

Contents**Articles and notes**

Preliminary Remarks on Coptic Biblical Titles (from the Third to the Eleventh Century) (Paola Buzi) 5

A New Piece in the Prosopography Mosaic of the Coptic Scriptorium of Toutōn: Pantouleos, Son of Houmise (Agostino Soldati) 23

Projects in manuscript studies

Document Reuse in Medieval Arabic Manuscripts (Konrad Hirschler) 33

Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths: An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature. Literary Texts in their Geographical Context. Production, Copying, Usage, Dissemination and Storage (Paola Buzi) 45

Individual research in manuscript studies

Patrons and Artists at the Crossroads: The Islamic Arts of the Book in the Lands of Rūm, 1270s–1370s (Cailah Jackson) 48

Conference reports

Sacred Word: Changing Meanings in Textual Cultures of Islamic Africa, Evanston, IL, April 21–22, 2016 (Adday Hernández) 52

Written Sources about Africa and their Study, Milan, January 26–28, 2017 (Eugenia Sokolinski) 55

Reviews

M. Friedrich and C. Schwarke, eds, *One-Volume Libraries: Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts*, Studies in Manuscript Cultures, 9 (Berlin and Boston: Walter De Gruyter, 2016) (Irmeli Perho) 58

G. Muradyan, *David the Invincible Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge: Old Armenian Text with the Greek Original, an English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, Philosophia Antiqua, 137 (Leiden: Brill, 2015) (Tara Andrews) 62

Clair-obscur in Copenhagen. Review of I. Perho, *Catalogue of Persian manuscripts. Codices Persici Arthur Christenseniani, Codices Simonseniani Persici, Codices Persici Additamenta*, I–II, Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts, Xylographs, etc., in Danish Collections (COMDC), 8/1–2 (Copenhagen: the Royal Library and NIAS Press, 2014) (Jan Just Witkam) 65

D. Hollenberg, C. Rauch, and S. Schmidtke, eds, *The Yemeni Manuscript Tradition* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015) (John Møller Larsen) 70



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Contents

Articles and notes

- Preliminary Remarks on Coptic Biblical Titles (from the Third to the Eleventh Century)* (Paola Buzi) 5
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Articles and notes

Preliminary Remarks on Coptic Biblical Titles (from the Third to the Eleventh Century)

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Summary

Coptic biblical titles have not received much attention until now. This article represents a preliminary study of them, dealing with their history and structural evolution. The aim is to show how the Bohairic biblical titles are much more similar to the Greek biblical titles than the Sahidic ones, a fact that sheds light on the parallel and partially independent development of the two literary traditions.

Coptic titles represent a privileged point of observation of the Coptic literary manuscript tradition and of the way the Copts interpreted and arranged their own history.

Over the centuries, they have changed position inside the manuscript, layout, length, textual structure and even purpose, marking crucial turning points in the manufacture of the writing supports—the shift from roll to codex, and from papyrus codex to parchment codex—and important passages of the history of Coptic literature—from the translations from Greek into Coptic to the production of an original literature.

The short, concise titles of the beginnings of Coptic literature (the third to the fifth century), based on the Greek titles of the works which were by then translated into Coptic, slowly but progressively gave way to longer and longer titles, which, in some cases, at least as far as the homiletic and hagiographic production is concerned, became real micro-texts, up to two pages in length, whose narrative thread was sometimes partially independent from the content of the works they were attributed to.¹

In the same way, Coptic titles, originally located at the end of the works, slowly moved to the beginning, although for some time initial titles and final titles co-existed and there are cases of 'fossil' final titles, as we will see.

In the absence of a shared terminology befitting the description of the different phenomena related to titles—even the accurate codicological termi-

1 Coptic titles can be classified, according to their length and complexity, in five categories: 'Subject Titles', 'Simple Structure Titles', 'Extended Simple Structure Titles', 'Complex Structure Titles', 'Extended Complex Structure Titles'. See Buzi 2005.

nologies elaborated by Peter Gumbert² and Marilena Maniaci³ are not satisfactory in this respect—I use the terms *inscriptio* and *subscriptio* to define, respectively, the initial and the final titles. These terms are in fact sufficiently ‘ample’ to include and to describe hybrid cases of paratextual elements, when the border between title and scribal subscription is not easily traceable.⁴

In these pages, I will focus only on the history and the evolution of biblical titles, and briefly on the titles of some biblical *apocrypha*, taking into consideration mainly (although not exclusively) the Sahidic tradition.⁵

Before analysing the Coptic biblical titles, however, it is necessary to point out that, unfortunately, any research on Coptic manuscript tradition is affected by two main problems: the fragmentary *status* of the codices which preserve the texts and the fact that a great part of the surviving literary manuscripts is dated between the ninth and the eleventh centuries. This means that we have only a limited number of examples of the early stages of the history of Coptic books.

From the third to the fifth century

As is well known, the first phase of Coptic literature consisted in translating biblical works from Greek into Coptic. We have only a few manuscripts dated—or better datable—to this period, but all of them seem to have the same characteristics: brief titles, preferably located at the end of the biblical works.

