscripts the last tendencies in Greek and Latin codicology summarized in *La syntaxe du codex. Essai de codicologie structurale* published in 2013 by Patrick Andrist, Paul Canart, and Marilena Maniaci. In the book, they describe a new method of genetic and stratigraphic analysis

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1 See the project note by Paola Buzi, Julian Bogdani, and Francesco Berno in this issue, § 1.

2 The *Clavis Coptica* (CC) or *Clavis Patrum Copticorum*, created by Prof. T. Orlandi on the model of the *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* (CPG), aims at providing a complete set of univocal identifiers for Coptic works. It is now fully available online at <www.cmcl.it>.

of complex manuscripts, that is to say manuscripts in codex form that underwent transformations related to their content, writing support, and/or binding during their history.³ The sources for this study are the very numerous Greek manuscripts, of which the three authors are renowned specialists.

In this book, new concepts have been proposed, such as that of ‘Unité de production’ (UniProd), which is defined as:

l’ensemble des codex ou des parties de codex qui sont le résultat d’un même acte de production. L’acte de production est l’ensemble des opérations, délimitées dans le temps et dans l’espace, qui créent un ou plusieurs objets ou parties d’objets, dans notre cas, un ou plusieurs codex ou parties de codex⁴

and the ‘Unité de circulation’ (UniCirc), defined as:

l’ensemble des éléments qui constituent un codex à un moment déterminé. Elle peut équivaloir à une UniProd ou / et être le résultat d’une transformation.⁵

Another important concept introduced is that of the ‘models of transformations’ that a manuscript may undergo. These are classified into two main categories, simple and multiple. A model of simple transformation can be identified as one operation aimed at increasing or reducing a codex by adding or removing content and/or writing material, joining together previous UniCircs to make a new larger UniCirc, destroying part(s) of a codex or dividing it into more new UniCircs. A model of multiple transformations can be identified as a succession of simple transformations.⁶

In this paper, I will apply both the ‘PATHs’ protocol and the concepts and the models of transformation of the codex defined in *La syntaxe du codex* to two parchment manuscripts: New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M578 (CLM⁷ 231) and Cairo, Coptic Museum, inv. 13446 (CLM 3469 + 6293). The double aim is to show 1) to what extent the stratigraphic method of analysis of *La syntaxe du codex*, which is based, as already said, on Greek manuscripts, can be applied to Coptic manuscripts, and 2) how this combined analysis can lead to innovative results regarding Coptic manuscripts and codicology.

3 Andrist, Canart, and Maniaci 2013, 7–9. In this sense, most manuscripts are complex in one or the other way.

4 Ibid. 59. See also pp. 59–60.

5 Ibid. 59. See also p. 61.

6 For a complete description see Andrist, Canart, and Maniaci 2013, 61–70 (models of simple transformations) and 70–79 (models of multiple transformations).

7 The Coptic Literary Manuscript (CLM) number is the identifier used in the ‘PATHs’ database to record Coptic manuscripts. On the IDs assigned to MS M578, see also note 16 below.

§ 1. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M578

MS New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M578 comes from the Monastery of the Archangel Michael of the Fayyum and is dated probably to the tenth century.⁸ It contains three works on 130 leaves: 1) Isaac of Kalamon, *Vita Samuelis Archimandritae* (CC 0216) on ff. 1r–68r, 2) Ephrem the Syrian, *In Ioseph patriarcham* (CC 0138) on ff. 69r–97r, and 3) the apocryphal *Paralipomena Ieremiae* (CC 0576) on ff. 97v–130v. F. 68v is blank. The manuscript is recorded in L. Depuydt's *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library*,⁹ and as MICH.BF in T. Orlandi's *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari*.¹⁰ Thanks to a critical reading of Depuydt's description by Paola Buzi, Agostino Soldati, and myself, as well as the analysis of the facsimile¹¹ and the examination of the original manuscript in New York in July 2017 by Maria Chiara Giorda, I will show that this codex consists actually of two distinct ancient UniCircs each corresponding to a single UniProd, the first going from f. 1 to f. 68, the second, from f. 69 to f. 130.

