

VATICANUS ARABICUS 13: WHAT DO WE REALLY KNOW ABOUT THE MANUSCRIPT? WITH AN ADDITIONAL NOTE ON THE ENDING OF MARK

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1. INTRODUCTION¹

Vaticanus Arabicus 13² has greatly interested scholars in comparison to other, less studied Arabic manuscripts of the New Testament. Although Vat. Ar. 13 is undated, it has always been considered one of the oldest witnesses. In his catalogue, Angelo Mai describes it as 'codex antiquissimus [...] inter codd. Arabicos'.³ F. C. Burkitt likewise supposes that Vat. Ar. 13 could be '[t]he oldest representative of this class, perhaps the oldest monument of Arab Christianity'.⁴ More recently, it has been called 'the oldest surviving MS (Vat. Ar. 13, dated eighth or possibly early ninth century)'.⁵

In the past few years, several scholars, including Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, who wrote a series of articles,⁶ and Hikmat Kashouh, who gives Vat. Ar. 13 an important role in his thesis, have paid particular attention to both the manuscript and its text. Kashouh argues that the most ancient parts of the Gospels in Vat. Ar. 13 were copied around 800, and that these folios present the oldest text of the Arabic Gospels. Moreover, Kashouh suggests that this translation would have been prepared in either the late-sixth or early-seventh century:

¹ This article is a revised version, with some additions, of the paper given during the Leuven conference in 2015 and of chapter 6 of my Ph.D. dissertation: S. Schulthess, *Les manuscrits arabes des lettres de Paul. La reprise d'un champ de recherche négligé*, Ph.D. dissertation (Université de Lausanne/Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, 2016), <http://hdl.handle.net/2066/159141>. Pp. 121-129 notably present a complete overview of the research concerning Vaticanus Arabicus 13. A digital edition of First Corinthians with high quality images, the Arabic text, and a French translation is available online: <http://tarsian.vital-it.ch>. The research for the dissertation was conducted as part of the Swiss National Science Foundation project 143810 (2013-2016). All links in the article were last accessed 01/06/2017.

² Color images of the complete manuscript are available online: http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.ar.13.

³ A. Mai, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio e Vaticanis codicibus edita*, vol. 4 (Vatican, 1831), p. 11.

⁴ F.C. Burkitt, 'Arabic Versions', *Dictionary of the Bible: Dealing with Its Language, Literature, and Contents Including the Biblical Theology*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1898), p. 136.

⁵ 'Arabic Versions of the Bible', in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, eds. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingston (Oxford, 2005), p. 96.

⁶ J.P. Monferrer-Sala, 'Dos antiguas versiones neotestamentarias árabes surpalestinas: Sin. Ar. 72, Vat. Ar. 13 Y Sus Posibles Vorlagen Respectivas Greco-Alejandrina Y Siriaca de La Pešittā', *La Ciudad de Dios*, 213/2 (2000), pp. 363-87; id., 'Una traducción árabe con "pseudoescolio exegético anónimo". Una nota de crítica textual interna a propósito del MS. Sabaítico Vaticano Arabo 13', *Boletín de la Asociación Española de Orientalistas*, 37 (2001), pp. 67-82; id., 'An Early Fragmentary Christian Palestinian Rendition of the Gospels into Arabic from Mar Saba (MS Vat. Ar. 13, 9th c.)', *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World*, 1 (2013), pp. 69-113; id., 'Estrategias e interferencias en una traducción árabe cristiana surpalestina (Vat. Ar. 13, S. IX)', in *Vivir de Tal Suerte: Homenaje a Juan Antonio Souto Lasala*, eds. M. Meouak and C. de la Puente, (Cordoue/Madrid, 2014), pp. 349-65; id., 'Translating the Gospels into Arabic from Syriac: Vatican Arabic 13 Restored Section, Strategies and Goals', *Arabica*, 62 (2015), pp. 435-458; id., 'The Pauline Epistle to Philemon from Codex Vatican Arabic 13 (Ninth Century CE) Transcription and Study', *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 60/2 (2015), pp. 341-371.

This version precedes all other versions of the Gospels prepared in the second half of the seventh or early eighth century. This version uses the language of the Arab Christians at the time and some terms clearly predate the advent of Islam.⁷

Monferrer-Sala discusses the linguistic analysis of Kashouh, which notably supports a Syriac *Vorlage*, and thinks that the translation was made according to Syriac and Greek substrates.⁸ In my recent dissertation I reached the same conclusion about the Greek and Syriac *Vorlagen* for the text of First Corinthians, although the translation techniques used for the Gospels and for Paul's letters present important differences.⁹

This short survey may suffice to show that Vat. Ar. 13 is at the core of many of the current debates regarding early Arabic versions of the New Testament. Thus, it is important to have a clear idea of what is really known about the manuscript. This article aims to summarize and in several respects clarify the information we have about the history of the manuscript and its material features.

2. PAST AND CURRENT LOCATION

The manuscript is currently kept in the Vatican Library and has the shelf mark Arabicus 13. It belongs to a collection of Arabic manuscripts that has been progressively acquired since the fifteenth century.¹⁰ At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Clement XI sent Joseph Simon Assemani to collect Oriental manuscripts in the Middle East. Vat. Ar. 13 was among those that he brought back from his second trip in 1715.¹¹ Assemani provided the first mention of Vat. Ar. 13 in his *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana* (1719), where the manuscript is listed among the *Codices Arabici, quos auctor ex oriente advexit* with the following description: 'LXXI. Evangelia Matthaei, Marci, & Lucae. Epistolae S. Pauli. In fol. Membr. 178.'¹² The actual shelf mark, 13, goes back to Assemani's later catalogue.¹³

As an outcome of the treaty signed between France and the Papal States in Tolentino (1797), treasures from the Vatican were confiscated and brought to Paris. Vat. Ar. 13 was among the manuscripts that were deposited in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and the stamps on f. 1r and 179v provide evidence of this stage of its travels. It is described in a

⁷ H. Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels, The Manuscripts and Their Families*, *Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung*, 42 (Berlin/Boston, 2012), p. 169.

⁸ Monferrer-Sala, 'An Early Fragmentary'.

⁹ Schulthess, *Les manuscrits arabes*, pp. 392-401.

¹⁰ P. Vian, 'Vaticani Arabi', in *Guida ai fondi manoscritti, numismatici, a stampa della Biblioteca Vaticana. I. Dipartimento Manoscritti*, Studi e Testi, 466, eds. P. Vian and F. D'Aiuto, (Rome, 2011), pp. 553-564, on p. 553.

¹¹ Vian presents a list of the manuscripts that Assemani brought back, but he does not mention Vat. Ar. 13. This has hampered the reconstruction of the manuscript's movement over time. Vian, 'Vaticani Arabi', p. 557.