This is the case, for instance, of Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Ms.or.oct. 987,⁶ a well-preserved papyrus codex of small dimensions (135/140 × 125 mm *c.*), written in Akhmimic—a dialect of the area of Panopolis—, composed of a single quire and dated to the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century. It contains the *Proverbia Salomonis* and, according to some scholars, it might come from the White Monastery of

2 Gumbert 2005.

3 Maniaci 1996. See also Muzerelle 1985.

4 *Inscriptio* and *subscriptio* are now terms largely shared by the Coptologists. Moreover, in this article I use the terms ‘double title’ to refer to the combination of a *subscriptio* (attributed to the previous work) and an *inscriptio* (attributed to the following work) and ‘internal title’ to define a title pertaining to a specific part of a work, that often refers to the contents (mainly author and subject) of the initial title.

5 A complete census, edition and translation of the entire *corpus* of Coptic titles, as well as a systematic attribution of the *clavis coptica*, is one of the goals of the project ‘Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths: An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature. Literary Texts in their Geographical Context. Production, Copying, Usage, Dissemination and Storage (‘PATHs’)’ financially supported by the European Research Council (ERC Advanced Grant 2015, project no. 687567).

6 Böhlig 1936; Böhlig 1958, 1–3; Böhlig and Ibscher 1958; Böhlig, Ibscher, and Kiesig 1959, 356–374; Böhlig 1963; Böhlig 1968, 73–79.

Shenoute, in Atripe. The title of this codex is located at the end of the work: ΠΠΑΡΡΟΙΜΙΑ ΠΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ ('Proverbs of Salomon'), while there is no title at the beginning.

Among the most ancient biblical Coptic codices are those belonging to the Bodmer Papyri, a definition to be intended here *lato sensu*, including not only the manuscripts today preserved in the Bodmer Library,⁷ Cologne, but also those whose provenance from the same context is largely shared by scholars.⁸

The Bodmer Papyri collection serves as a valuable magnifying lens on how, around the beginning of the fifth century, the manufacture of books was evolving in Christian Egypt. Its nature of book collection in evolution, which has seen the slow stabilising of layout criteria and of paratextual elements, is inevitably reflected in the articulation of the texts by means of different graphic devices and, above all, by means of titles.⁹

We will leave aside the manuscripts in Greek and Latin belonging to the collection, observing only that, with some exceptions, the final title is prevalent, although irregular positions or even absences are very common. In the Coptic codices, on the other hand, although with numerous irregularities that denote the still unstable nature of the new writing praxis of titles, the works tend to be introduced more regularly by an initial title and closed by a final title. It is necessary to notice, however, that even when the *inscriptio* is written by the same hand as that of the main text, it has normally less graphic dignity, being located outside the written area, in the upper margin of the leaf, and often being characterized by a quick and unskilled script.

An exemplary case of the co-presence of the two titles is P. Crosby Schøyen,¹⁰ a miscellaneous papyrus codex where biblical works (Jonah, 2 Maccabees, 1 Peter) are combined with homilies (Melito of Sardis, 'On the Passion', and an unidentified homily). In P. Crosby Schøyen all the works are introduced by an initial title and closed by a final title (with the exception of the first work, which is acephalous, and of the last work, which is mutilated):

pp. 7–51: Melito of Sardis, *De Pascha*

p. 51, *subscriptio*: ΠΕΡΙ ΠΑΣΧΑ ΜΜΕΛΙΤΩΝ ('On the Passion, by Melito')

There was probably also an *inscriptio*, but the first pages are almost illegible.

7 <<http://fondationbodmer.ch>>.

8 The composition of the original library the Bodmer Papyri belonged to is strongly debated. See for instance Robinson 2011. A detailed *status quaestionis* of the manuscripts which should be attributed to the (original) library is dealt with in Fournet 2015, 8–24 and Schubert 2015, 8–24, 41–46.

9 On the titles of the Bodmer Papyri see Buzi 2015, 47–59.

10 Goehring 1990. See also Pietersma 2011, 27–46.

pp. 52–74: Unidentified homily for Easter morning

p. 52, *inscriptio*, after a white column: Μ<Η>ΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΟΥΔΔΑΙ ΕΝΤΑΥΘΩΠΕ ΖΙ
ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΣ ΠΙΡΟ ('The Hebrew martyrs under the kingdom of Antiochus')

p. 74, *subscriptio*,¹¹ better evidenced: Μ<Η>ΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΟΥΔΔΑΙ ('The Hebrew mar-
tyrs')

pp. 75–107: Epistle to the Hebrews

p. 75, *inscriptio*, after a white column: ΤΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΜΠΕΤΡΟΣ ('The Epistle of Peter')

p. 107, *subscriptio*, better evidenced: ΤΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΜΠΕΤΡΟΣ ('The Epistle of Peter')

pp. 107–124: Book of Jonah

p. 107, *inscriptio*, hardly readable: ΙΩΝΑΣ ΠΕΠΡΟΦ<ΗΤΗΣ> ('Jonah the prophet')

p. 124, *subscriptio*: ΙΩΝΑΣ ΠΕΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ('Jonah the prophet')

