EARLY CHRISTIAN ARABIC COLOPHONS FROM THE PALESTINIAN MONASTERIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

MIRIAM L. HJÄLM AND PETER TARRAS

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE STOCKHOLM, SANKT IGNATIOS COLLEGE AND JMU WÜRZBURG/LMU MUNICH

The present study offers a comparative analysis of colophons written in Arabic by Christian scribes at the monasteries of Saint Chariton, Saint Sabas, and Saint Catherine in the ninth and tenth centuries CE. These monasteries have played a crucial role in the formation of the early Christian Arabic manuscript tradition. The colophons of these manuscripts provide the most immediate access to the socio-cultural milieu of their producers. The present study is based on a selection of 20 colophons, which are explicitly connected to one of the three monasteries. Our main aim is to draft a typology of early Christian Arabic colophons as a means to investigate the various issues surrounding emergent Christian Arabic scribality. Additionally, we will discuss paleographical features of the handwriting of the scribes who authored the colophons discussed here. As we will show, these can be used to connect anonymous colophons and manuscripts without colophons, at least with some probability, to the workshops of these monasteries. Overall, our aim is to highlight the microhistorical significance of early Christian Arabic colophons, which not only offer spatio-temporal, prosopographical, social, intellectual, and, to some extent, economic coordinates for the contextualisation of early Christian Arabic manuscript production, but also allow us to catch a glimpse of early Christian Arabic scribal self-perception.

1 INTRODUCTION[1]

The present study offers a comparative analysis of colophons written in Arabic by Christian scribes at the monasteries of Saint Chariton, Saint Sabas, and Saint Catherine in the ninth and tenth centuries CE. These Palestinian monasteries have played a crucial role in the birth and formation of a Christian Arabic literary legacy and manuscript tradition.[2] They were important nodes in a scribal network that stretched from Egypt to Northern Mesopotamia, from the deserts to the urban centers.[3] Arguably following a Byzantine trend, Christian Arabic scribes started to leave dates in manuscripts from the second half of the ninth century CE onwards.[4] They may also mention places of production as well as personal information about themselves or the recipients of the manuscripts, which is already observable in earlier undated colophons. Together with other types of paratextual documentary evidence, they provide the most immediate access to the socio-cultural milieu of the early tradents of Christian Arabic literature. The earliest surviving witnesses of this literature reflect intellectual needs and social practices that document scribal activity. The main aim of this study, therefore, is to draft a typology of early Christian Arabic colophons as a means to investigate the various issues surrounding emergent Christian Arabic scribality.[5]

The early, i.e. pre-1000 CE, Christian Arabic colophon corpus comprises ca. 40 colophons. The present study is based on a selection of 20 colophons, which are explicitly connected to one of the three Palestinian monasteries. At a later point, we plan to address in detail all known early Christian Arabic colophons, but already at this stage, the material studied here will be discussed in light of this broader corpus, when relevant. We tentatively estimate that ≦ 10% of the pre-1000

[1] This study has greatly benefitted from our exchanges with Vevian Zaki and Alexander Treiger. We would also like to express our gratitude to Father Justin of Saint Catherine's Monastery who helped us gain access to material otherwise inaccessible. We would like to thank Sophia Dege-Müller, Feras Krimsti, Ramez Mikhail, Bereket Okubatsion, and Lev Weitz for helping us clarify certain questions and for suggesting literature. This paper was partly composed with the support of the Swedish Research Council (2017–01630).

[2] The Sinai region was known as "Palaestina Tertia" or "Palaestina Salutaris" in late antiquity, which is why we refer to Saint Catherine's Monastery as a "Palestinian" monastery as well. The material presented here amply evinces the strong ties between the Sinai and the Judean Desert monasteries.

[3] For studies of such networks, see Griffith, "Anthony David"; Schachner, "Book Production"; Rapp, "From the Holy City."

[4] Cf. Treu, "Schreibernotizen," p. 314; Nongbri, *God's Library*, p. 47; Bausi et al. (eds), *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies*, p. 205. For the Arabic tradition, see Binggeli, "Early Christian Graeco-Arabica."

[5] We have highlighted the need for thoroughgoing studies of Christian Arabic scribality in an earlier publication; see Gibson, et al, "Biblia Arabica," pp. 70–72. See also Samir, "La tradition arabe chrétienne," pp. 46–47.

CE Christian Arabic manuscript corpus preserves a colophon (which again roughly matches the numbers of Greek Byzantine manuscripts).[6] For our study, we have singled out six colophons from five manuscripts produced at the Monastery of Saint Chariton, six colophons from five manuscripts produced at the Monastery at Saint Saba, and eight colophons found in six manuscripts produced at Saint Catherine's Monastery. Some of these colophons have already been published, translated, and discussed in previous research. What is lacking, however, is a study that looks at this material comparatively, identifying and categorizing the vocabulary of early Christian Arabic colophons, their stylistic conventions, as well as the type of factoids they contain.[7] One of the advantages of a comparative approach is that it allows us to analyze this material statistically. Most importantly, however, it brings to the fore the microhistorical significance of colophons, which offer the spatiotemporal and prosopographical coordinates for the contextualisation of early Christian Arabic manuscript production. To some extent, a comparative study also provides us with clues, albeit suggestive in nature, as to the historical and scribal context of manuscripts that lack paratextual information concerning their production. In many cases, viewing a significant number of colophons together also allows us to understand and reconstruct parts of colophons that are lost due to damage or hard to decipher.

For our study, we have revisited the texts of the colophons either *de visu* or by means of digital reproductions. In one case (SANF Parch. 3),[8] we had to rely entirely on transcriptions, mainly because of the manuscript's fragile state of preservation.[9] Today the manuscripts from which we have taken our source material are

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[6] Treu, "Schreibernotizen", p. 310. For Christian Arabic manuscripts there is no reliable quantitative data. André Binggeli estimated the number of shelfmarks of Christian Arabic parchment manuscripts to ca. 200; cf. Binggeli, "Early Christian Graeco-Arabica," p. 231. This number has to be adjusted for two reasons. First, we have to take into account that sometimes up to seven shelfmarks designate *membra disiecta* of one and the same original codex. Second, from 920 CE onwards paper becomes increasingly used as writing support; cf. Hjälm, "Paleographical Study," pp. 76–77. Against this background, we tentatively estimate that the corpus of pre-1000 CE Christian Arabic manuscripts amounts to ca. 300–400 codicological units.

[7] A pioneering study was published by Gérard Troupeau in 1997. Troupeau based his typology of Christian Arabic manuscripts on 215 manuscripts from the collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris. This corpus, however, contained only one 10th-century CE manuscript. See Troupeau, "Les colophons."

[8] For a key to the abbreviations of shelfmarks we use here, see the Appendix.

[9] It is noteworthy that such a comparatively large number of colophons has survived more than one thousand years of vicissitudes. Colophons are typically found at a place in the manuscripts, which is liable to get detached from the binding due to the disintegration of the binding material. Such loose folios were kept with their mother codices or kept in others; sometimes they were themselves used to reinforce the binding. Especially in the 19th century, an extreme dispersion of *membra disiecta* of Christian Arabic (and other Eastern Christian)

housed at a number of different institutions. More than half of them belong to the collection of Saint Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai. Another five originally belonged to this collection as well. There is only one manuscript in our corpus (BL Or. 4950), for which not enough information on provenance could be obtained so as to determine if it came to Europe via Sinai or some other place. This strong tie to Sinai confirms André Binggeli's assessment that "we are seeing the early Christian Arabic manuscript production, prior to the 11th century, through a particular prism," namely the "network of cultural relations that the monastery of Mount Sinai had built in the Middle East during this period."[10] This also means that all manuscripts included in this study are, to the best of our knowledge, the product of Arabized Orthodox Christians, who were in formal communion with Constantinople and are traditionally called "Melkites" (today this designation refers to Roman Catholic Christians following the Byzantine rite, which is why it is commonly substituted by the designation "*Rūm*-Orthodox"). The Melkite or *Rūm*-Orthodox community was among the first Christian groups to adopt Arabic for its religious affairs on a larger scale, a fact that is clearly mirrored in the manuscripts it produced.[11] The Greek and Syriac cultural and linguistic backgrounds of this community shine through also in the conventions and language of the manuscripts discussed here. Hence, even though the material analyzed here is representative of only a small fraction of the Christian Arabic manuscript tradition as a whole, it is also characteristic of it in the sense that it is clearly embedded in a wider Eastern Christian context.

2 Analyzing Colophons: Some Methodological Preliminaries

Definitions of the term "colophon" are not uncontested. As indicated above, we proceed here from a definition that understands colophons as paratextual units of manuscripts, authored by a person involved in the copying of those manuscripts (typically the scribe), providing at least one – but ideally more than one – unit of factual information (factoid), i.e. personal names of those involved in the produc-

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manuscripts took place. Cf. e.g. the remarks in Gibson, *Catalogue of the Arabic Mss.*, p. viii: "Most of the books had not only lost their title-pages, but their last leaves as well, so that it was not possible to find their dates. One is ashamed to think that some scholar in former years must have abused the hospitality of the monks, and that a choice collection of title-pages may be found in some European library."

[10] Binggeli, "Early Christian Graeco-Arabica," p. 231.

[11] Besides *Rūm*-Orthodox Christians, East Syriac communities seem to be connected to the early corpus of Arabic Bible translations; cf. Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, p. 67. See there also his observations that non-literal translation techniques, such as alternate renderings, may be connected to the East Syriac communities. For an overview of such features in the early corpus, see Hjälm, *Christian Arabic Versions of Daniel*, pp. 377–398. For possible East Syriac influence on early Arabic Bible translations, see also Brock, "A Neglected Witness."

tion of the manuscripts, as well as the place or date of its production.[12] It is exactly this sort of information, which makes colophons important documentary sources. At least when it comes to the Christian Arabic manuscript tradition, the data colophons provide regarding the early manuscript production and its socio-cultural context is not otherwise accessible, except by means of other sorts of paratexts found in manuscripts (e.g. scribal notes, ownership notes, bequest statements, book curses, etc.).[13]

Colophons are attested across all pre-modern Eastern Christian manuscript cultures. Apart from the articles collected in the present volume, exemplary studies have been conducted by Avedis Sanjian and Anna Sirinian for Armenian,[14] Gérard Troupeau and Feras Krimsti for Christian Arabic,[15] Kurt Treu for Byzantine,[16] Arnold van Lantschoot and more recently Hugo Lundhaug, Lance Jenott, and Agostino Soldati for Coptic,[17] Amsalu Tefera, Marilyn Heldman, Monica Devens, Claire Bosc-Tiessé, Marie-Laure Derat, and Getachew Haile for Ethiopic,[18] Adam McCollum for Georgian,[19] and Heleen Murre-van den Bergh for Syriac colophons.[20] Just as in the present case, these studies single out well-defined sets of colophons, which may concur with temporal or geographical parameters or represent samples

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[12] Hence, colophons are sometimes similar to *explicits* in that they represent "the place (or places) in a manuscript where the scribe steps out from his copying work and speaks as an extra"; see McCollum, "Notes and Colophons," p. 113. *Explicits* formally conclude a text, but typically do not contain factoids. Colophons are normally found at the first or last folio of a manuscript. Our corpus, however, also includes samples of colophons found in between textual units.