¹² J.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana: In Qua Manuscriptos Codices Syriacos, Arabicos, Persicos, Turcicos, Hebraicos, Samaritanos, Armenicos, Aethiopicos, Graecos, Aegyptiacos, Ibericos, & Malabaricos, Jussu et Munificentia Clementis XI. Pontificis Maximi Ex Oriente conquisitos, comparatos, avectos, & Bibliothecae Vaticanae addictos*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1719), p. 681. Assemani seems to have miscounted the number of folios and mentions 178 instead of 179. Folio 179 contains the *desinit* in Hebrew and a Greek epigram, and I see no reason why it would have been absent at the time. The miscount occurs again in the *Recensio mancriptorum* (see n. 14) and in Mai (see n. 3). In 1823, J.M.A. Scholz gave a precise description of folio 179v in his 'Ueber die arabischen Handschriften des N.T. zu Rom', in *Biblich-kritische Reise in Frankreich, der Schweiz, Italien, Palästina und im Archipel, in den Jahren 1818, 1819, 1820, 1821, nebst einer Geschichte des Textes N.T.*, (Leipzig, 1823), p. 126.

¹³ Only the three first volumes of Assemani's catalogue were printed: *Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae codicum mancriptorum Catalogus in tres partes distributus* (Rome, 1756-1769). The volume on the Arabic manuscripts, in which Vat. Ar. 13 is included, was never published because of a fire (Vian, 'Vaticani Arabi', p. 558).

directory of the requisitioned manuscripts from 1803.¹⁴ The manuscripts were returned to the Vatican in 1815.¹⁵

3. ORIGIN

Scholars often mention the Monastery of Mar Saba as the manuscript's place of origin. Among recent authors, this is the case with Kashouh,¹⁶ Griffith,¹⁷ and Monferrer-Sala.¹⁸ However, the Greek note on the last folio mentions Ἐμῶση, the city of Emesa, modern-day Homs, in Syria (see 7.2. below). It seems that a remark made by Hyvernat in 1895 has led to the assumption that Vat. Ar. 13 comes from Mar Saba. He compares Vat. Ar. 13 and Borgia Ar. 95 with Leipzig Univ. Or. 1059A, the latter of which he claims came from Mar Saba, and supposes a common origin:

On n'a pas de données positives sur l'origine de ces deux manuscrits, mais l'examen de leur texte ne laisse aucun doute sur leur provenance. Le manuscrit du musée Borgia [Borgia Ar. 95] contient absolument le même texte qu'un fragment [...] de lectionnaire de Leipzig (cod. Tischendorf, XXXI, A [Leipzig Univ. Or. 1059A] [...]), qui a été apporté de Saint-Sabas; et le manuscrit du Vatican, pour être paraphrastique,¹⁹ ne laisse pas que de se rattacher à la même famille. On a dit que ce manuscrit venait d'Emèse, en se fondant sans doute sur une certaine note en vers grecs, inscrite au verso du dernier folio; mais cette note n'est pas du même copiste que le manuscrit.²⁰

Although earlier publications mentioned Emesa,²¹ Mar Saba began to be regarded as the manuscript's origin shortly after Burkitt²² and this has now become common opinion.

There is no positive evidence to support the suggestion that the manuscript originated in Mar Saba and we should reconsider Emesa a possible place of origin. The city was taken by the Arabs in 636 and, under the Abbasids, was one of the most important cities in Syria. Furthermore, Emesa was a Byzantine ecclesiastical metropolis with an important Syriac Orthodox presence.²³ Regarding the monasteries in this region, Nasrallah states: 'Nous ne

¹⁴ *Recensio manuscriptorum codicum qui ex universa Bibliotheca Vaticana (...) procuratoribus Gallorum iure belli, seu pactarum induciarum ergo, et initæ pacis traditi fuere (...)* (Leipzig, 1803), p. 17.

¹⁵ P. Vian, "Per le cose della Patria Nostra". Lettere inedite di Luigi Angeloni e Marino Marini sul recupero dei manoscritti Vaticani a Parigi (1816-1819)", in *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae*, vol. 28, Studi e Testi, 469 (Rome, 2011), pp. 693-799.

¹⁶ Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions*, p. 147.

¹⁷ S.H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic. The Scriptures of the 'People of the Book' in the Language of Islam* (Princeton, 2013), p. 116.

¹⁸ Monferrer-Sala, 'An Early Fragmentary'.

¹⁹ About this question, see especially Monferrer-Sala, 'Una traducción árabe' (see n. 6).

²⁰ H. Hyvernat, 'Arabes (versions) des écritures', in *Dictionnaire de la Bible* (Leipzig, 1895), pp. 845-856, on p. 852.

²¹ E.g., C. Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum Graece. Ad antiquos testes recensuit, apparatus criticum multis modis auctum et correctum apposuit, commentationem isagogicam praemisit...* (Leipzig, 1849), p. LXXVIII.

²² Burkitt, 'Arabic Versions'.

²³ R. Janin, 'Emèse', in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, vol. 15 (Paris, 1963); J. Aubert, 'Homs', *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, vol. 24 (Paris, 1993). See also R. Dussaud, 'Chapitre II. De Tripoli à Carné. – L'Émésène', in *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, 4 (Beyrouth, 2015), pp. 75-115, <http://books.openedition.org/ifpo/3699>; M. Dumper and B.E. Stanley, *Cities of the Middle East and North Africa: A Historical Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, 2007), p. 172.

connaissions presque rien de la situation des couvents de l'Antiochiène.²⁴ It is worth noting here that Sin. Ar. 151, which contains the letters of Paul and is dated from 867, was copied in Damascus, a city in the Antiochene patriarchate, whose situation was comparable to that of Emesa at that time.

The characteristics of the Greek epigram imply that the manuscript was copied within a Byzantine milieu, while the liturgical Greek marks suggest that later it was also used in a similar context (see 7.2 and 7.4). Sadly, Assemani does not provide any information on the original location of the manuscript in his notes in *Codices Arabici, quos auctor ex oriente advexit*, and gives only imprecise information about the details of his travels.²⁵ He acquired most of his manuscripts in Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. In Egypt, he visited Cairo and the monasteries in the Nitrian desert. In Syria, he travelled to Damascus, Alep, and Tripoli, but also searched in the many monasteries around these cities. Vat. Ar. 13 was most likely acquired during the Syrian-Lebanese part of his trip instead of the Egyptian, as the manuscript does not contain any Coptic elements.

4. MATERIAL AND LAYOUT

The leather binding is not original. The spine presents the emblem of the Albani, the family of Clement XI.²⁶ Therefore, the binding was obviously made after its arrival at the Vatican Library in 1715.