Another miscellaneous but purely biblical manuscript, P. Bodmer XXII + Mississippi Coptic Codex II (155 × 115 mm c.),¹² containing the Book of Jeremiah, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, the Epistle of Jeremiah and the Book of Baruch, also shows the fairly regular presence of both initial and final titles.

p. 72, *subscriptio*: ΙΕΡΕΜΙΑΣ ΠΕΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ('Jeremiah the prophet'); *inscriptio*:
ΝΘΡΗΝΟΣ ΝΙΕΡΕΜΙΑΣ ('Lamentations of Jeremiah');

p. 102, *subscriptio*: ΝΘΡΗΝΟΣ ΝΙΕΡΕΜΙΑΣ ('Lamentations of Jeremiah').

The following work, the Epistle of Jeremiah, has no *inscriptio*.

p. 118 (end of work) is very lacunose, but the double title (*subscriptio* + *inscrip-
tio*) is intuïtable: [ΤΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΝΙΕΡΕΜΙΑ]ς ('Epistle of Jeremiah') / [ΠΧΩΩΜΕ ΒΑΡΟΥ]Χ
(('Book of Baruch')).

Lastly, it is necessary to mention P. Bodmer XXIII,¹³ a papyrus codex (210 × 135 mm c.), containing Isaiah, whose initial title, located on the guard-leaf, is

Π[ΜΕΞ]ΩΜΟΝΤ Μ[ΕΡΟ]Σ ΠΧΩΩΜΕ [ΝΣΑΙ]ΔΣ ΠΕΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ('The third part of the Book
of Isaiah the prophet'),

while the final title is

p. 80: ΠΧΩΩΜΕ ΝΣΑΙΔΣ [Π]ΕΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ('The Book of Isaiah the prophet').

Yet, among the Bodmer Papyri, there are also examples of codices which have only initial titles—as, for example, P. Bodmer XVIII,¹⁴ a papyrus codex (145 × 140 mm c.) containing the Book of Deuteronomy:

p. 1: ΠΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΝΟΜΙΟΝ ΜΩΥΣΗ[Σ] ('Deuteronomy of Moses', *inscriptio*)

—or only final titles—like, for example, P. Bodmer XLI,¹⁵ consisting of seven leaves transmitting the *Acta Pauli*:

11 James M. Robinson inappropriately defines it as colophon.

12 Kasser 1964.

13 Kasser 1965.

14 Kasser 1962a.

15 Kasser and Luisier 2004, 281–384. On the Acts of Paul, see also Rordorf et al. 1997, 1115–1177.

p. 18: ΠΑΡΑΞΙΣ ΠΑΥΛΟΥ ('Acts of Paul', *subscriptio*).¹⁶

Other codices show an irregular presence of *inscriptions* and *subscriptions*.¹⁷ P. Bodmer III,¹⁸ for instance, is a papyrus codex (233 × 165 mm c.) which contains the Gospel of John and the Book of Genesis—an anomalous sequence that has been explained with the nature of the faith of the owners of the library, a Christianity which was still *in fieri*, also from the point of view of the biblical canon and its arrangement. It has a final title (p. 139) to conclude the Gospel of John (ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΡΑΝΝΗΣ) and an initial title (p. 1, the pagination starts over) to open the Book of Genesis (ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ).

In brief, the Bodmer Papyri represent a crucial moment of the history of Coptic manuscript book, when the title gains, albeit slowly and with some irregularities, its position at the beginning of the work it is attributed to, a position which will become definitive from about the sixth century.

Moreover, it is interesting to observe the co-presence of (almost) pure Greek titles (ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΡΑΝΝΗΣ), titles characterized by a hybrid grammatical structure (ΠΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΠΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΘΘΑΙΟΣ) and completely Coptized titles (Π[ΜΕΡ]ΩΜΗΝΤ ἸΜ[ΕΡ]ΟΙΣ ἸΠΧΩΩΜΕ Ἰ[ΝΣΑΙ]ΔΣ ΠΕΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ).

*

At this point it is probably worth making a brief digression towards some, more or less, contemporary heterodox works, dwelling in particular upon those transmitted by the Nag Hammadi codices, that are notoriously multiple-text codices.¹⁹

We will not deal here with the nature of the community that produced the famous thirteen codices,²⁰ but it is highly likely that these represent the product of a fluid tradition. Not only have the texts undergone some changes during their translation into Coptic, but several elements lead us to believe that the copyists had a wide freedom of action. In brief, the works found in Nag Hammadi are not the witnesses of a stable literary tradition.

16 In Coptic *Acts* is singular.

17 A special case is represented by P. Bodmer XIX, a papyrus codex (155 × 125 mm c.), whose initial title has been added, by a different hand, on the guard leaf, when the codex was already very deteriorated and the first part of it had been lost: ΠῚΑΗ ἸΜΕΡΟΣ ΜΑΘΕΟΣ ('The last part of [the Gospel of] Matthew'). The final title is regular: ΠΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΠΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΘΘΑΙΟΣ. Kasser 1962b.