In fact, a series of codicological features are indicative (see table 1). First, we must have a look at the quire collation. The first UniProd (quires I–IX, ff. 1–68) is composed of eight quaternions (quires I–VIII, ff. 1–64) followed by one binion (quire IX, ff. 65–68). The second UniProd (quires X–XVII, ff. 69–130) is composed of six quaternions (quires X, XII, and XIV–XVII) and two quires of seven leaves (quires XI and XIII). The pagination and the quire signatures are reinitialized in the second unit. The pagination runs first from α (f. 1r) to $\rho\lambda\epsilon$ (f. 68r, while f. 68v is left completely blank). Then, the pagination starts again from α (f. 69r) and goes to $\rho\kappa\Delta$ (f. 130v). In a similar way, the quire signatures are usually (but not always) written on the first and on the last page of each quire. They run from α (f. 8v) to θ (f. 68r, since f. 68v is blank), then start again from α (f. 76v) and go to θ (f. 130v). The end of the first series of page and quire numbers corresponds to the end of the *Vita Samuelis Archimandritae* (f. 68r), followed by a blank page (f. 68v). On the other hand, the *Paralipomena Ieremiae* start on f. 97v, that is, immediately after the end of Ephrem the Syrian's homily on f. 97r. The decoration of the page numbers on ff. 1–68 always follows a specific pattern, while another pattern is used on ff. 69–97. The writing is a bimodular upright majuscule (sloping for the titles) showing a contrast between thick and thin strokes. However the contrast looks

8 The date 'between April 14, ad 891 and August 29, 893' for M578 stated in Depuydt 1993, 357 is actually based on the date of the colophon written on the leaf New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS 3815, reused as lower pastedown of M578. It therefore cannot be taken as a sure dating of M578.

9 Depuydt 1993, 357–359 (no. 173).

10 Available at <<http://www.cmcl.it>>.

11 Hyvernat 1922.

Quires	Folia	Content	Pagination	Decoration of page nos	Quire numbering (first–last page)	Lots at the time of acquisition
I (ff. 1–8)		Isaac of Kalamon, <i>Vita Samuelis Archimandritae</i> (CC 0216)	α–παε	pattern 1	α (only on the last page)	Lot A
II (ff. 9–16)					β–β	
III (ff. 17–24)					γ–γ	
IV (ff. 25–32)					Δ–Δ	
V (ff. 33–40)					ε–ε	
VI (ff. 41–48)					ς–ς	
VII (ff. 49–56)					ζ–ζ	
VIII (ff. 57–64)					η–η	
IX (ff. 65–68)					θ (only on the first page)	
	68v	Blank	Blank		Blank	
X (ff. 69–76)		Ephrem the Syrian, <i>In Ioseph Patriarcham</i> (CC 0138)	α–ρκλ (with some errors)	pattern 2	α (only on the last page)	Lot B (first part)
XI (ff. 77–83)					Δ–β	
XII (ff. 84–91)					γ–γ	Lot C
	90r				Δ–Δ	
XIII (ff. 92–98)		<i>Paralipomena Ieremiae</i> (CC 0576)				Lot B (second part)
	97r					
	97v					
XIV (ff. 99–106)					ε–ς	
XV (ff. 107–114)					ζ–ζ	
XVI (ff. 115–122)					η–η	
XVII (ff. 123–130)					θ–θ	

Table 1. Discontinuities identified in MS New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M578.

sharper after f. 69r. The ruling type in the whole manuscript is a very simple one (Leroy 00A2, Muzerelle 1-1-11/0/0/A).