The manuscript is a parchment. This supports its antiquity, without providing much precision. As Gacek explains: '[d]espite the wide-spread use of paper from the 3rd/9th century on, the use of parchment in the central part of the Muslim world was still significant even in the 4/10th century.'²⁷ The majority of the Arabic parchment manuscripts on the epistles of Paul date from the ninth century.²⁸

Folio sizes are unequal, varying between 260 and 278 mm high and 170 and 180 mm long. The leaves are not ruled and the written surface also varies, ranging between 200 and 230 mm high and 125 and 170 mm long. The number of lines per folio is also uneven and varies between 13 (see folio 6r) and 21.

5. THE COMPOSITION OF THE MANUSCRIPT AND THE DIFFERENT HANDS

The manuscript is not an autograph. Several types of scribal errors, such as *homoeoteleuton*, are notable in both the Gospels and the Pauline part.²⁹ The composite aspect of the manuscript and the presence of different scribal hands were noticed soon after its arrival in Europe. The *Recensio manuscriptorum codicum*, for example, described the Vat. Ar. 13 as 'divisibilis in duas partes' as early as 1803.³⁰ Ignazio Guidi offered a more detailed description in 1888. By observing the quires, Guidi determined that the Gospel folios

²⁴ J. Nasrallah, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'Église Melchite du Ve au XXe siècle*, vol. II.2 (Leuven, 1988), p. 15.

²⁵ Assemani gives a report of his journey in the preface of the *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana* (see n. 12).

²⁶ 'Integumentum e corio rubro recens refectum in operculis praebet lineas, in dorso autem notam 13, signa gentilicia familiae Albani, i. e. Clementis XI', <http://www.mss.vatlib.it/guui/console?service=shortDetail&id=115495>. The online description of Vat. Ar. 13 is taken from Georg Graf's work on the catalogue for the Vatican Library, which started in 1930, but was never published.

²⁷ A. Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers* (Leiden/Boston, 2009), p. 195.

²⁸ Schulthess, *Les manuscrits arabes*, p. 119.

²⁹ Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions*, p. 149. Schulthess, *Les manuscrits arabes*, p. 132.

³⁰ *Recensio manuscriptorum*, p. 17.

PERSONAL VERSION

consisted of an older section and two more recent additions.³¹ Georg Graf built on this conclusion and distinguished four scribes: two different, but contemporary, hands for the ancient part of the Gospels, and another two for the more recent parts (from the ninth and the eleventh centuries).³² In 2012, Kashouh distinguished a fifth hand:

1st scribe (S^a), early 9th century, copied folios 15-46 (Matt 10:27b- 26:17a); folios 55-56 (Mark 5:19b- 6:9a); folios 83-86 (Mark 6:9b-7:12a); folios 57-64r (Mark 7:12b-10:29a); folios 75-82 (Luke 3:31-7:11). 2nd scribe (S^b), early 9th century, copied folios 64v-74 (Mark 10:29b-16:8); folios 87v-179 (Paul's Epistles and the Letters to the Hebrews); 3rd scribe (S^c) about the 10th century copied folios 1-6 (Matt 1:1-6:18a); 4th scribe (S^d) about the 12th century copied folios 7-14 (Matt 6:18b-10:27a) and folios 47-54 (Matt 26:17b-28:11).³³

The fifth scribe is 'an anonymous hand (S^e) [who] made a few corrections in the text copied by S^a'.

Next to the palaeographical evidence that I will discuss in point 6, it is the quire signatures and collation notes that are particularly important for corroborating Kashouh's conclusions on the manuscript's composition. Some of the quires have Greek numbering (on the recto of the first folio and on the verso of the last folio).³⁴ One also finds collation marks in Arabic (عروض و صحح e.g. 94v) on the verso of the last folio of the quires containing a Greek signature.³⁵

The numbering of the quires helps to reconstruct the history of the composition of the manuscript. In fact, the quires copied by the more ancient scribes S^a and S^b have signatures, which is not the case for those of the more recent scribes S^c (quire 1) and S^d (quires 2 and 7). It is likely that the quire signatures indicate the original quires and that those of S^c and S^d were later additions. The following chart may help to visualize the composition of the manuscript:

³¹ I. Guidi, *Le Traduzioni degli Evangelii in arabo e in etiopico*, Atti della reale accademia dei Lincei, 4 (Rome, 1888), p. 8.

³² G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 1, Studi e Testi, 118 (Rome, 1944), p. 147 and p. 150. He gives no information about the hands in the Pauline part.

³³ Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions*, p. 145, n. 47. The online introduction to Vat. Ar. 13 on the website of the Vatican Library offers the same conclusions:

<http://www.mss.vatlib.it/guui/console?service=shortDetail&id=115495>.

³⁴ This was already noted by Guidi, *Le Traduzioni*, p. 8.

³⁵ Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts*, p. 65.

PERSONAL VERSION

Quire signature	Quire position	Folios	Quire content	Scribe	Quire type
	1	1-6	Matt 1,1-6,18a	S ^c	Ternion
	2	7-14	Matt 6,18b-10,27a	S ^d	Quaternion
IA' (=11)	3	15-22	Matt 10,27b-26,17a	S ^a	Quaternion
IB' (=12)	4	23-30		S ^a	Quaternion
IΓ' (=13)	5	31-38		S ^a	Quaternion
IA' (=14)	6	39-46		S ^a	Quaternion
	7	47-54 ³⁶	Matt 26,17b-28,11	S ^d	Quaternion
IZ' (=17)	8	55-58	Mark 5,19b-6,9a* + 7,12b-16,8 ³⁷	S ^a	Binion
IH' (=18)	9	59-64r 64v-66		S ^a	Quaternion
IΘ' (=19)	10	67-74		S ^b	Quaternion
KA' (=21)	11	75-82	Luke 3,31-7,11	S ^a	Quaternion
	12	83-86	*Mark 6,9b-7,12a	S ^a	Binion
M' (=40)	13	87-94	Pauline epistles (Rom; 1-2 Cor; Gal; Eph; Phil; Col; 1-2 Thes; 1-2 Tim; Tit; Phlm; Heb)	S ^b	Quaternion
MA' (=41)	14	95-102		S ^b	Quaternion
MB' (=42)	15	103-110		S ^b	Quaternion
MΓ' (=43)	16	111-119		S ^b	Quaternion ³⁸
MA' (=44)	17	120-127		S ^b	Quaternion
ME' (=45)	18	128-135		S ^b	Quaternion
MΣ' (=46)	19	136-143		S ^b	Quaternion
MZ' (=47)	20	144-151		S ^b	Quaternion
MH' (=48)	21	152-159		S ^b	Quaternion
MΘ' (=49)	22	160-167		S ^b	Quaternion
N' (=50)	23	168-174		S ^b	Independ. leaves
NA' (=51)	24	175-179		S ^b	Independ. leaves

The following represent some concluding remarks that can be drawn from this chart:

1. Folios 83-86 (quire 12) were moved or misplaced. Their original place was with quire 8, as no text is missing after Mark 6,9a.³⁹ This is confirmed by the fact that quire 8 and quire 12 are the only binions.
2. Only the quires of the scribes S^a and S^b have a signature. The *lacunae* in the quire numbering correspond to the description of the biblical books present in the codex according to the Greek epigram. Before quire IA' (= 11, today quire 3), there were 10 quires containing the Psalms and the beginning of Matthew. Between quire IA' (= 14, today quire 6) and quire IZ' (= 17, today quire 8), two quires contained the end of

³⁶ 'Folios 47-54 are in disorder and should be read as follows: 47, 53, 52, 51, 50, 49, 48', Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions*, p. 145, n. 47.

