

Towards a Codicological Categorization of Early Christian Arabic Bible Manuscripts

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Dating manuscripts solely based on paleographical considerations is a risky venture, as many of us have experienced. Yet, in order to increase our understanding of the manuscript production among Arabic-speaking Christians, it may be fruitful to try to establish some general trends that can point us in the right direction. Thus, in this presentation I will offer a preliminary codicological categorization based primarily on Arabic Bible manuscripts that are datable to the first centuries of the Christian Arabic text production. I will mainly discuss the overall layout of the texts and elaborate on which letters may serve as good indicators for specific styles of writing. To a lesser extent, I will also take other codicological features into consideration, such as writing material, catchwords, and quire marks.