[13] We have, for instance, no letter exchanges of scribes discussing aspects of manuscript production, as we have in the Coptic tradition; see e.g. Kotsifou, "Books and Book Production in Byzantine Egypt." There are also no book lists of professional scribes and book sellers of the kind attested in the Cairo Genizah; see the lists collected in Allony, *The Jewish Library in the Middle Ages* (in Hebrew). See also Frenkel, "Book lists from the Cairo Genizah."

[14] Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts*; Sirinian, "On the Historical and Literary Value."

[15] Troupeau, "Les colophons;" Krimsti, "Signatures of Authority."

[16] Treu, " Schreibernotizen."

[17] van Lanschoot, *Recueil des colophons*; Ludhaug and Jenott, "Production, Distribution and Ownership"; Soldati, "Some Remarks."

[18] Tefera, "Colophonic Reflections"; Heldman and Devens, "The Four Gospels of Däbrä Märʿar"; Haile, "The Marginal Notes." See also Bosc-Tiessé and Derat, "Authority in Bəgwəna-Lasta."

[19] McCollum, "Notes and Colophons."

[20] Murre-van den Bergh, "'I the Weak Scribe'"; eadem, *Scribes and Scriptures*, Ch. 3. Many useful observations on colophons can also be found in the sections devoted to scribes in the codicological part of Bausi et al., *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies*. Adam McCollum has also devoted a number of blogs to colophons in Eastern Christian manuscripts on <https://hmmlorientalia.wordpress.com/>.

of a specific collection. We have chosen to focus on Christian Arabic colophons written before 1000 CE, i.e. a time frame during which the use of colophons in Christian Arabic manuscripts starts to emerge. We further decided to limit our corpus geographically to colophons explicitly mentioning one of the three Palestinian monasteries of Saint Chariton, Saint Sabas, and Saint Catherine in order to be able to reach significant results with respect to these three important centers of early Christian Arabic manuscript production.

Some of the studies mentioned above have already developed typologies in order to assess their material.[21] The most thorough classification of colophons thus far, however, was devised by Markus Schiegg who mainly focused on medieval European colophons, but also took into account colophons of pre-modern Eastern manuscript traditions.[22] Given the multi-cultural setting of the Palestinian monasteries and other sorts of inter-cultural exchange that took place especially in the vicinity of popular pilgrimage sites in Syria-Palestine and the Sinai, Schiegg's categories provide proper tools of analysis for our corpus.

Schiegg offers three categories of classifications: (1) *formal classification*, which takes into consideration the length, language, and visual presentation of colophons; (2) *contextual classification*, which attends to the manuscript context of the colophons (correspondence between colophon and text types, script, language of texts, etc.); (3) *functional classification*, which aims at identifying scribal intentions through linguistic Speech Act Theory, identifying four types of relevant illocutions: (a) *assertives* provide factual information; (b) *expressives* display the scribe's emotions and attitudes towards his work; (c) *directives* aim at making the reader do something, typically pray for the scribe; (d) *declaratives* attempt to change the state of the world, mostly through curses, but also by signaling how the manuscript is supposed to be handled.[23]

Here, we have singled out those features that seemed most relevant for our corpus. In the following, we will first attend to each subset of our corpus and mainly focus on *formal* and *functional* aspects. Even though the contents of the respective manuscripts will be mentioned, we will not make use of the *contextual* category, as we were not able to detect any relation between text types and the language or script employed in colophons. Related to that, we will not discuss in any detail the codicological features of the manuscripts in which the colophons are found, nor will we address issues of provenance. The reader is referred to the accompanying edition, translation, and commentary of our texts, where these questions are discussed.

The main *functional* features we discuss are *directives* and *expressives*. The two features are sometimes difficult to keep apart since they may occur in one and the

[21] Cf. e.g. Troupeau, "Les colophons;" McCollum, "Notes and Colophons;" Soldati, "Some Remarks."

[22] Schiegg, "Scribe's Voices."

[23] Schiegg, "Scribe's Voices," p. 141.

same sentence and be interrelated depending on the type of sentence (e.g. in conditional sentences). Thus, we define these categories here as depending on the grammatical person invoked. If the deity or saints are invoked, the speech act normally has the function of a wish ("may this happen"), even when included in a conditional sentence ("if you do this, may God reward you"), and is as such defined here as an *expressive*. In contrast, a *directive* is directed towards the human reader, typically asking him or her to pray for the scribe. *Declaratives* are rare in our corpus and will be discussed only with respect to one Sinaitic colophon (see section 5.4 below). *Assertive* features are discussed mainly in the sections on datation as well as in a section, which will offer some general observations (section 6). In each subset, we will also discuss paleographical features. One aim of these discussions, which are not directly related to colophon typology, is to collect criteria that may be used, at least with some probability, to connect anonymous colophons and manuscripts without colophons to one of the workshops of the three Palestinian monasteries.

3 COLOPHONS FROM SAINT CHARITON

The Monastery of Saint Chariton, located in the Tekoa Valley east of Jerusalem, was one of the founding places of Palestinian monasticism, going back to its instigator Chariton the Confessor in the fourth century CE.[24] The venerability of this site is expressed also in our colophon corpus where scribes refer to it as the "Old Lavra" (*al-sīq al-ʿatīq*), mirroring the Greek παλαιά λαύρα, or as the "most ancient of lavras" (*qadīm al-asyāq*).[25] A "lavra" (lit. "alley, lane") is a monastic setting, which typically emerged from a cluster of hermits' cells. The Arabic term for "lavra," *sīq*, probably goes back to Greek σηκός ("enclosure"), though some authors have connected it to Syriac *šūqā*, which has the same meaning as λαύρα, but was apparently also used to render σηκός.[26] Both the Monastery of Saint Chariton and the Monastery of Saint Sabas are called *sīq* by our scribes, while the Monastery of Saint Catherine is referred to by the term *dayr* ("convent, cloister"). Since Catherine of Alexandria only came to be adopted as the patron saint of the Sinai monastery from the 13th century CE onwards, she does not occur in our colophons. By contrast, the scribes of Saint Chariton and Saint Sabas refer to their places of activity as *sīq Mār(y) Ḫarīṭun* and *sīq Mār(y) Sābā*. The honorific title *Mār(y)* is clearly adapted from Syriac, lit. "my lord."[27]

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[24] On Saint Chariton and his monastic foundations, see Bins, *Ascetics and Ambassadors of Christ*, pp. 45–47; Hirschfeld, "The Monastery of Chariton"; Hamilton and Jotischky, *Latin and Greek Monasticism*, p. 309.

[25] Cf. SA 75, f. 222r:14.

[26] Cf. de Goeje, "Sīq;" Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, s.v. *šūqā*.

[27] As in Syriac, the final *yāʾ* was probably not pronounced (hence we also find *Mār* without final *yāʾ*).

Among the ca. 40 Christian Arabic colophons dated or datable to the ninth and tenth centuries CE, four colophons in four manuscripts explicitly mention the Monastery of Saint Chariton. One of these is written by the scribe Iṣṭāfanā b. Ḥakam al-Ramlī (or Stephen of Ramla) who also left a second colophon in the same manuscript as well a separate colophon in another copy. Neither of the latter two mention the monastery. Still, we have included these two colophons here, as their connection to Saint Chariton is validated through the scribe's name.

1. **BL Or. 4950, f. 197v**
   Contents: theology; date: 876/7 CE; scribe: Stephen of Ramla.
2. **BL Or. 4950, f. 237r–v**
   Contents: see above; date: not specified (see above); scribe: Stephen of Ramla.
3. **SA 72, f. 118v**
   Contents: gospels, theology; date: 897 CE; scribe: Stephen of Ramla.
4. **SA 75, f. 222r**
   Contents: gospels; date: not specified (ca. late 9th c. CE); scribe: not specified.
5. **SANF Parch. 3**
   Contents: patristic texts; date: lacunose, ca. 858–67 CE; scribe: name illegible.
6. **SANF Parch. 7, f. 127v**
   Contents: gospels; date: 901/2 CE; scribe: Mīḫāʾīl al-šammās (or Michael the Deacon).

Like the Sabaitic and Sinaitic colophons, the Charitonian colophons disclose only a few names of scribes. Their activity, however, is important evidence for the occupation of the monastery in the second half of the ninth and early tenth century CE and the need for Arabic-language books, whether they were used by people in the area or exported to other regions.[28] The manuscripts they copied contain theological works (BL Or. 4950), translations of the Gospels (SA 72, SA 75, SANF Parch. 7), and of patristic literature (SANF Parch. 3). Their colophons have certain features in common, which we will discuss below. These may not be exclusive to Charitonian scribes, but they are certainly typical of them.

3.1 Formal Features

The length of the colophons varies between eight and sixteen lines. This may be due to the amount of available space left on the folio page, but at least in one case the colophon stretches over two pages (BL Or. 4950, f. 237r–v). The amount of

[28] Hamilton and Jotischky, *Latin and Greek Monasticism*, p. 309; Griffith, "Stephen of Ramlah," p. 40; idem, "Anthony David of Baghdad," p. 16. See also Hjälm, "From Palestine to Damascus to Berlin."

words varies between ca. 30 and 140, which means that scribes to some extent decided whether to compose verbose or concise colophons. On average, the Charitonian colophons fill up about half a manuscript page.

It is noteworthy that all six colophons bear decorations. BL Or. 4950, f. 197v uses a floral ornament, consisting of four petals with black-brown outlines and red filling, loosely suggesting the shape of a cross, which is also used as a textual divider. The decoration marks the beginning of the colophon and is repeated three times below it in a horizontal line to mark the end of the textual unit. The colophon of SA 75 is separated from the preceding text by a horizontal line of nine similarly cross-shaped ornaments. These are designed even more frugally, consisting of five dots each with one dot in the middle in red and the rest in black-brown ink or vice versa. Most common are ribands, likewise colored in black-brown and red ink (BL Or. 4950, f. 237r–v; SA 72; SANF Parch. 7). They either exhibit some sort of braid pattern (drawn in straight or curved lines) or floral ornament. In each case, their horizontal arrangement serves to navigate the reader's eye and indicate the end of a textual unit.

3.2 Functional Features

The order of information provided in the colophons does not adhere to any specific template, not even when composed by the same scribe, as in the case of Stephen of Ramla who penned half of the Charitonian colophons. Assertives are often used at the beginning of a colophon, followed by expressive and directive statements, but they may also appear in the middle of the text of the colophon. Directives and expressives follow similar patterns, but are never mechanically reproduced as ready set phrases. Quite often, an expressive wish forms the apodosis of a directive statement. The basic content of directives across our corpus is to implore readers to pray for mercy on behalf of the scribe and not forget him (see the table below). In principle, the content of expressives is to wish for blessings on behalf of the reader and, in some cases, for the entire church (BL Or. 4950, f. 237r–v; SA 75). Saint Mary and Saint John are invoked by Stephen of Ramla in the colophon of SA 72, whereas Michael the Deacon mentions Mary only. It is noteworthy that Saint Chariton is never invoked in these colophons, especially in the light of the colophons from Saint Sabas' Monastery, which sporadically mention the monastery's patron saint (see section 3 below). Most notably, large portions of the Charitonian colophons are made up of a quotation from Matthew 25:34, which will be dealt with in section 3.2 below.