Finally, the modern history summarized in the library catalogue¹² confirms the fact that there were originally two distinct manuscripts. The leaves were acquired in three separate lots. Lots A (ff. 1–68) and B (ff. 69–89 and 97–130) were bought as two distinct codicological units in Paris in 1911, while lot C (ff. 90–96) was acquired in Cairo in 1912. During their restoration in Rome in the 1910s, lot A was named M578, while lots B and C were joined

12 Depuydt 1993, 359.

together as M601. In Hyvernat's *Facsimiles*,¹³ the three parts are joined under the shelfmark M578 as one manuscript, which is still the case, while shelfmark M601 was reassigned to another manuscript.¹⁴

Following the observations made above, two records were initially created in the 'PATHs' codicological database. Ff. 1–68, corresponding to the first UniProd/UniCirc, with Isaac of Kalamon's *Vita Samuelis Archimandritae*, were recorded as CLM 231. Another record, CLM 712, was created for ff. 69–130, corresponding to the second UniProd/UniCirc, with Ephrem the Syrian's homily *In Ioseph patriarcham* and the *Paralipomena Ieremiae*.

This example (fig. 1) shows how the model of transformation A4—characterized by a union of two codices—works, as described in *La syntaxe du codex*.¹⁵ It focuses on the ancient history of the manuscript, before the division into three lots. The 'PATHs' database always tries to go up to the most ancient UniCirc.¹⁶

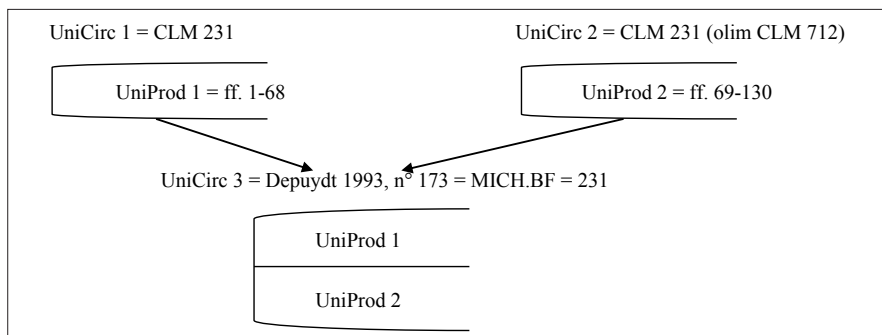


Fig. 1. A4 model of transformation of MS New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M578.

13 Hyvernat 1922.

14 CLM 256 = MICH.CE. See Depuydt 1993, 62–64 (no. 45).

15 Andrist, Canart, and Maniaci 2013, 66.

16 I thank Francesco Valerio, who told me, while this article was already in press, about other manuscripts from the Monastery of the Archangel Michael near Phan-toou, that can be similar to M578 in their manufacture. According to his analysis for the 'PATHs' project, these manuscripts are surely composed of one UniProd, while some of them show a double pagination and quire numbering, such as CLM 203, 218, 221, 222, 228, and 241, and some others, only a double pagination, such as CLM 225 and 237. An accurate serial analysis of all these manuscripts showing double pagination and/or quire numbering, could certainly lead to more nuanced results, since double pagination and quire numbering cannot be alone a sure element to identify an unification of two previous UniCirc. Nevertheless, thanks to this observation, there is a possibility that M578 was already one UniCirc in ancient times. Consequently, for now, in the framework of the 'PATHs' project, we decided to gather both UniProd/UniCirc in one record (CLM 231) and to cancel CLM 712.