³⁷ See point 9 below.

³⁸ Folio 119, which contains Heb 11,16b-12,2a, is at the end of this quire. It should be between folios 176 and 177.

³⁹ Already noticed by Graf: <http://www.mss.vatlib.it/guui/console?service=shortDetail&id=156629> (last accessed 12.11.16). This aspect is also mentioned by Monferrer-Sala, who proposes a new foliation that takes into account the original place of folios 83-86. This leads him to 'increase' the number of folios to 183, a procedure I do not understand. Cf. Monferrer-Sala, 'Una traducción árabe', p. 72.

Matthew and the beginning of Mark. Between quire IΘ' (= 19, today quire 10) and quire KA' (= 21, today quire 11), one quire contained the beginning of Luke. Between quire KA' (= 21, today quire 11) and quire M' (= 40, today quire 13), 18 quires contained the end of Luke, the Gospel of John, Acts, and the Pastoral epistles.⁴⁰

3. The previous point shows that the manuscript was originally very long (51 quaternions, or 408 folios). It may have been bound in several codices. This could explain why so many folios are missing (e.g., if one complete codex got lost).
4. As noted in remark 2, all the quires copied by S^a and S^b have signatures. This suggests that both scribes worked during the same period despite the differences in the script (see point 6 below). Furthermore, if S^a copied most of the remaining Gospel folios and S^b the Pauline part, S^b must also have copied a few Gospels folios (parts of quire 9 and quire 10). S^b even continued on the verso (64v) of a recto (64r) copied by S^a.⁴¹ This supports the theory of a common work.
5. The quires copied by S^c and S^d do not have signatures and are of a more recent date. They seem to have been written to complete *lacunae* within the manuscript. The entire beginning of Matthew, for example, was completed by S^c. In 47r, S^d started over at the exact point where the text ends on 46v (Matt 26,17a). However, S^c and S^d are probably not contemporaneous.⁴² In the S^d folios, we can observe differences, such as vocalization marks, that are elsewhere very rare, or the absence of liturgical marks present in the rest of the manuscript, including the S^c folios (see point 6 and 7.4).
6. The manuscript came to Europe with the current number of folios (179). There are no traces of a restoration made in Europe, as argued by Monferrer-Sala.⁴³ The Arabic numbering of the folios from 1 to 179 probably dates either to the time of the arrival of the manuscript in the Library or to its first cataloguing.

6. SOME PALEOGRAPHICAL REMARKS

The presence of different hands is obvious, as each one presents very distinctive characteristics. However, it is still difficult to use these as evidence for establishing date or provenance. In fact, Arabic paleography presents several difficulties and is not well-developed. François Déroche states, 'To put it bluntly, the paleography of Arabic scripts remains two centuries behind the work done on Latin and Greek manuscripts.'⁴⁴ Lewis and Gibson's album of dated manuscripts is still very useful for the study of Christian Arabic manuscripts, but overall basic research tools are still insufficient.⁴⁵ Thus, much care must be taken in using a method of comparison between the manuscripts and their scripts. Several elements of Arabic writing can present difficulties, such as 'the complexity of determining the change from one style to another'⁴⁶ or the contemporaneous use of different scripts.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Guidi, *Le Traduzioni*, p. 8.

⁴¹ Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions*, p.147.

⁴² See the estimation of Kashouh already quoted above: '3rd scribe (S^c) about the 10th century [...]; 4th scribe (S^d) about the 12th century', Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions*, p. 145.

⁴³ 'Una vez en Roma, si no ya antes, al proceder a la tarea de inventariado, ordenación y catalogación de todo el material, pudieron acabar fusionándose muestras pertenecientes a dos manuscritos distintos.' Monferrer-Sala, 'Una traducción árabe', p. 76.

⁴⁴ Ed. F. Déroche, *Islamic Codicology. An Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts in Arabic Script* (London, 2006), p. 210. This is the English translation of F. Déroche, (ed.), *Manuel de codicologie des manuscrits en écriture arabe* (Paris, 2000).

⁴⁵ A. Smith Lewis and M. Dunlop Gibson, *Forty-One Facsimiles of Dated Christian Arabic Manuscripts*, *Studia Sinaitica*, 12 (Cambridge, 1907).

⁴⁶ Déroche, *Islamic Codicology*, p. 210.

This is the case with S^a and S^b, who wrote at the same time but used very different scripts. With this in mind, the following paleographical remarks should not be considered as anything more than suggestions.

S^a writes in *kūfī* script (Mai, Scholz), a style used from the eighth to the tenth centuries. Kashouh underlined the antiquity of the script with a detailed description:

1. The writing of the Alef in S^a is unique among [Arabic Gospels manuscripts]. At the base of the Alef, there is a turning of the hand to the right. According to Ibn al-Nadim, a tenth century scholar from Baghdad, this peculiar form of the alef is common among manuscripts of Makkah and al-Madinah, in the south of Arabia, copied in the first and second centuries AH (seventh/eighth centuries A.D.).
2. In general, the middle ‘ayn and ghayn are written with two oblique strokes only (without a horizontal stroke joining them together).
3. The tail of the final mīm is short and has a slant which makes it look like the ra’.
4. The final ba’ and ta’ do not end with a vertical stroke.
5. The semi-circle (or the curve) of the final nun is pointing more forward than upward.
6. Some of the initial and independent ‘ayn have the lower base extended to the right.⁴⁸

According to Kashouh, the characteristics of S^a recall the script of the Quranic manuscript BNF Ar. 328: ‘A comparison of this kind shows not only the antiquity of *h¹* [Vat. Ar. 13] (though codex BNF, Ar. 328 is older than *h¹*), but also the similar geographical milieu of both codices.’⁴⁹ However, the comparison between the part of Vat. Ar. 13 written by S^a and BNF Ar. 328 is not without problem. In fact, one of the most important features of the script *hijāzī*, as found in BNF Ar. 328, is ‘a distinct ductus, where the shafts of the *alif* and other letters are slanted to the right’.⁵⁰ Yet, the script of S^a is not slanted to the right, but vertical. In our view, the script of S^a is close to that of plate II in the Lewis-Gibson album, which depicts British Museum Oriental 4950, dated 876.⁵¹ Furthermore, the habit of writing of the *alif* with a turning to the right is observed in *hijāzī*, as well as in *kūfī* scripts.⁵²

S^b differs from S^a in that its script possesses straight *alifs* and is written in a smaller, cursive font, while still broken. Some of the archaic features mentioned by Kashouh above (points 3, 4, 5 and 6) are also found in S^b. In my opinion, the script has similarities with Sin. Ar. 151 (year 867), which Aziz S. ‘Atiya has described as a transitional text between *kūfī* and *nashī*.⁵³ This comparison with Sin. Ar. 151 brings us close to the second part of the ninth century.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ D. Muzerelle, ‘L’écriture’, in ed. P. Géhin, *Lire le manuscrit médiéval* (Paris, 2013), p. 85-120.