18 Kasser 1958.

19 For the translation of the whole Nag Hammadi library see Meyer et al. 2009. See also Robinson et al. 1972–1982.

20 As is well known, the nature of the community which produced the Nag Hammadi codices has been long debated. See for instance the recent Lewis and Blount 2014, 399–419 and, above all, Lundhaug and Jenott 2015. See also Buzi 2016, 95–100.

On the contrary, the related titles seem to have remained substantially unaltered in the various phases of their transmission.

In his study on the titles of Nag Hammadi codices and of the codex *Berolinensis Gnosticus* 8502, Paul-Hubert Poirier²¹ calculated that:

- 9 works have only initial titles (*inscriptiones*),
- 22 have only final titles (*subscriptiones*),
- 11 works have both initial and final titles,
- 9 works do not have titles, but *incipit* and/or *desinit* which in some way have the function of a title,
- 7 works have no titles or other paratexts playing their role,
- 11 works have *incipit* and/or *desinit* which do not substitute the title, but in some way recall their content,
- 6 works have internal titles, and, lastly,
- for 7 works it is impossible to say if they had any titles because the manuscripts that transmit them are very fragmentary.

Taking into consideration only the biblical apocrypha, the Apocryphon of John, that is attested three times in the Nag Hammadi collection and once in the *Berolinensis Gnosticus* 8502, represents an extremely interesting case.²²

In NH II 1 there is no initial title (but it appears one of those *incipit* that Poirier considers a sort of substitution of a title), while the final title (p. 32) is well evidenced: ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΡΔΑΝΗΝΗΝ ΝΑΠΟΚΡΥΦΟΝ. The case of NH IV 1 is substantially similar. The *incipit* is missing and only very cautiously we can assume that there was no *inscriptio*.²³ On the contrary, the *scriptio* (p. 49) is again very well evidenced: ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩ[ΡΔΑΝ]ΗΝΗΝ ΑΠΟΚΡΥΦΟΝ. Here the morph *η* used for attributive constructions is missing, but the title is comparable to the previous one. In NH III 1 the nominal syntagm of the *scriptio* (front flyleaf and p. 40) is reversed: ΝΑΠΟΚΡΥΦΟΝ ΝΙΩΡΔΑΝΗΝΗΣ, which recalls the form of the *scriptio* of the ‘Gospel of Judas’: ΠΕΓΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΔ. The same title is repeated on the verso of the guard leaf of the first folium (this being certainly a later addition). Lastly, BG 2 has exactly the same *scriptio* (p. 77), while it has no *inscriptio*.

Poirier deduces that the four titles attributed to the Apocryphon of John—structurally similar in pairs—depend on two different traditions. Such a theory is supported by the fact that also the texts of the two versions of the work differ in length and in other important particulars. These two different textual

21 Poirier 1997, 339–383.

22 Waldstein and Wisse 1985.

23 The final part of the first line, although corrupted, does not seem to contain textual elements compatible with a title.

however, they make use of a ‘display script’. No canonical biblical works are preserved in the Turin papyri.

The ninth to the eleventh century

Not surprisingly, Coptic biblical titles have not changed structure over the centuries. If we take into consideration codices dated to the ninth or tenth century, however, we have some surprises: the normal position of titles is initial, but it is not rare to find the *subscriptions* still in use.

This is the case of the manuscript of New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M566²⁷ (MICH.AA),²⁸ from the Monastery of the Archangel Michael, in the Fayyūm, containing the Books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

The first work (f. 1r) is preceded by the title ΠΛΕΥΡΕΤΙΚΟΝ ΕΜΩΥΣΗΣ (‘Leviticus of Moses’) and followed by a *scriptio* (f. 41r) which is a combination of a final title and an *explicit*: ΔΡΧΩΚ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΩΑΔΕ ΜΠΛΕΥΡΕΤΙΚΟΝ ΜΜΩΥΣΗΣ ΠΑΡΧΗΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΖΕΝ ΟΥΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΖΑΜΗΝ (‘Words of Moses the Archprophet’ is *sic* finished. In peace. Amen’). Numbers open with the title (f. 42r) ΠΧΩΜΕ ΝΑΡΙΘΜΟΣ ΕΜΩΥΣΗΣ (‘Book of Numbers of Moses’) and close (f. 102v) with the sentence ΝΑΡΙΘΜΟΣ ΕΜΩΥΣΗΣ (‘Numbers of Moses’). Lastly, Deuteronomy is preceded by the *inscriptio* (f. 103r) ΠΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΝΟΜΙΟΝ ΕΜΩΥΣΗΣ and closes with the title (f. 152r) ΠΧΩΜΕ ΜΠΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΝΟΜΙΟΝ ΜΜΩΥΣΗΣ (‘Book of Deuteronomy of Moses’).

The analysis of the titles of M566 reveals how biblical titles still preserve the *scriptio* in a very late period. Although the *inscriptio* is normally more emphasised by the presence of different kinds of ornaments and frames, the *scriptio*, when present, is frequently longer, often being something in between a real title and a colophon.