§ 2. *Cairo, Coptic Museum, inv. 13446*

The manuscript now kept in Cairo, Coptic Museum, inv. 13446 was discovered in the Theban hermitage MMA 1152 in March 2005,¹⁷ together with two papyrus manuscripts, one containing Pseudo-Basil's *Canons* (CC 0090),¹⁸ the other containing the *Encōmion* of Pisenthius, bishop of Coptos (CC 0238).¹⁹ The datation is debated. Some scholars point to a datation to the ninth or tenth century, while, for others, the manuscript can be dated to the seventh or eighth century.²⁰ The manuscript consists of a set of 52 parchment leaves, originally kept between two wooden boards. The quire collation cannot be described so far. The parchment is considerably damaged and seems to have been exposed to high temperatures. Moreover, all the leaves are mutilated, mostly in the inner part, i.e. the part near the binding (if there was one). On ff. 1–50, the manuscript contains the last part of the Old Testament book of *Isaias* (CC 0739), corresponding to chapters 47–66.²¹ The text is written in two columns per page in Biblical majuscule and ends with a final title. The last two leaves, ff. 51–52, combine decorations and drawings (frame, cross, and birds) with text (*Acta Petri* = CC 0026)²² and request particular attention.

Leaf 51 has the same dimensions as the previous leaves and also shows the same pattern of ruling and pricking, but no pagination. On the recto, an interlaced frame containing an interlaced cross was drawn in red and green. The four rectangles left blank inside the frame were later filled by a second hand with a small informal sloping majuscule more recent than the elegant Biblical majuscule of the *Isaias* text. The text is identified as the *Acta Petri*. On the verso of the leaf, we see a bird and another drawing, around which the continuation of the *Acta Petri* was written. The second hand continues the copy of the *Acta Petri* on f. 52r and v. Leaf 52 however presents some phys-

17 On the discovery, see Górecki 2007.

18 Cairo, Coptic Museum, inv. 13448 = CLM 713.

19 Cairo, Coptic Museum, inv. 13447 = CLM 714.

20 On this debate, see Boud'hors 2017, 195.

21 The comparison of the very badly preserved first pages of the codex with other manuscripts bearing the text of *Isaias* lead us to identify the beginning of the text in this codex with chapter 47. It is therefore no coincidence if another testimony of *Isaias*, P.Bodmer XXIII = CLM 40 = DISH.AH (end of the fourth or first half of the fifth cent.; see Kasser 1965), a fully preserved parchment codex coming from the so-called 'Bodmer Papyri' or 'Dishna Papers', hosts the text of *Isaias* from ch. 47 to the end. As the codex bears the title 'The third part of the book of Isaias the Prophet' (π[μεζ]ωμον τ η μ[ερο]ς η π[ω]με η [ησα]ας πεπροφητης) on f. 2v, it indicates that the division of *Isaias* into three parts, the third one corresponding to ch. 47–66, was common. The *Isaias* text of MS Cairo, Coptic Museum, inv. 13446 is being edited by A. Suciū (Göttingen, Germany).

22 The *Acta Petri* are being edited by P. Piwowarczyck (Katowice, Poland).

ical features that make it different from the previous ones. It is a bit smaller than leaves 1–51 (14 × 9 cm against 14 × 11 cm)²³ and has no ruling, pricking, or pagination. It is therefore possible that f. 52 was added later to complete the writing space necessary to finish the copy of the *Acta Petri* (see table 2).

f.	r/v	F/H	Pagination	Text
	r	H	No pag.	Cross and frame + <i>Acta Petri</i>
51	v	F	No pag.	Bird + second drawing + <i>Acta Petri</i>
	r	F	No pag.	<i>Acta Petri</i>
52	v	H	No pag.	<i>Acta Petri</i>

Table 2. Content of the two last leaves of MS Cairo, Coptic Museum, inv. 13446.

Thus, we can conclude that the manuscript is composed of two UniProds. UniProd 1 consists of ff. 1–51, with the *Isaias* text written in Biblical majuscule (ff. 1–50), the decorated frame with the cross (f. 51r), and the drawings (f. 51v), while UniProd 2 corresponds to the copy of the *Acta Petri* by the second hand on the space left blank on f. 51r and 51v and continued on f. 52, which was added for this specific purpose. Thanks to this analysis, UniProd 2 can be further identified as a UniProd-C-MC, since new content on previous material (C) and new content on new material (MC) are added.²⁴

The manuscript further corresponds to two UniCircs. UniCirc 1 is composed of ff. 1–51 before the writing of *Acta Petri*, and is later transformed into UniCirc 2, after the copy of the *Acta Petri* and the addition of f. 52. It therefore fits perfectly in model of transformation A3 described in *La syntaxe du codex*, which is characterized by adding a new content both on blank parts of the manuscripts and on new material added at the end on the manuscript.²⁵ Moreover, in this case we clearly observe, on f. 51, that the end of UniProd 1 (frame, cross and drawings) and the beginning of UniProd 2 (*Acta Petri*) are interlacing or overlapping, since both production acts were executed on the same leaf.