The following table shows the basic structure of directives, a functional feature which aims at making the reader do something. In our case, directives speak to the reader directly ("if you read") or indirectly ("whoever reads") and combine this address with a request not to forget the scribe. Even though this is a more generic expression, it has a clearly discernible communal dimension implying that someone is praying for the scribe as long as the manuscript is in use (a sort of spiritual payoff of the scribe's labor). Sometimes, the scribe also explicitly uses verbs of request (e.g. *ṭalaba*).

Ms.	*Trans.*	*Text*
BL Or. 4950, f. 197v	When **you read**, **remember** me, **do not** (17) **forget** [me] and God will not forget you and place you at his right …	*iḏā anta* ***qaraʾta fa-uḏkurnī lā*** (17) ***tansā*** *lā nasiyaka Allāh wa-aqāmaka ʿan yamīnihi …*
BL Or. 4950, f. 237r–v	<**He asks of**> (17) **the one who reads** in this volume to <invoke God in my (?) favor and that> God may give him mercy, forgiveness and <…> (19) burdened with trespasses. **Do not forget** [me], my brother, and <God will not> forget <you and place you> (20) at his right …	*wa-<****huwa yasʾalu***> (17) ***man qaraʾa*** *fī hāḏā l-muṣḥaf an yad<ʿū lī* (?) (18) *wa-an> yahaba Allāh lī raḥma wa-maġfira wa-<…>* (19) *<al-ṯaqī>l bi-l-ḏunūb* ***lā yansā*** [sic!] *yā aḫī lā nasiya<ka Allāh wa-aqāmaka>* (20) *ʿan yamīnihi …*
SA 72	When **you read** [this], my brother, **remember** me [and] (14) may God remember you and place you at his right … **Do not forget** me (18), my brother, [and] God will not forget you …	*iḏā anta* ***qaraʾta*** *yā aḫī* ***uḏkurnī*** *ḏakaraka* (14) *Allāh wa-aqāmaka ʿan yamīnihi …* ***lā tansā****nī* (18) *yā aḫī lā nasiyaka Allāh …*
SANF Parch. 7	**He requests** of everyone (20) **who read** in it that he implores God on his behalf to forgive his many sins and (21) trespasses … **Do not forget to say** of the scribe: "may God have mercy on you" (24) and place you at his right …	*wa-****huwa yaṭlubu*** *ilā kull* (20) ***man qaraʾa*** *fīhi yabtahilu ilā Allāh an yaġfira lahu ḫaṭāyāhu* (21) *wa-ḏunūbahu al-kaṯīra …* ***lā tansā*** *turaḥḥimu ʿalā l-kātib raḥimaka Allāh* (24) *wa-aqāmaka ʿan yamīnihi …*

As noted above, an expressive displays the writer's emotions, in our case a wish for something to happen. Even though the phrase is often marked in the indicative mood, it has a nuance of jussive in the sense that the response is up to the divine.

As such, it may serve as the apodosis of a directive statement as demonstrated in the table above. Additional examples are provided below.

Ms.	*Trans.*	*Text*
BL Or. 4950, f. 197v	**May this be** [so] for us by the intercession of the pure **Saint Mary (21) and Saint John and [by] the prayers of all the righteous fathers,** amen and amen.	*yakūnu lanā ḏālika bi-šafāʿat Martmaryam al-ṭāhira* (21) *wa-Mār(y) Yuḥannā wa-ṣalawāt ǧamīʿ al-ābāʾ al-abrār āmīn wa-āmīn*
BL Or. 4950, f. 237v	**May this be** [so] for all the children of the universal, holy, and orthodox church of God (4), who, according to true faith, believe (5) in Jesus Christ to whom belongs glory with his Father (6) and his Holy Spirit, for ever, amen and amen.	*yakūnu ḏālika li-ǧamīʿ banī kanīsat Allāh* (4) *al-<ǧāmiʿa al-muqaddasa> al-urṯuduksiyya al-muʾmina ʿalā amānat* (5) *Yasūʿ al-masīḥ allaḏī lahu al-maǧd maʿa abīhi* (6) *wa-<maʿa rūḥi>hi ilā l-abad āmīn wa-āmīn*
SA 72	**May God have mercy** on the one who read (25) and [the one who] wrote and may he give understanding and [ability] to keep the commandments to the one who acquires [it]. Amen.	*raḥima Allāh man qaraʾa* (25) *wa-kataba wa-wahaba al-muqtanī al-fahm wa-ḥifẓ li-l-waṣāyā āmīn*
SA 75	**May the Lord keep us** in his prayers (16) and his intercession and [so also] all of the sons of the universal, luminous, (17) orthodox, pure, and holy church … **May God praise you** with what has been written and place you (19) at his right [side] and make you hear the sweet, beau-	*yaḥfaẓunā al-rabb bi-ṣalawātihi* (16) *wa-šafāʿatihi wa-li-ǧamīʿ banī l-kanīsa al-ǧāmiʿa al-munīra* (17) *al-urṯuḏuksiyya al-ṭāhira al-muqaddasa … yuhalliluka Allāh li-mā kutiba wa-aqāmaka* (19) *ʿan yamīnihi wa-asmaʿaka al-ṣawt al-ḥulw al-bahīy al-bahīǧ … yakūnu laka ḏālika wa-lī anā l-miskīn* (22) *bi-ṣalawāt Martmaryam*

	tiful, and delightful voice … **May this be** [so] for you and me – I the poor one – (22) by the prayers of **Saint Mary and Saint John and all the saints**, amen.	*wa-Mārī Yuḥannā wa-ǧamiʿ al-qiddīsīn āmīn*
SANF Parch. 7	(21) **May God hear** everyone who reads and says "amen" …	(21) *samiʿa Allāh mimman qaraʾa wa-man qāla āmīn* …

3.3 Biblical Quotation

A noteworthy feature of the colophons produced by Charitonian scribes is the often used reference to Matthew 25:34. The biblical quotation is embedded in the directive (as part of a conditional sentence) or the expressive part of the colophon. It appears in both colophons of BL Or. 4950 as well as in SA 72, all of which were written by Stephen of Ramla. But it also occurs in the anonymous colophon of SA 75. SANF Parch. 7, copied by Michael the Deacon, arguably hints at it by way of the typical introductory phrase. Hence, all colophons authored by scribes active at Saint Chariton, except perhaps for SANF Parch. 3, which we were not able to access, include the reference.

The typical introductory phrase, which is not part of the biblical quotation itself, begins with "may [God] make you hear this voice…" (*asmaʿaka ḏālika al-ṣawt*).[29] Like SANF Parch. 7, the colophons of BMCL BV 69b and BNU Or. 4225a, produced at Saint Catherine's Monastery, seem to hint at the passage. Yet the fuller form, where the biblical text is provided in length, is typical only of the Charitonian colophons and might be considered a signature trait of its Christian Arabic scribal workshop.

3.4 Datation

If we turn to the assertive parts of the colophons, a striking feature of colophons authored at the Monastery of Saint Chariton is the use of multiple calendric systems. In the first colophon of BL Or. 4950, Stephen of Ramla refers to three systems: (1) the World Era;[30] (2) the Alexandrian Era, by which is meant the Seleucid

[29] Cf. BL Or. 4950, f. 197v:17–18; BL Or. 4950, f. 237r:20; SA 72, f. 118v:14; SA 75, f. 222r:19.

[30] On the two different Alexandrian World Eras, that of Panodoros (starting in August–September 5493 BC) and that of Annianos (starting in March 5492 BC), see Swanson, "Some Considerations," pp. 130–131. See in this article also other relevant calculation systems.

Era; (3) the Muslim Hijra calendar. In SA 72, the same scribe uses a World Era date and a Hijra date and provides the year both written out in Arabic and in Greek numerals. Neither the second colophon of BL Or. 4950 nor that in SA 75 are dated. SANF Parch. 3 uses the World Era. In SANF Parch. 7, however, which seems to be the youngest Charitonian colophon in our corpus, only the Hijra calendar is used. The use of multiple systems and/or the World Era calendar is thus used only in the earliest dated manuscripts from Saint Chariton. Though various calendars continued to be used in other material, our colophons may bear witness to a change in the perception of what was the public measure of time relevant to relate to.

It appears that the term for "world era" was translated into Arabic *ad hoc* by the scribes, which would explain its various forms in the colophons. In BL Or. 4950, Stephen of Ramla refers to it as (*ḥisāb*) *sinī l-dunyā* and in SA 72 as (*ḥisāb*) *sinī l-ʿālam*. In both cases, he uses the genitive construction expected in Classical Arabic (genitive *sinīn* of *sinūn* with dropped end-*nūn* in construct state). The scribe of SANF Parch. 3 uses both terms, clearly understood as synonyms: *sinīn al-dunyā* and *sinīn al-ʿālam*. Yet, as opposed to Stephen of Ramla, he uses a non-Classical genitive construction, where the end-*nūn* is retained.

There is a third translation of the term "world era," which is found outside of Saint Chariton. In two signed manuscripts (BNF Ar. 6725c, f. 11r and SA 309, f. 217r), the scribe Dawīd al-ʿAsqalānī (David of Askalon) who was active in the church of the Anastasis in Jerusalem, uses the Arabic expression (*min*) *sinī Ādam*. The same term is used in the colophon of SG 34b, produced at the Monastery of Saint Sabas. Whereas SG 34b uses the World Era calendar next to the Hijra calendar, David of Askalon only uses World Era datation. Hence, SG 34b is one of the few manuscripts outside Saint Chariton, which also uses a multiple calendric system. This observation entails that many, but by no means all, manuscripts, in which the scribe uses multiple calendars, are connected to Saint Chariton.

It should also be mentioned that Stephen of Ramla employs month names according to different calendars. In the first colophon of BL Or. 4950, the first day of December (ذقبرس) is provided according to the Roman calendar and the month Rabīʿ al-Awwal according to the Hijra calendar. In SA 72, he refers to "the months of the non-Arabs (*ašhar al-ʿaǧam*)" when using the first month of Āḏār, i.e. the month names of the Syrian calender, next to the Muslim month Muḥarram. Here he also uses Greek numerals in addition to writing out the year of the World Era date in Arabic letters. It appears that BNU Or. 4225e also refers to months according to two different systems (cf. 5.3), as does the translation note in SANF Parch. 66 (cf. 4.3).

One of the best known colophons from one of the Palestinian monasteries is the anonymous colophon in SANF Parch. 16, which offers yet another translation option for "world era," viz. [*min*] *sinīn al-dahr*. It is used next to the dating "according to the years of the Romans" (*min sinīn al-rūm*) as well as to that of the Hijra

calendar.[31] There are several unclarities regarding the Common Era date of this manuscript and both 859 CE and 873 CE have been suggested as possible interpretations.[32] In any event, even though the place of production is not mentioned, the use of multiple (three) calendars makes it likely that the manuscript was produced at Saint Chariton and that the scribe was an older contemporary of Stephen of Ramla, since both scribes reflect a similar practice in datation according to no less than three systems. With the exception of the early Charitonian scribes, David of Askalon, one scribe from Saint Sabas (SG 34b), and perhaps one from Sinai (BNU Or. 4225e),[33] all early Christian Arabic colophons give dates according to the Hijra calendar (though occasionally using month names from other calendric systems). This also holds of the anonymous colophons of our broader corpus and not just of those mentioning the place of production, which we discuss here.