⁴⁸ Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions*, p. 145-146.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

⁵⁰ Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts*, p. 124.

⁵¹ Lewis and Gibson, *Forty-One Facsimiles*, pp. 3-4 and plate II. About this plate, see N. Abbot, *The Rise of the North Arabic Script and Its Qur’ānic Development, with a Full Description of the Qur’ān Manuscripts in the Oriental Institute* (Chicago, 1939), p. 20.

⁵² See the typology of Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts*, p. 8.

⁵³ A.S. ‘Atiya, *The Arabic Manuscripts of Mount Sinai: A Hand-List of the Arabic Manuscripts and Scrolls Microfilmed at the Library of the Monastery of St. Catherine* (Baltimore, 1954), p. XII. See also H. Staal, *Codex Sinai Arabic 151 Pauline Epistles, Studies and Documents. Part II (Rom., I & II Cor., Phil.)*, 2 vols., Studies and Documents 2 (Salt Lake City, 1969).

⁵⁴ S^a and S^b also make uses of diacritic dots, but in an irregular fashion. They do not use *taškīl*, a feature that is shared by Christian Arabic manuscripts of the first millennium as described by Joshua Blau in his *Grammar* (J. Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic, Based Mainly on South-Palestinian Texts from the First Millennium*, CSCO 267, Subsidia 27 [Louvain, 1966], p. 61). This feature is attested beyond the tenth century, see the Lewis-Gibson album (see n. 46): plate VII (Sin. Ar. 69, 1065), plate XIII (Sin. Ar. 117, 1204), plate XXXIV (Sin. Ar. 135, 1558).

The script of S^c is difficult to determine. It is more cursive than S^b, but not as smooth as most of the scripts described as *nashī*. Unlike S^a and S^b, S^c uses vowel signs (the ‘modern’ system), but not regularly. A particular feature is the shape of the *alif*, presenting two breaks and looking at some points like a lightning bolt. This feature is nowhere to be seen in the Lewis-Gibson album and is not described by Gacek in his *Vademecum*.⁵⁵

S^d has a *nashī* script with a large use of vocalization and with *šaddas*. It uses the disambiguation system for homographic pairs (e.g. ‘*ayn* et ‘*gayn*’), in which a small version of the letter is placed above or below the intended letter. Déroche assigns this system to the ninth through the eleventh centuries.⁵⁶ In my opinion, the script of S^d could be from a similar date as that on plate XII (Sin. Ar. 82) in the Lewis-Gibson album, which dates from the year 1197.

More generally, when examined against Déroche’s distinction between ‘calligraphic’ and ‘casual’ scripts (‘soignée’ and ‘informelle’ in French), one can confidently label all of the manuscript’s scripts as ‘casual’. Déroche thinks this distinction can be particularly useful in paleographical study:

[...] there has been little coherent application up to now of a fundamental distinction between ‘calligraphic’ hands employed by professionals with a concern for an even appearance, and ‘casual’ scripts used by individuals who either did not master penmanship sufficiently well or who felt no need to use a formal hand.⁵⁷

All hands in Vat. Ar. 13 are ‘casual’, a feature that applies not only to the scripts, but to the manuscript as a whole. I have already underlined the irregularities in the folio size and the line numbering (point 4 above). Déroche suggests that those involved in the production of this book did not master their art. But maybe it is all just a matter of a lack of resources invested in the production and restoration of the manuscript.

7. PARATEXT

7.1 *Subscriptio* in Arabic (179r)

The scribes left two important notes: a short *subscriptio* and a longer epigram (see 7.2). The *desinit* of the epistle to the Hebrews (179r) is followed by a *subscriptio* written by S^b:

الشكر لله المعين على الخير السابغ نعماموه على عباده المشد رسوله وسليحه بقوة جبروته الذى
اعان وسلم عبده نسطاس بن ليون بن ابى الوليد الضعيف

Thanks to God, the one who contributes to the good, who abounds in mercy for his servants, who strengthens his messenger and his disciple by the strength of his all-powerfulness, who helped and protected his servant Naṣṭās⁵⁸ ibn Liyūn ibn Abī al-Walīd, the weak.

The note does not give any information, except for the name of the scribe. The passage may have been copied from the model. The scribe’s name comes with the expected standard features of Christian Arabic manuscripts, as collected by Troupeau: ‘La mention du copiste,

⁵⁵ Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts*.

⁵⁶ Déroche, *Islamic Codicology*, p. 221.

⁵⁷ Déroche, *Islamic Codicology*, p. 215.

⁵⁸ Scholz suggests ‘Justas’ (Scholz, ‘Ueber die arabischen’, p. 126.), Mai, ‘Justus’ (Mai, *Scriptorum veterum*, p. 13.); Guidi rather thinks of a proper name close to ‘Anastasius’ (Guidi, *Le Traduzioni*, p. 8.). The lack of diacritical signs makes it difficult to reach a firm conclusion.

PERSONAL VERSION

désigné par le nom de ‘*abd* ‘serviteur’ [...], est toujours accompagnée d’un ou de plusieurs qualificatifs dépréciatifs, destinés à bien marquer son indignité’⁵⁹ – in our case, the negative term الضعيف ‘the weak’.