In the ‘PATHs’ codicological database, two records have been created for Cairo, Coptic Museum inv. 13446, each corresponding to one UniProd. UniProd 1 is described in CLM 3469 and UniProd 2 is recorded as CLM 6293. In this specific case, the field ‘Codex stratigraphy’ is very helpful to describe the relationship of both records and UniProds, so as to highlight the his-

23 I thank Paola Buzi for taking the measurements of the codex during a research mission to the Coptic Museum in June 2018.

24 On this more precise typology, see Andrist, Canart, and Maniaci 2013, 60.

25 Andrist, Canart, and Maniaci 2013, 65.

tory of the manuscript and its transformations. Fig. 2 summarizes the above observations.

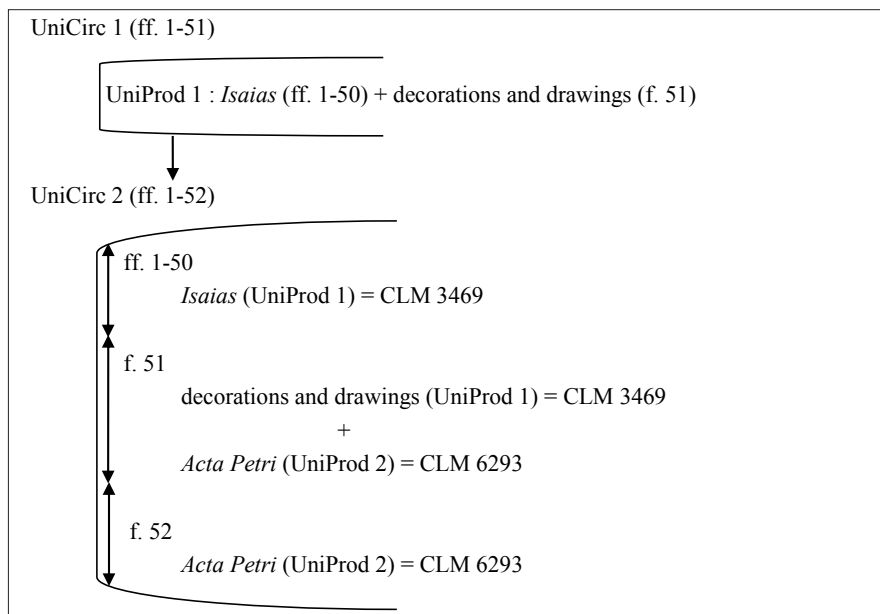


Fig. 2. A3 model of transformation of MS Cairo, Coptic Museum, inv. 13446

The application of an accurate description protocol to Coptic manuscripts like the one developed in the ‘PATHs’ project leads to new conclusions about already known manuscripts, such as identifying two manuscripts in what were thought to be one original manuscript, or distinguishing two phases of production of a manuscript. Moreover, although the conclusions reached in *La syntaxe du codex*, which rely only on Greek manuscripts, are sometimes very sophisticated, and seem hardly applicable to the Coptic manuscripts (mainly because of their poor state of conservation and their dispersal throughout the world, which make their reconstruction very difficult), our case studies show that it is worth making an attempt. As we have seen above, we can for now conclude that models of simple transformation fit well with what we can obtain from the study of well-preserved Coptic manuscripts. Trying to apply these concepts and models more systematically to Coptic manuscripts will therefore allow us to shed a new light on Coptic book production.

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