A good example of this is M568²⁹ (MICH.AC), an almost complete codex (its leaves are divided between New York, Cairo, and Berlin), which contains the Book of Isaiah. It opens with the *inscriptio* ΗΣΑΙΑΣ (‘Isaiah’) and closes with the *scriptio* ΠΕΝΕΙΩΤ ΗΣΑΙΑΣ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΔΡΧΩΚ ΕΒΟΛ (‘Our father Isaiah the holy Prophet is finished’).

Inside the codex, however, there are also some internal titles that subdivide the Book of Isaiah in the chapters: ΘΟΡΑΣΙΣ ΝΓΑΝΗΣΑΙΑΣ ΝΑΥ ΕΡΟΣ ΠΩΗΡΕ ΝΗΖΑΜΩΣ ΕΤΒΕ ΤΒΑΒΙΩΝ (f. 12v, ‘Vision on Babylon, which Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw), ΠΩΑΔΕ ΕΤΩΟΠ ΕΤΒΕ ΤΜΩΑΒΙΤΗΣ (f. 15v, ‘Prophecy on the [land of] Moab’), ΘΟΡΑΣΙΣ ΝΚΗΜΕ (f. 17v, ‘Vision of Egypt’), ΠΩΛΗΛ ΝΕΖΕΚΙΑΣ ΠΡΡΟ

27 Depuydt 1993, 5–7.

28 The *siglum* MICH.AA, like the following ones, has been elaborated by the CMCL. It refers to the codices from the Library of the Archangel Michael in the Fayyūm (MICH), each one identified by two letters.

29 Depuydt 1993, 20–22; 611–612.

ⲛⲧⲟⲩⲁⲗⲓⲁ ⲛⲧⲉⲣⲉⲗⲟⲩⲗⲉⲕ ⲁⲓⲱ ⲁⲓⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛ ⲓⲙ ⲡⲉⲗⲟⲩⲗⲉⲕ (f. 38r, ‘Prayer of Hezekiah, king of Judah, after he had been ill and had recovered from his illness’).

A similar case is represented by M567³⁰ (MICH.AB) containing the Kingdoms. The codex begins with the *inscriptio* (f. 1r) βασιλῖα τῶρπⲉ ⲙⲙⲏⲧⲣⲟ ⲛⲥⲁⲟⲩⲗ ⲓϥ ⲗⲥ (‘Kingdoms. The first Kingdom of Saul. Jesus Christ’). At the end of the first book we have the following *subscriptio* (f. 69r): τῶρπⲉ ⲙⲙⲏⲧⲣⲟ ⲁϥⲕⲱⲕ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ (‘The first Kingdom is finished’). The second book is introduced by a combination of a final and an initial title (f. 69r): ⲁⲓⲟⲩⲱ βασιλῖα τῶρπⲉ ⲙⲙⲏⲧⲣⲟ ⲛⲥⲁⲟⲩⲗ ⲁϥⲕⲱⲕ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ρⲟⲙⲁⲓⲟⲩ ⲧⲙⲉⲣⲃ̅ ⲙⲙⲏⲧⲣⲟ ⲛⲁⲗⲁⲓⲉⲓⲁ ρⲛ ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲣⲏⲛⲏ ρⲁⲙⲏⲛ (‘Of the saint [Book] of Kingdoms, the first Kingdom of Saul is finished. Likewise (follows) the second Kingdom of David. In peace. Amen’). The *subscriptio* is much more concise (f. 266r): ⲧⲙⲉⲣϥⲛⲧⲉ ⲙⲙⲏⲧⲣⲟ ⲁϥⲕⲱⲕ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϥⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲓ ⲕⲱ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ (‘The second Kingdom is finished. Bless me, forgive me’).

Moving to the New Testament, the characteristics of titles remain unchanged. In M569³¹ (MICH.AD) the Gospel of Matthew opens (f. 3r) with the *inscriptio* ⲡⲉⲃⲁⲓⲛⲉⲓⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲃⲛ ⲛⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲙⲁⲑⲟⲁⲓⲟⲩ ϥⲛⲏ ⲑⲉⲱ (‘The Holy Gospel of Matthew. With God’) and closes with the *subscriptio* (f. 38r) ⲡⲉⲃⲁⲓⲛⲉⲓⲟⲩ ⲛⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲙⲁⲑⲟⲁⲓⲟⲩ.