7.2 The Greek epigram (179v)⁶⁰

On the verso of the same folio (179v), there is the following Greek text:⁶¹

Greek transcription ⁶²	Translation ⁶³
Βίβλος γάρ εἰμι εὐκλεῆ[ς] [---] ⁶⁴ καρποῦς ἔχουσα ἐνθέους ζω[ῆς ---] ⁶⁵ Δαυεῖδ τε πρῶτον ἀκριβῆ ψαλμωδῖαν κεῦθαγγελιστῶν τὰς φάσεις τῶν τεττάρων πράξεις δὲ καθῆτις τῶν σοφῶν ἀποστόλων σὺν καθολικαῖς ἑπτὰ ταῖς σεβασμίαις κέπιστολάς δις ἑπτὰ Παύλου ἐγκρίτου φέρουσα πιστοῦ Δανιὴλ Φιλεντόλου γόνου τελούντος Γαβριὴλ Φιλοκάλου λαμπρᾶς Ἐμίσης αὐτε οὗ τῆς πατρίδος ὄνπερ λυτρῶσαι χριστὲ τῶν πάντων ἄναξ τῆς δυσμενῶδους καὶ κακῆς ἀμαρτίας καταξιών τε τῆς ἄνω κληρουχίας ζωῆς ἀλίκτου καὶ τρυφῆς αἰωνίου λιταῖς πανάγνου κἀτρεκοῦς Θεητόκου τοῦ προδρόμου τε καὶ σοφῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τοῦ χοροῦ τε τῶν ἀγίων μαρτύρων ἀμὴν βοάτω τάξις ἡ οὐρανία ΕΖῆΘΦΒΥΕἠῆἠΠΒῆΧΠΛΑΧΣῆΘΠΑΝΑΧ+ ἐγράφη χειρὶ κηρύκου διακόνου	I am a reputable book [---] – having the divine fruits of life [---] carrying (φέρουσα) first: the precious song of David and the accounts of the four evangelists, then: the acts of the apostles with the seven catholic [epistles], the honourables, and the fourteen epistles of Paul the chosen one – [book] of the son (γόνου) of the faithful Daniel Philentolos, Gabriel Philokalos, who is completing [this work], [from] the shining Emesa, his fatherland then. May you redeem him, Christ, master of everything, from the meanness and the bad sins, counting him worthy of the heaven colony, the eternal life and delight of eternity, by the prayers of the all-saint and true Theotokos, of the precursor and the wise apostles, and of the choir of the saint martyrs. Let the order that is heavenly call out: Amen! written by the hand of a preacher deacon

The text is written in a Greek majuscule script known as ‘ogivale inclinée’, which was mostly used in the eighth and ninth century.⁶⁶ This would correspond to the paleographical remarks regarding the scripts of S^a and S^b. Hyvernats does not think it was written by S^a or of S^b, but concludes that the note was not made by ‘the scribe of the manuscript’ (see point 3 above).

⁵⁹ G. Troupeau, ‘Les colophons des manuscrits arabes chrétiens’, in *Scribes et manuscrits du Moyen-Orient*, eds. F. Déroche and R. Francis, (Paris, 1997), p. 227. This feature is found in Syriac manuscripts as well.

⁶⁰ Thanks to David Bouvier, Christiane Furrer and Christophe Guignard for their comments and suggestions on the Greek epigram.

⁶¹ See http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.ar.13/0362.

⁶² Scholz (‘Ueber die arabischen’, p. 126) offers as transcription. Guidi (*Le Traduzioni*, p. 8) also transcribes it, but without the encrypted signature.

⁶³ Insofar as possible, I have respected the verse structure. It was sometimes necessary to move a word to another line. To make this clear, I have added the Greek work in brackets in the translation.

⁶⁴ Four syllables are missing from this line.

⁶⁵ Two syllables are missing from this line.

⁶⁶ L. Pernot, ‘La paléographie grecque et byzantine au colloque de Paris (21-25 octobre 1974)’, *Revue des études grecques*, 91, no. 432–433 (1978), pp. 165-176, on p. 167. G. Bady, ‘Petit album de paléographie grecque’ (Sources chrétiennes, HiSoMa, 2007), http://www.sources-chretiennes.mom.fr/upload/doc/Album_paleo_grecque.pdf.

But can we evaluate with certainty a scribe's hand when it switches from Arabic to Greek?⁶⁷

The text is written in twelve-syllable verse, which leads us to a specific genre, the Byzantine book epigram.⁶⁸ Such epigrams were widespread and are currently being collected and studied as part of a research project that has established an online database: *Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams* (DBBE). The database lists already more than 3,152 epigrams written in twelve-syllable verse. The formula at the beginning of the text, with the book 'speaking up' (βίβλος εἰμι), is most likely part of the poetic effect. The DBBE lists instances of this opening formula in two manuscripts from Mount Athos: Monê Megistês Lauras Δ 71 (eleventh century)⁶⁹ and Monê Koutloumousiou 307 (fourteenth century)⁷⁰. There also exist variant formulations, such as ὄργανον εἰμι (Florence Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana Plut. 72, Cod. 3).⁷¹

The information in the epigram is crucial. The manuscript originally contained the Psalms, the Gospels, Acts, the Pastorals, and the Pauline epistles. This is confirmed by the codicological study, as given above.

Two names are mentioned: Δανιήλ and Γαβριήλ. They are followed by the terms Φιλεντόλος and Φιλοκάλος, which could be proper names or adjectives ('lover of the Commandments' and 'lover of the beautiful'). I chose to translate them as proper names.

The term γόνου indicates a filial relationship (real or symbolic) between Daniel and Gabriel. It is not obvious who is the 'father' and who is the 'son'. Since γόνου occurs in the same verse as Γαβριήλ, the latter could be the son of Daniel. Also in the same verse, the present participle τελούντος could be related to a scribe finishing his work. This scribe would then be Gabriel Philokalos, son of Daniel Philentolos.

The relative οὗ seems to connect the city of Emesa to Gabriel; it could be the place where he hailed from, as is also hinted at by αὐτε. However, it would be surprising to have this kind of geographical information about the scribe without any equivalent information about the manuscript, as the scribe normally remains in the background.⁷²

The last line is an encrypted signature that means ἐγράφη χειρὶ κηρύκου διακόνου. A recent Greek hand wrote the solution below the lines in a minuscule script. Scholz considered κηρύκου to be a proper name. This interpretation would mean that the note, made by Gabriel, was copied by another scribe named κηρύκου. This may have strengthened Hyvernât and other scholars in the conclusion that the note does not contain any valid evidence for the provenance of the manuscript. In my opinion, κηρύκου goes together with διακόνου and describes the function of 'preacher-deacon' to Gabriel.

The manuscript thus mentions two different scribes, one Nasās ibn Liyūn ibn Abī al-Walīd in Arabic (179r) and one Gabriel Philokalos, son of Daniel Philentolos, in Greek (179v). These notes date from the same time as S^a and S^b. Of course, it can never be ruled out that colophons were merely copied and not composed by the scribes, but I do not see any convincing evidence for this – on the contrary.

7.3 *Incipit and desinit*

⁶⁷ Some attempts were made for bilingual manuscripts. See A. D'Ottone, (2013): 'Al-haṭṭ al-maġribī et le fragment bilingue latin-arabe Vat. Lat. 12900: quelques observations', in *Les écritures des manuscrits de l'Occident musulman*, Les rencontres du Centre Jacques Berque 5 (Rabat, 2013), pp. 7-18.