3.5 Paleographical Features

The handwriting of Stephen of Ramla, Michael the Deacon, and the scribes of SA 75 and SANF Parch. 3 show clear affinities. We will discuss their hands here in some detail in order to evaluate the questions of closer collaboration and whether some sort of workshop style is discernible. What is particularly difficult when examining and comparing the handwritings of specific scribes on a more detailed level is the fact that one and the same scribe not seldom exhibits inconsistency with regard to letter shapes, that the material components of the writing support may affect the writing (format, material, layout, size), and that the quality of digital reproductions (color, lighting, resolution) influences our impression. That said, some observations can nevertheless be made. Methodologically, it is safer to assume that if difference in script is detected, the manuscripts were not copied by the same hand. However, and although difficult to prove, we shall remain open to the idea that scribes sometimes changed certain ways of writing a letter.

In general, the manuscripts written by Stephen of Ramla (BL Or. 4950, SA 72) and SA 75 display great similarity,[34] which becomes even more clear when comparing the colophons authored by the two scribes. Similar expressions used are *wa-kāna kamāl kitābihi*, "the writing of [this book] was completed," or *wa-aqāmaka ʿan yamīnihi wa-asmaʿaka al-ṣawt*, "may he place you at his right [side] and make you hear the voice." If viewed next to each other, the phrases are written in a very similar ductus. However, a notable paleographic difference is that whereas *alif* in

[31] SANF Parch. 16, f. 5r:6–9.

[32] Swanson, "Some Considerations," p. 133.

[33] In BNU Or. 4225e, the scribe active at Saint Catherine's Monastery may have used more than one calendar, referring to "the month of Romans" (*šahr al-rūm*) next to the Muslim month name. Yet, the extremely fragmentary state of the folio does not allow to judge whether he also gave the year in both Muslim and Christian datation.

[34] Hjälm, "Paleographical Study," pp. 56–60.

SA 72 is sometimes curvy, sometimes straight, it is usually straight in SA 75. In addition, in Stephen of Ramla's hand, the tail of final *mīm* leans to the left whereas it leans to the right in SA 75.

The handwriting of the scribe of SANF Parch. 3 also shares many features with the hand of Stephen of Ramla, as noted by Alexander Treiger, including final *mīm*.[35] However, in general, the script of SANF Parch. 3 is less horizontally elongated than in the other manuscripts in the group and exhibits more round forms. The particularly angular shape of *kāf* in Stephen of Ramla's hand exhibits sharper angles and more elongated base lines than what we see in the script of SANF Parch. 3. The latter is also rather similar to the anonymous hand of SA 75. In fact, both SA 75 and SANF Parch. 3 use the expression *al-sīq al-ʿatīq*, "the Old Laura," to refer to Saint Chariton as the place of production. SANF Parch. 3 is a small codex (110–112 x 92–95 mm, 10 lines/page) made for personal use, which sets it apart from all the other manuscripts in our corpus. The size of the manuscript may explain the less elongated shape of letters and limits paleographical comparison. In any event, this important finding shows that Stephen of Ramla, Michael the Deacon, the anonymous scribe of SA 75, and what now might be a fourth person connected to the scribal workshop of Saint Chariton, closely collaborated and produced a substantial number of manuscripts.

SANF Parch. 7, copied by Michael the Deacon, and BL Or. 4950 as well as SA 72, copied by Stephen of Ramla, display clear, often identical letter shapes. In addition, SANF Parch. 7 and SA 72 use identical decorations (see section 3.1 above). This shows that these Charitonian scribes probably shared the same context of training, which makes it difficult to keep their hands apart. In general, however, SANF Parch. 7 displays a less round and smooth impression than Stephen of Ramla's hand. Yet, the most significant difference in letter shapes, in fact, evinces the opposite: Michael the Deacon presents us with a round featured independent *dāl/ḏāl* grapheme, whereas Stephen of Ramla as well as the scribe of SA 75 write an angular *dāl/ḏāl*. Like SA 75, SANF Parch. 7 normally has a straight (not curvy) *alif*. In this connection, the question also arises whether Michael the Deacon is identical to Michael the Priest who signed one of the manuscripts in our Sinaitic corpus, as suggested by Treiger.[36] We will postpone this question to the discussion of the Sinaitic colophons below (section 5.5).

Against the backdrop of these observations, we may turn to a number of manuscripts, which are not part of our corpus, but seem to have been copied by the same scribes just discussed. The anonymous scribe of SA 75 may also have copied SA 431 and the manuscript of which now one fragmented bifolium is preserved in the fly-leaf added to SG 34 (SG 34a; note for instance the way final *mīm* is written).[37] Michael the Deacon's handwriting bears great similarity with the hand that

[35] We thank Alexander Treiger for sharing his thoughts on the matter with us.

[36] Treiger, "Palestinian Origenism," p. 64n71.

[37] Hjälm, "Paleographical Study," pp. 59–60.

copied St. Andrews 14 (and its continuation in CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 140), which preserves one of the theological tracts copied by Stephen of Ramla in BL Or. 4950.[38]

Finally, based both on the similarity in script and the advanced dating system, SANF Parch. 16 (and its *membrum disiectum* SANF Parch. 14) may have been produced at Saint Chariton as already noted. It exhibits the overall angular shape and horizontal extension of the script, typical of Stephen of Ramla's and Michael the Deacon's hands (especially with respect to the *kāf* grapheme) as well as the angular shape of *dāl/ḏāl* of Stephen of Ramla's hand. SANF Parch. 16 exhibits even more sharp angles and straight strokes than the manuscripts surveyed thus far (i.e. only little New Style influence).[39] Most importantly, however, it includes some typically ancient letter forms and precedes the manuscripts produced by Stephen of Ramla as well as the other Charitonian manuscripts in date. For instance, SANF Parch. 16 places one diacritical dot below instead of two dots above the body of *qāf* and final *nūn* resembles the *rāʾ* grapheme.[40]

4 COLOPHONS FROM SAINT SABAS

Even more than the Monastery of Saint Chariton, the Monastery of Saint Sabas, located in the Kidron Valley between Bethlehem and the Dead Sea and founded in the fifth century CE, emerged as one of the most important centers of Palestinian monasticism in late antiquity. As Bernard Hamilton and Andrew Jotischky point out, one "reason for the eminence in which St Sabas was held was the high level of scribal and literary activity in the monastery."[41] This activity is continued in Islamic times and mirrored in the early Christian Arabic manuscript corpus, which testifies to the monastery's importance as a center of translation and manuscript production. In at least two cases, we find a monk from Saint Catherine's Monastery ordering hagiographic books from Saint Sabas (BAV Ar. 71, RNL Ar. N.S. 263 and its *membra disiecta*). This may indicate that Saint Sabas Monastery served as a sort of archive of monastic texts and highlights its role in cultural transfer. Texts pro-

[38] Hjälm, "Lost and Found"; Hoyland, "St Andrews MS. 14." As we have seen above, sharp angles and elongated *kāf* graphemes, which we also find in St. Andrews 14, are typical of both Stephen of Ramla and Michael the Deacon. What makes the script of St. Andrews 14 particularly similar to Michael the Deacon's hand, however, is the round shape of independent dāl/ḏāl.

[39] New Style scripts introduce more curvy features. For the term "New Style," see Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*.

[40] For this reason, Hjälm, "Paleographical Study," pp. 53–54 places SANF Parch. 14/16 in Group A. See there also other manuscripts possibly copied by the same scribe. On the Christian Arabic scribal convention of writing *qāf* with one dot below the body of the letter, see Monferrer-Sala, "Once Again on the Earliest Arabic Apology."

[41] Hamilton and Jotischky, *Latin and Greek Monasticism*, p. 310.

duced at this monastery have for instance been found in Damascus.[42] The monastery, of course, was not only a center of Christian learning, but also of ascetic spirituality. As indicated above, the scribes from Saint Sabas in our corpus use the expression *sīq Mār(y) Sābā* (or *sīq al-qiddīs Mār Sābā/sīq Mār Sābā al-qiddīs*) to refer to their place of activity. But they also employ terms like *barriyyat Mār Sābā al-qiddīs* ("the desert of the holy Saint Sabas") or *barriyyat bait al-maqdis* ("the desert of Jerusalem") – Saint Sabas was himself known as the "star of the desert" (*kawkab al-barriyya*).[43] The term *barriyya* ("wilderness, back country, desert"), which is still in use today to refer to the region, is probably related to Greek ἐρημία, which, in a monastic context, not only refers to features of the landscape, but also to the sort of asceticism practiced in the desert. The colophons explicitly mentioning the Monastery of Saint Sabas are the following:

1. **BAV Ar. 71, f. 236r**
   Contents: monastic literature; date: 885 CE; scribe: Anṭūna Dawūd b. Sulaymān al-Baġdādī (Anthony David of Baghdad).
2. **RNL Ar. N.S. 263, f. 5v**
   Contents: monastic literature; date: 885/6 CE; scribe: Anthony David of Baghdad.
3. **LUB Cod. Gr. 2, f. 17r**
   Membrum disiectum of SANF Parch. 66 below. Contents: see below; date: not specified (see below); scribe: Ḏawīḏ al-Ḥimṣī al-Naǧǧār (David of Homs the Carpenter)
4. **SANF Parch. 40, f. 26r**
   Contents: Acts; date: not specified (ca. 9th c. CE); scribe: name illegible.
5. **SANF Parch. 66, f. 4v**
   Contents: hagiography; date: not specified (early 10th c. CE); scribe: David of Homs
6. **SG 34b, f. 218r**
   Contents: Greek-Arabic Psalter; date: 929/30 CE; scribe: not specified.

The colophon of SANF Parch. 40, which was discovered in 2017 by Vevian Zaki, is the most recent addition to the early Christian Arabic colophon corpus. Due to the fragmentary state of preservation of the manuscript, the scribe's name is no longer legible (M[…]ʿ[…] is all we have). The only name of a Christian Arabic scribe we can connect to the monastery with certainty in the 9th/10th century CE is that of Anthony David of Baghdad to whom Sidney Griffith devoted a study in the late 1980s.[44] The colophon of SANF Parch. 66 does not refer to the Monastery of Saint Sabas as the place of production, but as the location of the manuscript's commissioner. However, as argued by André Binggeli, the manuscript was very likely pro-

[42] Hjälm, "From Palestine to Damascus to Berlin."
[43] Cf. Fleischer, *Kleinere Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 380.
[44] Griffith, "Anthony David."

duced at Saint Sabas as well, since it was determined for internal use within the monastery.[45] Hence, David of Homs was probably another monk working at Saint Sabas, active about one generation after Anthony David of Baghdad. SANF Parch. 66 and LUB Cod. Gr. 2 (also known as Tichendorf Rescriptus II) are two *membra disiecta* of the same original codex. LUB Cod. Gr. 2 does not mention Saint Sabas, but since we know the scribe, we include it here. All the above manuscripts transmit typically monastic literature, such as hagiography and homilies (BAV Ar. 71, RNL Ar. N.S. 263, SANF Parch. 66) as well as bible translations (SANF Parch. 40, SG 34b).