The structure, the position and the combination of the following titles are similar:

- ⲡⲉⲃⲁⲓⲛⲉⲓⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲃⲛ ⲛⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲙⲁⲣⲕⲟⲥ (f. 39r, *inscriptio*)
- ⲡⲉⲃⲁⲓⲛⲉⲓⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲃⲛ ⲛⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲙⲁⲣⲕⲟⲥ (f. 60r, *subscriptio*)
- ⲡⲉⲃⲁⲓⲛⲉⲓⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲃⲛ ⲛⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲗⲟⲓⲕⲁϥ ϥⲛⲏ ⲑⲉⲱ (f. 62r, *inscriptio*)
- ⲡⲉⲃⲁⲓⲛⲉⲓⲟⲩ ⲛⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲗⲟⲓⲕⲁϥ (f. 84r, *subscriptio*)
- ⲡⲉⲃⲁⲓⲛⲉⲓⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲃⲛ ⲛⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲓⲱⲣⲁⲛⲏⲏϥ (f. 85r, *inscriptio*)
- ⲡⲉⲃⲁⲓⲛⲉⲓⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲃⲛ ⲛⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲓⲱⲣⲁⲛⲏⲏϥ (f. 113v, *subscriptio*)

The survival of the *subscriptiones* in codices dated to the ninth or tenth century is not a negligible phenomenon and deserves appropriate attention. Clearly, copyists and commissioners by then had perceived the initial titles as the normal way to open a work, as the entire production of Coptic literature demonstrates, but at the same time we should not forget that on the library shelves of the Monastery of Saint Michael—the library for which these manuscripts had been produced—final titles continued to appear in older codices. The same codices that probably were used as models to make the manuscripts we are dealing with—as far as proportion, manufacture, layout and decoration

30 Depuydt 1993, 11–13, 42–43.

31 Depuydt 1993, 23–26.

are concerned—represent a typical example of the books of the last phase of Coptic manuscript tradition.

The nature of the works which were copied, that is biblical texts, probably restricted the freedom of copyists to take initiatives, at least from the textual point of view. As a result, final titles, although devoid of their original function, survive in very recent codices, codicologically unnecessary but traditionally important.³² It is useful to note, however, that although less frequent, there are also some cases of homiletic works transmitted by (relatively) late manuscripts (the ninth through the eleventh century) that preserve final titles.

Codex M570³³ (MICH.AH), containing the Epistles of Paul, deserves special attention and inspires new reflections. The fourteen letters attributed to Paul—therefore including the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Pastoral Letters—open with an *inscriptio* that in part refers to the Epistles as a whole and in part only to the first of them (f. 2r), and that, very likely, was created somewhere along the Coptic Sahidic manuscript tradition: *παγλοϣ ἀποστολοϣ τε προς ρωμαιοϣ επιστολη ι̅δ̅* ('Of the Apostle Paul. The [letter] to the Romans. Fourteen Epistles').

The other letters follow one after the other, each one introduced by its own title, which however in M570 becomes a sort of an internal title (*τε προς κορινθιοϣ α̅, τε προς κορινθιοϣ β̅, τε προς ρεβραιοϣ, τε προς γαλατιϣ*, etc.).³⁴

At the end of the fourteen 'Epistles', a *subscriptio* (f. 83v) regularly closes the volume: *τοϣ αγιοϣ ἀποστολοϣ επιστολη ι̅δ̅ στιχοϣ ε̅ϕ̅ο̅ε̅* ('The fourteen Epistles of the holy Apostle Paul. 5575 *stichoi*').

It is necessary to stress that the Epistle to the Hebrews is located immediately after the two dedicated to the Corinthians, therefore in a sequence which is not that of the oldest Greek witnesses (Codices Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Vaticanus, and Ephraemi Rescriptus), where it is located after the letters to the Thessalonians, as the last of the letters addressed to groups and not to individuals.³⁵

Unfortunately, all the other codices from this library containing the Epistles of Paul are too fragmentary, but, as we will see, some leaves from the

32 Differently from what happened in rolls, where final titles were necessary in order to clearly mark the end of a work.

33 Depuydt 1993, 47–50.

34 There are no (internal) *subscriptiones*.

35 Trobisch 2001, 1–25.

White Monastery allow us to hypothesise that the behaviour of the titles of M570 represented a consolidated tradition, at least in the Sahidic tradition.³⁶

Moreover, the comparison with the most important witness of the Boha'iric tradition, a paper manuscript (London, British Library, Or. 424), that dates back to 1307, although in its colophon (in Arabic)³⁷ it is specified that it was copied from older manuscripts, is very interesting. In this case, the Epistles of Paul do not have a general title to introduce them as a whole. Therefore, the first letter is directly preceded (p. 1) by a regular *προς ρωμεις* ('To the Romans'), without the demonstrative pronoun *τε*, which is present in the Sahidic codex).³⁸ At the end of the 'Epistle to Romans' we find a long *subscriptio* (p. 89): *προς ρωμειος αυςβητης ηεν κορινθιος αυγογορπς ριτην φοιβη ιρωμη στυχος δ κελ κβ* ('To the Romans. It was written in Korinthos and sent by Phoebe, the sister. 1000 *stichoi*, 22 chapters'). All the other 'Epistles' are regularly introduced by a short *inscriptio* (*προς κορινθιοις, προς γαλατης, etc.*) but, above all, are concluded with a fairly articulated *subscriptio*. We will only give a few examples here:

προς κορινθιοις δ αυςβητης ρεν εφεσος εβολ ριτην στεφανα νεν αχαικος στυχ ρξ κλ κβ ('To the Corinthians. It was written in Ephesos by Stefana and Achaicos. 160 *stichoi*, 22 chapters')