⁶⁸ See the reference work: M.D. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres. Texts and Contexts*, vol. 1, Wiener Byzantinische Studien, 24 (Vienna, 2003). I thank David Bouvier for this reference. See also K. Bentein and K. Demoen, 'The Reader in Eleventh-Century Book Epigrams', in *Poetry and Its Contexts in Eleventh-Century Byzantium*, eds. F. Bernard and K. Demoen (Farnham, 2013), p. 69-88.

⁶⁹ <http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/occ/211>.

⁷⁰ <http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/occ/3686>.

⁷¹ <http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/occ/2974>.

⁷² Troupeau, 'Les colophons', p. 229.

All the instances of *incipit* and *desinit* in Arabic that have been preserved – that is, all of the Pauline epistles – are written in red ink. There is also an *incipit* in Greek in the upper margin. The *incipit* contains only the name of the book.⁷³ For First Corinthians (103r), for example, it reads:

❖ الرسالة من بولس الي القورنثانيين الاولي ❖

In the upper margin of 103r, the Greek *incipit* in red (the same Greek *incipit* is repeated in the upper margin of 111r) reads:

ΠΑΥΛΟΥ ΠΡΟΣ ΚΟΡΙΝΘΙΟΥΣ Α

It is worth mentioning that the *desinit* of the Pauline epistles, also written in red ink, contains the Euthalian apparatus in Arabic. In the case of 1 Corinthians, it reads (120r):

تمت رساله بولس الرسول الي القورنثانيين الاولي وكتبت في مدينه فيليبوس علي يدي اسطفانا
وفرطونطوس وحايقوس وطيماتوس فيها خمس قريانات والروس تسع والشهادات سبع وعشرين
والايات ثمان ميه وتسعه

completed is the epistle of Paul the apostles of the Corinthians, the first, it was written in the city of Philippi, with the help of Stephan, Fortunatus, Achaius and Timothy, within five lectures, nine chapters, twenty-seven testimonia, 809 signs.

The Arabic tradition has not yet been included in the study of the Euthalian apparatus.⁷⁴

7.4 Reading marks

Several elements in the manuscript testify to its practical use as a lectionary work. Four types of reading marks can be distinguished:

- (1) The reading marks ἀρχή and τέλος (αρχ/τε) occur in the Arabic text. They were added in a second stage, either in the margin or above the punctuation marks. They are often written with red ink, but sometimes also in the same brown ink as in the rest of the body text. These reading marks are similar to those used in Greek manuscripts with continuous biblical texts.⁷⁵ Only the quires copied by S^d (folios 7-14 et 47-54) do not have them, a fact that would indicate the younger age of these quires.
- (2) The upper margin also has a couple of references in brown ink in Greek to a liturgical calendar. For example: ΚΥΡΗΑΚΗ Α (3v), ΣΑΒΒΑΤΩΝ Δ (16v), ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ Β (90v). The reading mark αρχ is present in the body text. Again, they are lacking in the quires copied by S^d.
- (3) The third type of mark also works with the αρχ and τε notes in the body text and gives in the margin the theme and/or the first Greek words of the reading.⁷⁶ These indications, in red or brown ink, were made by different hands. One of the hands shares similarities with the script used for the epigram. No marks of this type are found in the quires of S^c (folios 1-6) and S^d (folios 7-14 and 47-54).

⁷³ The beginning of Romans, next to a similar *incipit* to the one found in 1 Corinthians, has the formula: بسم الاب والابن وروح القدس.

⁷⁴ See, e.g., the work: L.C. Willard, *A Critical Study of the Euthalian Apparatus* (Berlin/New York, 2009).

⁷⁵ S. Engberg, 'Les lectionnaires grecs' (IRHT, 2015), <http://irht.hypotheses.org/612>.

⁷⁶ A detailed description of the reading marks in First Corinthians can be found in Schulthess, *Les manuscrits arabes*, pp. 142-143.

- (4) Finally, the quire of S^c (ff. 1-6) contains several reading marks in Arabic in the body text that start with هذا يقرأ.⁷⁷

This succinct introduction to the reading marks provides quite much information about the manuscript. With the exception of the quires of S^d (ff. 7-14 and 47-54), all parts served a lectionary purpose. The type (3) reading marks exist only in S^a and S^b and are thus the oldest; this is confirmed by a script that looks similar to the ‘ogivale inclinée’ of the Greek epigram. These elements adequately support the findings about the chronology mentioned in the conclusion.

8. CONCLUSION

Many questions regarding Vat. Ar. 13 and its history still remain unanswered. Nevertheless, some conclusions can be given:

1. S^a and S^b, likely in collaboration with other scribes, copied the Psalms, the four Gospels, Acts, the seven Catholic epistles and the fourteen Pauline epistles. To this first stage belong the Greek numbering and the Arabic collation marks on some quires. The Greek epigram also goes back to this stage. The type (3) reading marks occur only in the quires from S^a and S^b, hence date from before any restoration took place. This suggests that the complete manuscript was used in a liturgical context.
2. For some unknown reason, important portions of the manuscript were lost. This can have been caused by the extent of the manuscript or because it was originally separated into several codices.
3. This led to attempts at some point to replace the missing text. It cannot be established whether this resulted in a complete or a partial replacement, since the only evidence of this is for the part of the Gospels. A first stage in the restoration process is attested by S^c (quire 1). After this, the manuscript is still in use by a community; quire 1 has type (2) reading marks, just as the quires of S^a and S^b.
4. Parts of the manuscript were either never completed or lost a second time. This led to an additional restoration, as attested by S^d (quire 2 and quire 7). These quires do not contain reading marks. At this stage, the manuscript was likely no longer used for liturgical purposes.
5. The manuscript was either never completed in its totality in this second restoration or some parts got lost yet again. It is also possible that the manuscript was not bound when Assemani brought it to Rome. The manuscript then received a new binding and foliation.

This inquiry also highlights several other important points about Vat. Ar. 13. First of all, the manuscript does not contain any evidence that ties it to the Monastery of Mar Saba. On the contrary, the Greek epigram, made during the first stage of composition, mentions Ἐμίσης/Emesa. Moreover, Assemani does not say he made a stop at Mar Saba; he probably acquired the manuscript during his Syro-Lebanese tour.

Finally, the presence of Greek elements indicates that the manuscript was produced and used in a Byzantine milieu, as is also said in the Greek epigram and as suggested by the liturgical marks in Greek. Further research on the text of the manuscript may offer additional indications for this conclusion. An analysis of parts of the Gospels⁷⁸ and the Pauline epistles⁷⁹ has shown that the translator(s) worked with Greek and Syriac substrates. This kind of

⁷⁷ Several of them are described in Monferrer-Sala, ‘Translating the Gospels’.

⁷⁸ Monferrer-Sala, ‘An Early Fragmentary’.

⁷⁹ Schulthess, *Les manuscrits arabes*, pp. 392-401.

multilingualism was often noted in the Melkite milieu in the ninth century,⁸⁰ and would be possible to imagine for the region of Emesa.