4.1 Formal Features

The Sabaitic colophons vary between 5 and 13 lines in length. One of them is found in a bilingual Greek-Arabic Psalter (SG 34b) and written at the end of the right Arabic column, continuing two lines under the left Greek column. In this case, the scribe apparently did not carefully plan the amount of space needed for the colophon. Again, we find rather verbose texts next to crisp formulations (cf. SANF Parch. 40 and LUB Cod. Gr. 2). Generally, however, the Sabaitic colophons tend to take up more space than those from Saint Chariton. At least in three cases (BAV Ar. 71, RNL Ar. N.S. 263, SANF Parch. 66), the colophon covers more than two thirds of the manuscript page.

Not all colophons from Saint Sabas' Monastery bear decorations. In the Greek-Arabic Psalter, the only feature that sets the colophon apart from the rest of the text is the use of red ink. In SANF Parch. 66, the scribe makes ample use of textual dividers in the shape of red circles with a black dot in the middle as well as five dots arranged in the shape of a cross. They do not, however, serve the function of making the colophon visually distinct from the rest of the text. The remaining four colophons are decorated. In SANF Parch. 40, where the colophon is preserved at the end of a fragmented folio (ca. ¾ text loss), the decoration is simple, but effective: under the last line of writing runs a straight horizontal line, which is disrupted at regular intervals by two short dabs in the shape of inverted commas. Below the straight lines clusters of four dots, which also serve as textual dividers above, run in a parallel horizontal line. Both the text of the colophon as well as the decoration are executed in red ink. In LUB Cod. Gr. 2, the colophon is found at the bottom of the page, which is formally concluded with a horizontal riband in black-brown and red ink. Above this decoration and beneath the text of the colophon, there is a peculiar decorative feature arranged horizontally and in repetition, which also serves as a textual divider in the text above. It consists of three black dots on the left and one black dot in a red circle on the right, which are connected by what looks like a curved arrow with a red head. The two colophons authored by Anthony David of Baghdad are carefully planned. They are written in red ink with diacritical marks

[45] Binggeli, "Les trois David," pp. 102–104.

in black-brown ink. The decorations are arranged as a frame around the text of the colophons and exhibit several elements. In RNL Ar. N.S. 263, the frame consists of connected horizontal and vertical ribands in a simplified braid pattern or zigzag design.[46] The same design is used in BAV Ar. 71, but only above the text of the colophon in order to separate it from the preceding text. Below the riband runs a horizontal line of cross-shaped dot arrangements, which also make up the vertical parts and the lower horizontal part of the frame (the outer left margin of the folio is not preserved, but it very likely exhibited the same design).

4.2 Functional Features

Like in the Charitonian colophons, the arrangement of factoids (assertives), directives, and expressives in the Sabaitic colophons is rather loose and not even Anthony David of Baghdad's two texts are completely identical. Both begin with factoids relating to scribe, place and commissioner, and close the colophons with the date of production. In between the assertives, directives and expressives are included, yet not in the same order. David of Homs's colophon is longer and more complex, especially since it adds a second expressive relating to the commissioner of the manuscript. SG 34b dispenses with any directive speech as does what little is legible in SANF Parch. 40.

As noted above, expressives are defined in this study as addressing divine realities or saints, which basically turn such phrases into wishes. Directives are directed at the readers of the manuscript, typically asking them to pray to God for mercy on behalf of the scribe. There is not much to be said about the small amount of directives in the Sabaitic colophons, save that Anthony David of Baghdad uses the two verbs "ask" (*saʾala*) and "request" (*ṭalaba*) and that David of Homs's elaborate directive invokes Christ's love, seemingly twice, and that he, like the Charitonian monks, asks not to be forgotten.

Ms.	*Trans.*	*Text*
BAV Ar. 71, f. 236r	(8) … And **I,** the weak sinner who wrote it, **ask** (9) and **requests** of everyone **who reads** in it about the Holy Fathers (10) and others **to re-**	(8) … *wa-**anā** l-ḫāṭiʾ al-ḍaʿīf allaḏī katabahu **asʾalu*** (9) *wa-**aṭlubu** ilā kull **man qaraʾa** fīhi min al-abbahāt al-qiddīsīn* (10) *wa-ġayrihim an **yaṭlubū** wa-**yasʾalū** Yasūʿ al-*

[46] Above the frame, there is a black cross with red dots in its four angles. The same design is repeated three times in a horizontal row within the frame below the text of the colophon. After the first and second cross, one reads in black-brown ink: "may God forgive the one who wrote" (*ġafara Allāh li-man kataba*). The text appears to be part of the decoration of the colophon, but is written in a different hand and was, therefore, possibly added later.

	quest of and **ask** Jesus Christ, our God (11) and saviour, to forgive my many sins and tresspasses …	*Masīḥ ilāhanā* (11) *wa-muḫalliṣanā an yaġfira ḫaṭāyāya wa-ḏunūbī l-kaṯīra …*
RNL Ar. N.S. 263, f. 5v	(8) … And **I,** the poor sinner who (9) wrote this volume, **ask of all who read in it and request** of them (10) that they pray for me and **ask Christ** for forgiveness of my sins …	(8) … *wa-**anā** l-ḫāṭiʾ al-miskīn allaḏī* (9) *kataba hāḏā l-muṣḥaf **asʾalu** li-kull man qaraʾa fīhi wa-**aṭlubu** ilayhi* (10) *an **yaṣliya*** [sic!]*ʿalaya **wa-yasʾalu al-Masīḥ** fī ġufrān ḫaṭāyāya …*
LUB Cod. Gr. 2	(20) **He asks everyone who reads** this volume to pray for him for mercy and forgiveness, for the sake (21) of the love of Christ, our God and Lord.	(20) ***wa-yasʾalu kull man qaraʾa** hāḏā l-muṣḥaf an yadʿū lahu bi-l-raḥmat wa-l-maġfira min aǧ<l>* (21) *ḥubb al-Masīḥ ilāhinā wa-sayyidinā*
SANF Parch. 66	(13) He makes *metanoia*[47] and kisses the feet of **everyone who reads** this volume, full of light and life, (14) **and asks him** for the sake of < the love> of our Lord Jesus Christ to on his behalf pray for mercy and forgiveness (15) and help, of that which is required of him by/for God, for he is a stranger to all what is good and far from all virtue (16) and the way of the blessed fathers. Thus, for the love of Christ our God **do not**	(13) *wa-huwa yaṣnaʿu mīṭānīya wa-yuqabbilu arǧul **kull man qaraʾa** hāḏā l-muṣḥaf al-mumtalā nūr wa-ḥayāt* (14) ***wa-yasʾaluhu** min aǧl ḥubb sayyidinā Yasūʿ al-Masīḥ an yadʿū lahu bi-l-raḥma wa-l-maġfira* (15) *wa-l-maʿūna ʿalā mā yaǧibu li-Llah ʿalayhi fa-inna ġarīb min kull ḫayr wa-mutabāʿid min kull ṣalāh* (16) *wa-min sīrat al-ābāʾ al-mubārakīn fa-min aǧl ḥubb al-Masīḥ ilāhinā **lā tansūnī yā abbahātī wa-lā*** (17) ***tadʿū tuḏkurūnī** fī ṣalawātikum wa-ḫalawātikum al-maqbūla fa-innī ilā ḏālika muḍṭarr …*

[47] I.e. prostration to signal his will to repent, a spiritual reformation.

	forget me, o my fathers, and do not (17) **cease remembering me** in your prayers and your acceptable hermitages. I am in urgent need of that…	

Of great interest are the expressives in the colophons from Saint Sabas since here we can detect a pattern. All these manuscripts contain expressives, i.e. wishes or requests aimed at the divine, where various subjects involved in the production and use of the manuscript are mentioned. Between three (SG 34b) and six (BAV Ar. 71) agents who take part in the copying or reading process are included in the expressives. The two colophons penned by Anthony David of Baghdad and the main colophon copied by David of Homs (i.e. SANF Parch. 66) exhibit identical structures with regard to agents, except for the addition of "the one who made (*faʿala*) it" in BAV Ar. 71, and the omission of "the one who heard (*samiʿa*)" in RNL Ar. N.S. 263. That is to say, they basically all[48] include scribes (*man kataba*), commissioners (*man istaktaba*), readers (*man qaraʾa*), listeners (*man samiʿa*), and supplicants, i.e. persons "saying amen" (*man qāla amīn*) in this order. SANF Parch. 40 is too damaged to be properly evaluated in this regard but it clearly includes several agents. SG 34b is thus the only manuscript in our small corpus that somewhat deviates from the pattern. However, it too involves three agents: the reader (*man qaraʾa*), listener (*man samiʿa*), and supplicant (*man daʿā*), which still sets it apart from the Charitonian corpus. In the latter, only two colophons contain such agents and then only two of them (SA 72: scribe and reader; and SANF Parch. 7: reader and supplicant). Also colophons from Saint Catherine's Monastery contain several agents, yet there we encounter more variation. As we will see below, half of them lack any mention of agents involved in the production process or are too damaged to tell, whereas it is difficult to see any clear pattern in the four colophons that contain such information. It is of great interest that the first colophon in the Sinaitic manuscript SANF Parch. 1 exhibits the exact same pattern often found in the Sabaitic colophons. The mentioning of Isaac the Monk from Mount Sinai in Anthony David of Baghdad's two colophons as well as the name of the scribe Isaac in the second colophon in SANF Parch. 1 also indicate a close link between the two monasteries and their Christian Arabic scribal settings and it is not unlikely that the workshop of Saint Saba trained scribes who were later active at other monasteries. Likewise, the agents and their order in the colophons in the Sabaitic SG 34b and that in the Sinaitic SA 514 are the same.

[48] David of Homs' second colophon, i.e. that in LUB Cod. Gr. 2, does not mention any agents, perhaps since this colophon was seen as supplementing the longer one in SANF Parch. 66.

Other than this, we could mention that Anthony David of Baghdad's expressives invoke the intercession of Saint Mary and Saint Sabas as well as between two (BAV Ar. 71) and six (RNL N.S. Ar. 263) more abstract categories of saints, such as righteous people and prophets. David of Homs invokes the intercession of Saint Mary and Saint Stephen and "the fathers in this volume," likely referring to the characters in and authors of the *Lives* he copied. SG 34b does not include any requests for intercessions and SANF Parch. 40 is again too damaged to tell. As mentioned above, Saint Mary, Saint John, and "all the saints" or similar formulations are invoked in some of the Charitonian manuscripts, whereas the Sinaitic colophons are very sparse in this regard. A few Sinaitic colophons mention Mary and "the holy ones" or a similar phrasing, indicating that Mary was the local saint (cf. section 5 below).