προς κορινθ αυςβητης ηεν φιλιπποις ητε θμακεδονια αυγογορπς ητην τιτος νεν λογκας στυχ κνε κλε ιβ ('To the Corinthians. It was sent by Titus and Loukas. 555 *stichoi*, 12 chapters')

προς γαλατης αυςβητης ηεν ρωμη στυχ τιβ κλε ϛ ('To the Galatians. It was written in Rome. 312 *stichoi*, 6 chapters')

προς εφεσιοις αυςβητης ηεν ρωμη αυγογορπς ητην τιχικος στυχ τιβ κλε ϛ ('To the Ephesians, it was written in Rome and sent by Tichikos. 312 *stichoi*, 6 chapters')

προς φιλιπποις αυςβητης ηεν ρωμη αυγογορπς ητην τιμοθεος νεν απαφροτιτος στυχ σην κλε δ ('To the Philippians, it was written in Rome, it was sent by Timotheos and Aphroditos. 218 *stichoi*, 4 chapters').

36 See, for instance codices M571, M566, M599, M609, M665, M668(12/1), M668(12/14), and M988, all in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

37 Horner 1898, III, xi–xii.

38 For other codices, where titles have a different structure (see, for instance, the *inscriptio* *ιερπιστολη προς θεσσαλονικη δ*), cfr. Horner 1898, III, 434. Unfortunately, I could not check directly the manuscript and, in particular, its pagination. The *subscriptio* mentioned in this article are edited in Horner 1898, III, 114, 226, 300, 338, 376, 404, and 632.

A general *subscriptio* closes the fourteen letters and the codex itself: παγλοϝ ἀποστολοϝ ειρηνη τω κ̄ω επιστ̄ολη ῑδ, στ̄ιχος κεφαλεον ε̄φ̄οε ('Of Paul the Apostle, in the peace of the Lord, fourteen letters, 5575 *stichoi*').

The titles—above all the *subscriptiones*, but not only—of the Bohairic version of the Epistles of Paul, which are a combination of elements of different nature (final title, localisation, stichometric notes), demonstrate that they depend on the Greek tradition more than the Sahidic ones. In the Codices Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Vaticanus, Ephraemi Rescriptus, and Bezae the final titles correspond to the initial titles (προς ρωμεος, προς γαλατης, etc.), being therefore extremely brief. There are, however, other Greek witnesses that transmit longer *subscriptiones*, almost identical to those of the Bohairic manuscript. This is the case, for example, of the Codex Maedicaeus or Minuscule 42, containing the Acts, the Epistle of Paul and the Book of Revelation, which is preserved in Frankfurt³⁹ and is dated to the eleventh century.⁴⁰

Moreover, *subscriptiones* and indications of the *stichoi* also survive in the Copto(Bohairic)-Arabic tradition, as demonstrated, for instance, by codex Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, copt. 1 (tenth to eleventh century, with emendations of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries), containing the Book of Pentateuch.⁴¹ In this case, however, the *inscriptio* is longer than the examples we have taken into consideration until now: σ̄ην ε̄σ̄ω ταρχη ῑτ̄γενεσις ῑτε μωϝ̄χης π̄προφητης π̄χωμ̄ ῑροϝιτ̄ ῑτε π̄ωντ̄ ('With God. Beginning of the Genesis of Moses the prophet, first book of creation').⁴²

We can therefore assume that the Bohairic translations of the biblical works are made directly from Greek, without the medium of Sahidic, and are based on a different manuscript tradition compared with that used by the Sahidic translations. Even considering a direct passage from Greek to Sahidic and from Sahidic to Bohairic, however, it is clear that the groups responsible for the creation of a Bohairic New Testament had, as point of reference, the Greek tradition, as is confirmed by the fact that, contrary to the Sahidic M570, in the codex London, British Library, Or. 424 the Epistle to the Hebrews is

39 See <http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/en_GB/liste/?ObjID=30042> (last accessed 23 March 2017). According to Robert B. Waltz, however, the codex would be lost: <<http://www.skypoint.com/members/waltzmn/Manuscripts1-500.html>> (last accessed 23 March 2017).

40 Similar *subscriptiones* are also to be found in several other manuscripts, such as Codices Minuscule 466 (eleventh century), Minuscule 339 (thirteenth century), Minuscule 452 (thirteenth century), Minuscule 216 (1348), Minuscule 642 (fourteenth century) and Jo. Fabri or Minuscule 90 (sixteenth century). See Metzger 1998.

41 Boud'hors 2012, 63–71.

42 The term ταρχη is very interesting, since it suggests the combination of a normal title and the ancient use of the *incipit*.

located after the Epistle to Thessalonians and before the first letter to Timothy, like in the oldest Greek biblical manuscripts we have mentioned above.