9. ADDITIONAL NOTE ON THE ENDING OF MARK

Vat. Ar. 13 surprisingly ends with Mark 16,8. The text of Mark, written by S^b, ends on folio 74v. Folio 75r starts with Luke 3,31 (by S^a). A whole quire is missing from folio 74v, which explains the lacuna.

The last two lines of Mark are:

[...] فلما سمعتا هربنا فخرجتا من المقبرة لانه [دخل]هما
عجب و قرع و وجل فلم تقولا لاحد شيا لانهما ك[?]ا قد رعبتا⁸¹

Two words are not very legible but the passage can be translated as follows:

[...] and when they had heard, they fled and went out of the sepulchre, for astonishment, tremor and fear had entered them, and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid.

Since all of the endings of the Gospels in Vat. Ar. 13 are now lost, it is difficult to say if the Gospels originally contained a *desinit*, but this is likely. Could the missing quire contain the long ending of Mark, a *desinit*, and the beginning of Luke? The inconsistency in the writing, the physical features, and the fact that there is no way to decide whether the missing quire was written by S^a or S^b make any statistical evaluation impossible. There is no positive reason to doubt that Vat. Ar. 13 contained the long ending, as do the large majority of texts in the Greek and Syriac tradition (Peshitta and Harklean).⁸² Of course, the famous Syriac Sinaite Palimpsest,⁸³ a manuscript that predates the Peshitta, is an important witness of the shorter ending. It is also true that many scholars have underlined the presence of Old Syriac readings in early Arabic Gospels.⁸⁴ Yet, Monferrer-Sala, studying Matt 11,1-19, does not show any particular influence of the *Vetus Syra* in the Gospel part of Vat. Ar. 13.⁸⁵

Two other features regarding the last lines of the folio caught our interest. First, the text of Vat. Ar. 13 presents several variants. The beginning of Mark 16,8 reads: فلما سمعتا هربنا (‘and when they had heard, they fled and went out’). The temporal clause followed by

⁸⁰ J. Nasrallah, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire*, p. 183-186.

⁸¹ I added several diacritic dots to aid in reading. Originally, I read:

فلما سمعتا هربنا فخرجتا من المقبرة لانه [دخل]هما عجب و قرع و وجل فلم تقولا لاحد شيا لانهما ك[?]ا قد رعبتا

⁸² G.A. Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels: Mark* (Leiden, 1996).

⁸³ A. Smith Lewis, *A Translation of the Four Gospels from the Syriac of the Sinaitic Palimpsest* (London/New York, 1894).

For a precise list of the endings of Mark and their witnesses, see Wieland Willker, ‘The Various Endings of Mk’, 2015, <http://www.willker.de/wie/TCG/TC-Mark-Ends.pdf>. For an overview of the scholarly debates, see D.A. Black et al., *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark: Four Views* (Nashville, 2008).

⁸⁴ E.g. A. Vööbus, ‘The Arabic Versions’, in *Early Versions of the New Testament: Manuscript Studies* (Stockholm, 1954), pp. 271-97; J. Valentin, ‘Les évangéliaristes arabes de la bibliothèque du Monastère Ste-Catherine (Mont Sinaï) : Essai de classification d’après l’étude d’un chapitre (Matth. 28). Traducteurs, réviseurs, types textuels’, *Le Muséon*, 116 (2003), pp. 415-477.

⁸⁵ Monferrer-Sala, ‘An Early Fragmentary’. Monferrer-Sala and Kashouh agree on the importance of the Peshitta for the translation, but Monferrer-Sala supposes there was also a Greek *Vorlage*. Kashouh (*The Arabic Versions*, p. 167) notes that several pre-Peshitta readings generally agree with the Curetonian version, not with the Sinaitic.

two verbs is rare within the Greek tradition (W 099)⁸⁶, but the same wording is present in the Peshitta.⁸⁷ A second reading is more surprising. The text mentions three states of mind for the women: عجب و قرع و وجل ('astonishment, tremor and fear'). This trio does not come from Greek or Syriac, which have only two: τρόμος καὶ ἔκστασις (ܬܪܘܡܘܫ ܕܥܫܬܐܣܝܫ). A few witnesses have 'fear' instead of 'tremor' (φόβος instead of τρόμος): D W *pc* it sa^{ms}.⁸⁸ It is fair to wonder whether the motif of fear is merely an expansion,⁸⁹ or was influenced by the presence of φόβος in the *Vorlage*? In his analysis of Matt 11,1-19, Monferrer-Sala has already noted several agreements with W.⁹⁰

Finally, the last word of the verse رعبتا is written below the line in faded ink. It seems to be a later addition. The same can be said about the τε next to it, marking the end of a reading in the exterior margin. If these elements were added later, this would mean two things. First, the text continued on the lost folios. However, there is no way to find out what these contained. Second, it would mean that a scribe completed Mark 16,8 with رعبتا and added a τε next to it, with no intention to add anything else; apparently, the shorter ending was not a problem.

Abstract

The essay reviews the known information on the history of Vaticanus Arabicus 13, a manuscript from the ninth century that is at the core of much of the current research on the early Arabic versions of the New Testament. It surveys the state of research and addresses the material and scribal characteristics of the codex, providing several clarifications and some new insights. Also included is a short excursus on the sorter ending of Mark in the manuscript.

⁸⁶ καὶ ἀκούσασαι ἐξῆλθον καὶ ἔφυγον ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου W; καὶ ἀκούσασαι ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου καὶ ἔφυγον 099.

⁸⁷ ܥܒܝܢܐ ܕܥܩܪܥܐ ܕܘܨܠܐܝܢܐ. The Old Syriac Sinaitic version has similar wording at the beginning, but differs in the rest of the verse: ܘܡܫܚܐ ܕܥܩܪܥܐ ܕܘܨܠܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܩܪܥܐ ܕܘܨܠܐܝܢܐ. (Kiraz, *Comparative Edition*, p. 251.)

⁸⁸ D = Codex Bezae (05); W = Codex Washingtonianus (032); *pc* = a few manuscripts; it = 'Old Latin'; sa^{ms} = one Sahidic witness.

⁸⁹ Several scholars have underlined this characteristic over the years, although it is most notably discussed by Monferrer-Sala in 'Una traducción árabe con "pseudoescolio exegético anónimo". Una nota de crítica textual interna a propósito del MS. Sabaítico Vaticano Arabe 13'.

⁹⁰ Monferrer-Sala, 'An Early Fragmentary', p. 106. W is the so-called Codex Washingtonianus (Gregory-Aland 032), a codex from the fourth or fifth century that presents an eclectic text-type; it has an expanded long ending in Mark ('Freer logion'). See Willker, 'The Various Endings of Mk'.