Ms.	*Trans.*	*Text*
BAV Ar. 71	(12) May God have mercy on *the one who made and the one who wrote and the one who commissioned and the one who read* (13) *and the one who heard and said amen*, by the intercession of **the Lady, Saint Mary,** (14) **and our father Saint Saba and all his righteous and saints,** amen	(12) *raḥima Allāh man faʿala wa-man kataba wa-man istaktaba wa-man qaraʾa* (13) *wa-man samiʿa wa-man qāla āmīn bi-šafāʿat* ***al-sayyida Martmaryam*** (14) ***wa-abūnā Mār Sābā wa-ǧamīʿ abrārihi wa-qiddīsīhi āmīn.***
RNL Ar. N.S. 263	So, we ask Christ our God (4) and our saviour, by the intercession of **the Lady, Mother of Light, the pure Saint Mary (5) the blessed one, and [by] the prayers of all his apostles, disciples, prophets, (6) and martyres, and [by] the prayers of our father the holy man Saint Saba and all (7) his holy men, and those close to [God]** to be merciful	(3) … *fa-nasʾalu al-Masīḥ ilāhanā* (4) *wa-muḫalliṣanā bi-šafāʿat al-sayyida umm al-nūr Martmaryam al-ṭāhira* (5) *al-mubāraka wa-ṣalawāt ǧamīʿ rusulihi wa-talāmīḏihi wa-anbiyāʾihi* (6) *wa-šuhadāʾihi wa-ṣalawāt abūnā al-qiddīs Mār Sābā wa-ǧamīʿ* (7) *qiddīsīhi wa-aṣfiyāhi an yuraḥḥima wa-yaġfira ḫaṭāyā man kataba* (8) *wa-istaktaba āmīn* … (10) … *asʾalu al-Masīḥ* (11) *ilāhanā bi-faḍlihi wa-raḥmatihi an-yuraḥḥimahu man kataba wa-istaktaba wa-man qaraʾa* (12) *wa-qāla āmīn*

	and forgive the sins of *the one who wrote (8) and the one who commissioned [it], amen*…. I ask Christ, (11) our God, for his favour and his mercy to have mercy on *the one who wrote,[the one who] commissioned, and the one who read [it] (12) and said "amen."*	…
SANF Parch. 40	(1) May God have mercy on *the one who wrote* <…> <*and the one who*> *(2) says amen*, Lord of the Worlds … (5) … He asks Christ for mercy and forgiveness <…>	(1) *raḥima Allāh man kata*<*ba*> <…> <*wa-man*> (2) *yaqūlu āmīn rabb al-ʿālamīn* … (5) … *wa-huwa yasʾalu al-Masīḥ al-raḥma wa-l-maġ*<*fira*> <…>
LUB Cod. Gr. 2	(21) … May God be content with the one who made this, amen.	(21) … *raḍiya Allāh ʿan man faʿala ḏālika āmīn.*
SANF Parch. 66	(18) May Christ be pleased with *the one who wrote and the one who commissioned and the one who read and the one who heard and said "amen, amen, amen."* …(20) I ask Christ the Eternal Son of God to give him (his) hope and make him worthy to read and be fruitful and fulfill what he requests (21) to be worthy of standing at his right [side] at the day of repayment by the intercession of our **Lady Saint Mary, the pure virgin, (22) and by the prayers**	(18) *raḍiya al-Masīḥ ʿan man kataba wa-man istaktaba wa-man qaraʾa wa-man samiʿa wa-qāla āmīn āmīn āmīn* … (20) *asʾalu al-Masīḥ bn Allāh al-azalī an-yuʿṭiyahu amalahu wa-yusāwiyahu an yaqraʾa wa-yamṯura wa-yakmula mā yaṭlubu* (21) *li-yastaʾhila al-qiyāma ʿan yamīnihi fī yawm al-muǧāzāh bi-šafāʿat sayyidatinā Martmaryam al-batūl al-ẓāhira* (22) *wa-bi-ṣalawāt hāḏā l-qiddīs Mār(y) Istāfanus wa-ǧamīʿ al-ābāʾ al-maḏkūrīna fī hāḏā l-muṣḥaf āmīn.*

	of this holy Saint Stephen and all the fathers mentioned in this volume, amen.	
SG 34b	(15) … May God have mercy on *the one who (16) read and heard and prayed* for the scribe …	(15) … *raḥima Allāh man* (16) *qaraʾa wa-samiʿa wa-daʿā li-l-kātib* …

4.3 Datation

Three of the Sabaitic colophons are dated (BAV Ar. 71, RNL Ar. N.S. 263, SG 34b). Two of these were authored by Anthony David of Baghdad. As highlighted already by Griffith, the two manuscripts (BAV Ar. 71, RNL Ar. N.S. 263/BNU Or. 4226b) were copied in the same year, which is given in Hijra datation, viz. 277 (= 885/6 CE).[49] The datation system is referred to as "in the years of the Arabs" (*min sinī l-ʿarab*). There is another way of marking the use of Hijra datation, possibly also employed by Sabaitic scribes, namely by means of the adjective *hilāliyya*, i.e. "lunar."[50]

In BAV Ar. 71, Anthony David also gives the month according to the Islamic calendar, viz. Rabīʿ al-Awwal, which corresponded to August/September in that year. Both times the year is written out in Arabic. By contrast, in SG 34b the year is both written out in Arabic and given in Greek numerals. As mentioned above, this scribe uses two calendric systems, viz. the World Era calendar and the Hijra calendar. Interestingly, the year is written out in Arabic in combination with the World Era datation and given in Greek numerals in combination with the Hijra calendar. Again, both systems are marked with the phrases "in the years of Adam" (*min sinī Ādam*) and "in the years of the Arabs" (*min sinī l-ʿarab*). The colophon of SG 34b also indicates that the manuscript was completed at the feast day of the patron saint Sabas. The colophon of SANF Parch. 66 is not dated, but the foregoing textual unit, an Arabic translation of Leontius of Damascus' *Life of Stephen the Sabaite*, gives the date of the completion of the translation as follows: "This translation was completed on Tuesday of the week of *hyperthesis* – [this week] comes before [the festival of] Palms – with three days remaining in the month of March, which is to say Āḏār, in the year 290."[51] In contrast to the datations found in our colophon corpus,

[49] Griffith, "Anthony David," p. 10.

[50] This feature is used in the colophons of BMCL BV 47, f. 79v:4; BNU Or. 4226a, f. 1r:2. The colophon of SA 580, f. 205v:12 even uses the expression *li-hiğrat al-ʿarab*, "according to the Hijra [Era] of the Arabs."

[51] Lamoreaux (trans.), *The Life of Stephen of Mar Sabas*, pp. 132–133; slightly modified.

here the dating is inordinately specific, providing not only the day of the week and month, but also the feasts of the current and the following week. The month is given according to the Roman (*Marṭs*) and Syrian calendar (*Āḏār*), while the year is given according to the Hijra calendar, which, here is not marked as such.[52] As said above (section 3.4), the Charitonion scribe Stephen of Ramla also uses Roman and Muslim month names side by side in the first colophon of BL Or. 4950.

4.4 Paleographical Features

Anthony David of Baghdad's elegant handwriting exhibits many New Style features and has been described elsewhere, as have David of Homs' angular script, which represents an adaptation of Early Abbasid book hands.[53] Hence, it may suffice here to give short descriptions of the paleographical features of SANF Parch. 40 and SG 34b, which are not available elsewhere.

What little remains of SANF Parch. 40, it is clear that it is elegantly written and displays a horizontally elongated script with some curvy features, typical of New Style scripts. It preserves no typically ancient traits and rather resembles later witnesses of early Abbasid book hands.[54] Two diacritics are written above the consonantal skeleton of *qāf*, the tail of final *mīm* is slanting leftwards in a soft curve, final *kāf* lacks a head serif (at least in our sample), and the *dāl/ḏāl* grapheme has an angular shape. On the basis of some of these characteristics, we suggest that it was composed during the first half of the tenth century CE. The closest witness to this sort of handwriting is, to the best of our knowledge, a group of manuscripts which seem to have been penned by Thomas of Fustat or his Sinaitic workshop (see section 5.5 below).

In the bilingual SG 34b, the Arabic column may have been written by different hands (see, for instance, f. 123r). In any event, the main hand is similar to that in the well-known Gospel manuscript SA 74. In addition to the overall similar impression, final *kāf* often has a particular tripartite form in both, where the vertically extended head serif is the longest component of the letter. However, whereas *alif* is often curvy or straight and the *dāl/ḏāl* grapheme rather angular in SG 34b, *alif* is normally featured as a nail in SA 74 and the *dāl/ḏāl* grapheme takes a more elliptic form. In both manuscripts, a later hand has filled in certain letters, where the ink apparently had faded and they may have been restored by the same person. SANF

[52] The colophon of SANF Parch. 16, possibly of Charitonian origin as well, as we have argued above (section 3.4), comes closest to the translator's colophon of SANF Parch. 66 in terms of specificity: in addition to the year according to three calendric systems, it also mentions the day of the week (*yawm al-ṯulāṯāʾ*), the saint's feast falling on this day (*ʿīd Mārī Ǧurǧis*) and the Muslim month name (*Muḥarram*).

[53] Binggeli, "Les trois David."

[54] For a division of New Style and Early Abbasid scripts, which builds on Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, takes as its point of departure the hand's overall extension (vertical vs. horizontal), see Hjälm, "Paleographical Study."

Parch. 24 and parts of SANF Parch. 36 are rather similar to the former two as well. SA 74 is normally dated to the ninth century CE, though in light of the similar hand in SG 34b, dated to 929/30 CE, one should not exclude a tenth century CE date for SA 74 as well. As mentioned above, one of the fly-leaves probably added to the codex during a rebinding process, apparently comes from a codex copied by the Charitonian scribe who also copied SA 75 (cf. section 3.5 above).

To conclude, in sharp contrast to the Charitonian colophons, which are all examples of the typical Christian take on Early Abbasid book hands with relatively little New Style influence, all Sabaitic hands exhibit more curvy scripts, with the notable exception of SANF Parch. 66. It is likely, but not decisively clear, that this colophon was copied at Saint Saba, as mentioned above. Whereas paleography speaks against such a place of production, its expressive formula speaks for it, as demonstrated above. In either way, we must presuppose a certain mobility between monasteries and workshops and thus variation in practice.

Though a division of the monasteries along Early Abbasid-inspired vs. scripts with clear New Style influence is surprisingly clear in our small corpus, one should remember that the Charitonian manuscripts are normally older than those we have from Saint Sabas. The latter were thus composed during a time when the more curvy, and soon also more plain (so-called Naskh) scripts, increased. In any event, distinct curviness in script may very well be a typical feature of the Sabaitic workshops of this time, even if not exclusively used there (it is also attested in David of Ashkelon's hand active in the Anastasis and in Sinai, see below) and not consistently so (cf. SANF Parch. 66 + LUB Cod. Gr. 2, if indeed Sabaitic).