The Coptic tradition of the Epistles of Paul appears therefore very complicated: if London, British Library, Or. 424 shares with the oldest Greek biblical manuscripts the sequence of the letters,⁴³ it is with later Greek manuscripts that it has in common the long *subscriptions* mentioning the place where each letter was written and by whom it was sent.⁴⁴

It is a complex and intriguing thread of manuscript traditions with direct effect on titles, which deserves to be explored more in-depth, but that—as far as I know—has not received much attention in Coptic studies until now.

It is important to stress that from a more general point of view, in the late and capacious books produced in the Fayyūm, with few exceptions (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M588 and M706), normally the *incipit* of biblical works is located on the recto, even if this implies leaving a blank page. It is interesting to note that multiple-text manuscripts of different content (hagiographies, homilies, canons, etc.) do not behave in the same way.

Unfortunately, the codices from the White Monastery, mainly datable to the tenth or eleventh century—whose leaves, as is well known, are scattered in several European and extra-European collections—are in such a poor state that making a survey of the biblical titles is very difficult.⁴⁵ One should take into consideration that for most of them it has been possible to reconstruct (virtually) an average of ten to fifteen leaves of each codex.

Among the few exceptions, we have codex MONB.JA,⁴⁶ containing Ecclesiastes, Job and Proverbs. The first part of the codex is lost, but on page 102 we read the following *subscriptio*: Ἰσαχουὶδ τοῦ υἱοῦ Δαβὶδ τὰ προφῆτα ἐτέλεσαν (‘The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, are finished’). On the following page (p. 103) there is the *inscriptio* of the next work: Περὶ ἐκκλησιαστικῆς (‘Ecclesiastes’). As in the previous case, Ecclesiastes closes with a *subscriptio* (p. 153): Περὶ τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς (‘The Book of

43 On the contrary, in Codex Minuscule 642 the Epistle to Hebrews is located after that to Titus. Unfortunately, the paper *The Titles in New Testament Manuscripts (2nd–9th centuries): Material and Visual Strategies* presented by Daniele Bianconi and Pasquale Orsini at the conference ‘Book Titles and Other Paratexts in Ancient Literature’, held in Heidelberg, 6–7 October, 2014, is still unpublished, but it would be auspicious to systematically compare the initial and final titles of Coptic manuscripts with those of the Greek tradition.

44 The Copto(Bohairic)-Arabic codex Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, copt. 12 has the long *subscriptio*, but the Epistle the Hebrew is located at the end.

45 On the library of the White Monastery, see Orlandi 2002, 211–231; Emmel and Römer 2008, 5–14.

46 The *siglum* has been elaborated by the CMCL. It refers to one of the (virtually) reconstructed codices from the Library of the Monastery of Shenoute (MONB).

Ecclesiastes'), to which a later (?) hand has added ἀρχαὶ ἐβὼλ. At this point the pagination starts again. On p. 1 of the new page sequence, there is the *inscriptio* of Job: πλῶμα νῖωβ πδικαῖος ('The book of Job, the just'). The rest of the codex is too fragmentary to be analysed.

The same alternation of *inscriptio* and *subscriptio*—where, unlike the above mentioned cases, the *subscriptio* of the previous work immediately precedes, with no space in between, the *inscriptio* of the following one—appears also in some other fragments from the White Monastery, now preserved in the British Library (London, British Library, Or. 7558, ff. 31–32), where the following titles are readable:

British Library, Or. 7558, f. 31:

τε πρὸς κορινθίους (*subscriptio*)

τε πρὸς ἑβραίους (*inscriptio*)

British Library, Or. 7558, f. 32:

τε πρὸς [εφεσίους] (*subscriptio*)

τε πρὸς [φιλιππησίους] (*inscriptio*)

The position of the Epistle to the Hebrews after the Epistle to the Corinthians, exactly like in codex M570 of the Pierpont Morgan Library, is not surprising, since we know that the two monasteries—the Monastery of the Archangel Michael in Hamuli (Fayyūm) and the White Monastery of Shenute in Atripe—were connected, as far as the manufacture of the codices is concerned. The colophons of both the codices from Hamūli and from Atripe inform us that at least some of the books were produced in some little centres of the Fayyūm, by local copyists.⁴⁷

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To conclude, it is clear that, unlike all the other literary genres, which see the slow but progressive extension of titles, to the point where they become real micro-texts in their own right (with interesting and surprising consequences that we do not have the space to mention here),⁴⁸ the Holy Scriptures—canonical and non-canonical—determine a more conservative attitude. On the one hand, as is obvious, biblical titles maintain their original structures, since nobody would ever have dared to manipulate them substantially—although, as we have seen, there were some copyists who, every now and then, have taken some minor creative initiatives—, while on the other hand, *subscriptions* maintain a very important role even in very late codices.

Both phenomena, however, are determined by the same reason: the overwhelming importance of the tradition in the transmission of biblical texts.

47 Emmel 2005, 63–70.

48 See Buzi 2004, 309–316.

At the end of this survey it appears clear that the copyists charged with the transcription of biblical works, making use of older models, decided not to make any changes. Not even the obsolete *subscriptions* that, mounted in the body of the biblical texts and in some way becoming a part of them, continue to live and be preserved, like stone fossils.

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