5 COLOPHONS FROM SAINT CATHERINE

As mentioned above, Saint Catherine's Monastery has played a crucial role in preserving some of the earliest witnesses of the Christian Arabic literary heritage and the provenance of almost all of the manuscripts from which we have taken the source material for the present study is linked to this institution. The monastery was built in the sixth century CE by the Emperor Justinian. Pilgrim reports tell us that it was a multilingual setting from an early time on. Arabic-speaking monks must have been active there in the eighth century CE at the latest. The earliest dated Christian Arabic translation of a Greek text was carried out at Saint Catherine's in 772 CE. Treiger has argued that the "initial stages of this Christian translation activity can therefore be tentatively assigned to ca. 750 AD, perhaps even earlier. Mount Sinai must have been one of its early centers."[55] There are no copyists' colophons bearing such early dates, but from the set of Sinaitic colophons to be discussed below we can securely infer that several individuals were involved in the production of Christian Arabic manuscripts at Saint Catherine's Monastery at the turn of the 9th and 10th centuries CE. These scribes refer to their place of activity

[55] Treiger, "The Earliest Dated Christian Arabic Translation," p. 34.

simply as "Mount Sinai" (*Ṭūr Sīnāʾ*) or the "monastery of Mount Sinai" (*dayr Ṭūr Sīnāʾ*). It is often also called "God's holy mountain" (*ǧabal Allāh al-muqaddas*) or "God's holy dwelling place" (*mawḍiʿ Allāh al-muqaddas*). As pointed out above, Catherine of Alexandria became the monastery's patron saint at the earliest in the 13th century CE, to a great part due to Western pilgrims. In the 9th and 10th centuries CE, the monks of Mount Sinai would have considered Mary their patron saint. Accordingly, Saint Mary (*Martmaryam/Mārtmaryam*) is invoked for intercession in three colophons (BMCL BV 69b, BNU Or. 4225a, SG 32, f. 409r).[56]

1. **BMCL BV 69b, f. 2r**
   Contents: hagiography, homilies, Bible; date: not specified (ca. 10th c. CE); scribe: Ṯūmā al-rāhib (Thomas the Monk).
2. **BNU Or. 4225a, f. 226v**
   Contents: apothegms; date: 900/901 CE; scribe: Tūmā al-Fusṭāṭī (Thomas of Fustat).
3. **BNU Or. 4225e, reverse**
   Contents: hagiography (?); date: damaged (904–912 CE); scribe: name illegible.
4. **SA 116, f. 205v**
   Contents: Gospel lectionary; date: 984/5 CE; scribe: Yuḥannis al-qissīs.
5. **SA 514, f. 160r**
   Contents: Hagiography, Bible (Job); date: not specified (early 10th c. CE); scribe: Tūmā al-Fusṭāṭī (Thomas of Fustat).
6. **SANF Parch. 1, f. 1r**
   Contents: hagiography, homilies; date: not specified (ca. 10th c. CE); scribe: not specified.
7. **SG 32, f. 408v**
   Contents: Greek Psalter; date: not specified (early 10th c. CE); scribe: Mīḫāʾil al-qissīs tilmīḏ ambā Filūta (Michael the Priest)
8. **SG 32, f. 409r**
   Contents: see above; date: see above; scribe: see above and below.

As in the previous cases, the Sinaitic colophons appear in manuscripts that transmit ascetic literature (BMCL BV 69b; BNU Or. 4225a; SA 514; SANF Parch. 1) and biblical books (BMCL BV 69b; SA 514 and SG 32). It is difficult to find any clear patterns in the Sinaitic material and the most intriguing question in this corpus is perhaps the relation between Thomas the Monk and Thomas of Fustat and the many manuscripts that can be attributed to hands similar to the three Tomaic colophons in the early Christian Arabic corpus. Also interesting is the relation between the Michael mentioned in SG 32 and the Charitonian deacon with the same name (cf. SANF Parch. 7).

[56] In BNU Or. 4225e, the legible parts give the names of Aaron and probably Moses who would also have been venerated on Mount Sinai.

It becomes instantly evident that none of the colophons in Sinai predate the ninth century CE and that several younger colophons are found here. Thus, based on our small dated corpus, it appears that prolific scribal activity, or at least the practice of dating colophons, during the long ninth century, slowly moved from Saint Chariton, to Saint Saba, and finally to Saint Catherine.

5.1 Formal Features

Most of the Sinaitic colophons have an average length of around ten to thirteen lines. But there are also very concise ones with just three or four lines. The shortest colophon in our whole corpus is the signature by Thomas of Fustat in SA 514, which is found at the end of the biblical book of Job and reads: "The story of Job the righteous was completed with the help of God. May God have mercy on the servant, the sinner who wrote it for Mount Sinai, God's holy mountain. He is Thomas of Fustat, the sinner" (*tammat bi-ʿawn Allāh qiṣṣat Ayyūb al-ṣiddīq raḥima Allāh al-ʿabd al-ḫāṭiʾ allaḏī katabahā li-Ṭūr Sināʾ ǧabal Allāh al-muqaddas wa-huwa Tūmā al-Fusṭāṭī al-ḫāṭiʾ*).[57] The last word *al-ḫāṭiʾ* is even squeezed in on the last line of a densely written page, which means that this is everything but a carefully planned colophon. Thomas of Fustat's colophon in BNU Or. 4225a makes a completely different impression. It takes up about half the page and is executed in red ink in order to make it visually distinct from the preceding text. The colophons in BMCL BV 69b and SANF Parch. 1 share an interesting feature: both are found at the end of the manuscript's *pinax* or table of contents. SA 116 is a bilingual Greek-Arabic gospel manuscript and SG 32 a Greek Psalter with an Arabic scribal signature. Just as SG 34b discussed above (cf. section 3.1), SA 116 follows a two-column layout for the text. The Arabic colophon has its own column (left), but continues for three lines in the Greek column (right). Since the Greek colophon is substantially shorter than the Arabic one, the scribe supposedly intended this arrangement.[58] In SG 32, we find two colophons. As we shall argue below (section 5.5), there are certain indications that the second was not written by the original scribe of the codex. The first one is found at the end of a Greek text portion. The four lines in red and black-brown ink are carefully integrated into the decoration that formally ends the page.

When it comes to decorations, only SG 32 and SA 116 make use of this device. As just mentioned, the colophon of BNU Or. 4225a is set apart from the main text by means of different ink color, but no decorative elements are used except for a couple of line fillers in the form of short dashes in the last line of the colophon. For some reason, the scribe decided to write the closing three "amens" on the left side instead of the right one, as the directionality of Arabic script would suggest. In five

[57] SA 514, f. 160r:27–28.

[58] A transcription and English translation of the Greek colophon is provided in Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization*, p. 368.

cases, however, the text of the colophon is not set apart visually from surrounding text portions. In SA 116, both the Arabic and Greek columns are interrupted by two horizontal lines, which consist of alternating red dots and black dashes. The lines are followed by a continuous black line on which are situated six black cross designs (four of the crosses are decorated with red dots). Then follows another line of red dots and black dashes before the two-column layout continues with the Arabic and Greek colophons. The decoration in SG 32 is much more elaborate. Beneath the Greek text portion a riband in braid design, similar to the ones employed in the Charitonian manuscripts SA 72 and SANF Parch. 7 is followed by three horizontally arranged cross designs, colored in red, which pick up the braid pattern and resemble Celtic knots, a design that can also be found in Coptic, Syriac, and even Hebrew manuscripts. The slings of these cross designs are coupled with geometric patterns in the form of spikes, which also turn up at the right and left side of the riband above. Other elaborate braid designs occur throughout the codex.

5.2 Functional Features

In the Sinaitic colophons the order of functional features is flexible, just like we have seen in the other two corpora. A new feature found so far only in the Sinaitic corpus is the use of the *basmala* to introduce a colophon (cf. BNU Or. 4225e and SG 32b). Also new in this corpus is the introduction of a declarative feature (a curse) into one of the colophon-like texts in SG 32 (cf. 5.4 below).

The Sinaitic workshop under our scope appears to have been established after those in Saint Chariton and Saint Saba, a conclusion based on the later dates we find in them. It might also be that Sinai had fewer professional scribes, such as Stepehen of Ramlah and Michel the Deacon at Saint Chariton, and Anthony David of Baghdad and David of Homs at Saint Sabas, not to mention David of Askalon in Jerusalem. However, Thomas of Fustat/the Monk may have assumed a similar function.

All Sinaitic colophons include expressives, as usual in our corpus. BMCL BV 69b by Thomas the Monk and BNU Or. 4225a by Thomas of Fustat include the introductory phrase we identified as an allusion to Matthew 25:34 in the Charitonian colophons above (cf. section 3.3). They both invoke Mary and the holy ones/saints. The colophon of SA 514, penned by Thomas of Fustat, includes no such statements and neither does any other colophon from Sinai, save BNU Or. 4225e which references the "prophets" (*anbiyāʾ*) Aaron and Moses, very likely an allusion to the local veneration of these biblical figures. BMCL BV 69b and SANF Parch. 1 include several agents involved in the production, in a way typical of Sabaitic scribes (cf. section 4.2).

Ms.	*Trans.*	*Text*
BMCL BV 69b	(12) **I ask our lord Christ** to forgive the sins (13) of *the one who wrote*	(12) ***wa-anā asʾalu sayyidanā l-Masīḥ*** *an yaġfira ḫaṭāyā* (13) *man kataba wa-*

	and the one who read and the one who acquired and commissioned [this book] (14) and to give him [the commissioner] what he has given the righteous holy ones (15) *and place him at his right [side] and make him hear the sound filled (16) with joy*. **And [so also invoke] for the scribe, amen, through the intercession of [our] Lady,** (17) **the Mother of Light, Saint Mary and all the holy ones, amen.**	*man qaraʾa wa-man iqtanā wa-istaktaba* (14) *wa-yuʿṭiyahu mā aʿṭā l-qiddīsīn al-abrār* (15) *wa-yuqīmahu ʿan yamīnihi wa-yusmiʿahu al-ṣawt al-mamlūʾ* (16) *faraġ* ***wa-li-l-kātib āmīn bi-šafāʿat al-sayyida*** (17) ***umm al-nūr Martmaryam wa-ǧamīʿ al-qiddīsīn āmīn.***
BNU Or. 4225a	(15) … **May** (16) **Christ remember you** in his kingdom and place *you at his right [side]* and [invoke] *for him who read (17) and him who wrote and him who [commissioned it]* through the *intercession of Saint Mary and all the saints*, (18) amen, amen, amen.	(15) … ***ḏakaraka*** (16) ***al-Masīḥ*** *fī mulkihi wa-aqāmaka ʿan yamīnihi wa-li-man qaraʾa* (17) *wa-li-man kataba wa-li-man* [*istaktaba*] *bi-šafāʿat Mārtmaryam wa-ǧamīʿ al-qiddīsīn* (18) *āmīn āmīn āmīn.*
BNU Or. 4225e	<…> (5) your mercy shall reach me and your strength shall protect me. The admonitions of [**Moses** (?)] (6) **and Aaron, your prophets**, are redemption, mercy, and forgiveness <…> (7) and grace on your sinful servant …	<…> (5) *raḥmatuka tanālunī wa-ʿizzatuka taḥūṭunī wa-waʿaẓāt* [***Mūsā*** (?)] (6) ***wa-Harūn anbiyāʾika*** *ḫalāṣ wa-raḥma wa-maġfira* <…> (7) *raʾfa ʿabdaka al-ḫāṭiʾ al-maḏnūb* …
SA 116	[left column] (9) **Remember, o Lord,** your servant (10) the sinner	[left column] (9) ***uḏkur yā rabb*** *ʿabdaka* (10) *al-ḫāṭiʾ Yuḥannis al-qissīs* …

	John the priest…	
SA 514	(26) … **May God have mercy** on the servant, the sinner (27) who wrote it…	(26) … ***raḥima Allāh*** *al-ʿabd al-ḫāṭiʾ* (27) *allaḏī kataba …*
SANF Parch. 1	(18) … **May God have mercy** on the one who wrote, *the one who commissioned, <the one who> (19) read, and the one who listened and said "amen."*	(18) … ***raḥima Allāh*** *man kataba wa-man istaktaba <wa-man>* (19) *qaraʾa wa-man samiʿa wa-qāla āmīn.*
SG 32, f. 408v	(1) **May God help you**, my brother, and grant you understanding!	(1) ***mālaʾaka Allāh*** *yā aḫī wa-fahhamaka …*
SG 32, f. 409r	And whoever comes close to the place, (14) **may God respond to him** and to whoever said "amen."	(12) … *wa-man qarubahu li-l-mawḍiʿ* (13) ***istaǧāba Allāh minhu*** *wa-man qāla āmīn.*

As already mentioned above (section 4.2), half of the Sinaitic colophons lack directives. As for those colophons which do include directives, we find the same request addressing the reader not to forget the scribe and pray for him (BNU Or. 4225a, SA 116, SG 32, f. 408v).

5.3 Datation

Only three of the Sinaitic colophons are dated (BNU Or. 4225a, BNU Or. 4225e, SA 116). Like most of their Sabaitic confrères, the Sinaitic scribes use Hijra calendar datation. In BNU Or. 4225a, Thomas of Fustat only gives the Hijra year without month or day. Equally, John the Priest refers to the Hijra year in SA 116. Interestingly, however, he adds to the date of the copying of the manuscript also the year in which he became a monk (*tarāhaba*) at Saint Catherine's monastery (roughly ten years prior to the copying). The datation of BNU Or. 4225e is difficult to assess owing to the fragmentary state of the folio on which the colophon is preserved. The scribe seems to have used a dual system at least with respect to month names, since he refers to a "month of the Greeks" (*šahr al-rūm*) and possibly also a "<month> of the Arabs" (*<šahr > al-ʿarab*). The latter is then given as Ḏū l-Ḥiǧǧa, i.e. the last month of the Islamic calendar. The Hijra year is only partly legible, but the colophon was written in the 290s (i.e. between 904 and 912 CE). As pointed out by Jean Mansour, who deciphered most of the text of this fragmented folio, this means

that the datable activity of this scribe and of Thomas of Fustat is separated by a maximum of eleven and a minimum of three years.[59] Hence, the two persons very likely worked together in a scribal workshop.

5.4 Declarative Features in SG 32

Curses are Schiegg's prime example of declaratives, i.e. written speech acts that "try to act beyond themselves in a mysterious way," as he writes.[60] Early Christian Arabic colophons are not a typical place of curses. In our entire corpus, there is only one example (SG 32), which we shall discuss here. As we will see, the presence of this declarative feature strengthens the assumption that the paratextual unit is not a colophon proper, but rather belongs to another genre of scribal notations.

Curses occur in paratextual notes in the manuscripts of our corpus and were added at a later point in time. They reveal something about the handling of the books and, generally, function as a sort of equivalent to the modern-day library stamps. Arabic book curses also occur, for instance, in Syriac and Georgian manuscripts from the collection of Saint Catherine's monastery. A typical Sinaitic book curse (*cum* endowment note) is found, for instance, in the upper margin of BAV Ar. 71, f. 3v–4r and reads as follows: "This book was given as a bequest for the benefit of the monks of Mount Sinai to read in it in the church about the Fathers. No one has authority to take it from the church and whoever takes it from the church will be under eternal ban" (*hāḏā l-kitāb ḥubbisa ʿalā ruhbān Ṭūr Sīnāʾ yaqraʾu fīhi ʿalā l-abbahāt fī l-kanīsa mā li-aḥad sulṭān yuḫriğuhu min al-kanīsa wa-man aḫrağahu yakūnu taḥta al-kalima al-azaliyya*). The same note, written by the same person, can be found in BMCL BV 69b, f. 2v, SANF Parch. 1, ff. 1v–2r, and SA 436, f. 3r (part of it is preserved in SA 155, f. 1). More elaborate curses were left by the tenth/eleventh-century CE Sinaitic bishop Solomon in a number of Saint Catherine's manuscripts. In comparison to the one just quoted, however, "Bishop Solomon's statements are uniquely elaborate (and terrifying!) in the Sinai collections," as Mark Swanson, who collected and studied Solomon's notes, observes.[61] Other examples left in manuscripts by Sinaitic bishops have been collected by Samir Khalil Samir.[62]

In SG 32, there are two colophons, both of which at first glance are authored by Michael the Priest. We shall comment on the paleographical peculiarities of both colophons in the next section. The longer of the two colophons is found on f. 409r and covers the whole page. The colophon includes typical assertive, expressive, and directive features. It is also richer in factoids compared to the first colo-

[59] Mansour, *Homélies et légendes religieuses*, p. XXII.
[60] Schiegg, "Scribes' Voices," p. 143.
[61] Swanson, "Solomon," p. 106.
[62] Samir, "Archevêques du Sinaï au 13e siècle."

phon in that it provides the name of the commissioner, a certain Abba Zechariah the Shoemaker (ambā Zaḫaryā al-iskāf). The scribe specifies that the book is to be kept on Mount Sinai for the benefit of those "who climb the holy mountain" (*man talaʿa al-ǧabal al-muqaddas*). Georgi Parpulov notes that Zechariah was a colleague of Abba Nilus and that they and their two disciples practiced asceticism on the summit of Mount Sinai.[63] The scribe further prescribes that "it should be with the priest who is on the mountain and he gives it to the one who reads in it; he will take it from him and not give it to someone else [to have it] for himself" (*wa-yakūnu ʿinda al-qissīs allaḏī yakūnu fī l-ǧabal yuʿṭīhi allaḏī yaqraʾu fīhi yaʾḫuḏuhu minhu wa-lā yaʾtaḫiḏu aḥad li-nafsihi*).[64] These provisions, which have themselves declarative force in that they determine the handling of the book, are paired with the following curse: "Whoever violates this or lends it, will not have forgiveness before Christ and will not have a share with Saint Mary, the mother of Salvation" (*fa-man ḫālafa hāḏā aw yuġīruhu*[65] *fa-laysa lahu ġufrān quddām al-Masīḥ wa-lā yakūnu lahu naṣīb maʿa Mārtmaryam wālidat al-ḫalāṣ*).[66] The basic structure of this curse is similar to those collected by Samir and Swanson or the ones found in the margins of the manuscripts in our corpus: it is formulated as a conditional and expresses a prohibition against a specific sort of action. The vocabulary, however, does not match that of other Sinaitic book curses. More importantly, as we have already highlighted, this is the only instance in which we have declarative features in an early Christian Arabic colophon. In other words, declarative features are not at all characteristic of the early Christian Arabic colophon corpus. An explanation that suggests itself is that this paratext was not authored by the original scribe of the manuscript, but by someone who used information of a now lost second colophon (since the commissioner is not mentioned in the first and there is no Greek colophon), or who was close enough in time to remember the involved parties, and added prescriptions and the curse typical of notes inserted by later caretakers of books. The impression that not Michael the Priest, but someone else is responsible for this text is corroborated by paleographic features to which we will turn now.

5.5 Paleographical Features

From the paleographical viewpoint, two main questions arise with respect to the colophons found in SG 32. The first concerns the question of whether the Charitonian scribe Michael the Deacon is the same person as the Sinaitic scribe Michael the Priest. The second concerns the relation between the hands of the two colophons in SG 32. Neither question is easy to answer, since the first colophon in SG

[63] Parpulov, *Byzantine Psalters*, pp. 79–80.
[64] SG 32, f. 409r:6–8.
[65] The Arabic text is un-doted and reads *yuʿīruhu* "violate, disobey," which may also be an option here, cf. Parpulov, *Byzantine Psalters*, p. 79.
[66] SG 32, f. 409r:9–11.

32 consists of only a few lines and, thus, offers only sparse material for comparison. In addition, we only had access to low-resolution black-and-white images of the second colophon of SG 32.

It appears that Michael the Deacon's hand in SANF Parch. 7 in general exhibits sharper angles than the hand of the first colophon of SG 32.[67] Both the first colophon of SG 32 and SANF Parch. 7, however, display a round form of *dāl/ḏāl*, and both use, and write, the word *tilmīḏ*, "disciple," in an identical way. This could strengthen the hypothesis that Michael the Deacon and Michael the Priest are, in fact, the same person. Yet, the question should remain open.

As noted above (section 3.5), inconsistency in certain letter forms is quite common, which is particularly clear in the second colophon where mixed forms of the *dāl/ḏāl* grapheme occur. In addition to the mixed forms, which may be a result of the second scribe looking at the earlier text when he wrote his own, the hand of the second colophon of SG 32 does not exhibit horizontal elongation (cf. the dimensions of *ṭā'*) and it is doubtful whether the colophons in SG 32 are written by the same hand. This observation would also be in accordance with the impression we gained above from the presence of declarative features in the second colophon of SG 32. Consequently, this paratext does not seem to have been written by Michael the Priest, though it is written in his name, and turns out not to be a colophon in the first place, but a scribal note similar to those left by Sinaitic bishops in other manuscripts of the collection.

A parallel case among the Sinaitic colophons, which is also worth discussing from the viewpoint of paleography, concerns BMCL BV 69b (and its *membra disiecta*),[68] BNU Or. 4225a, and SA 514 (and its *membra disiecta*).[69] Owing to the scribe's signature, we know that the latter two texts were copied by Thomas of Fustat. In the colophon of the first manuscript, the scribe calls himself "Thomas the Monk" and we might justifiably ask whether Thomas the Monk and Thomas of Fustat are the same person. The paleographic evidence seems to speak against this identification, at least when it comes to the colophon page of BMCL BV 69b. However, the relations between these manuscripts are rather complicated. Firstly, it appears that the scribe who copied the colophon in BMCL BV 69b is not the same as the one who copied the actual manuscript. As Peter Tarras argued elsewhere, the overall careless execution of the colophon page, which continues the table of contents, suggests that this is the product of a somewhat hasty restoration added to the manuscript at some later point.[70] In any event, it appears that one and the same hand

[67] This may be noted, for instance, in that the upper stroke of final *kāf* is placed almost in parallel with that on the baseline and supplied with a head serif in the former whereas it consists of a horizontal and a vertical stroke only in the first colophon of SG 32 (this shape of the letter does not appear in the second colophon).

[68] See van Esbroeck, "Remembrement."

[69] See Kessel, "A Catacomb."

[70] Tarras, "Building a Christian Arabic Library."

copied the main texts in both BMCL BV 69b and BNU Or. 4225a. In contrast, the production of SA 514 apparently involved more than one scribe. At least, we know from Thomas of Fustat's signature that he was one of the contributors. His handwriting has a slightly different appearance here due to the dense writing, i.e. his attempt at using as much as possible of the available space on the page. Still, typical features of his hand are at work, such as the archaic horizontal dotting of *šīn* (next to the triangular arrangement), the mainly straight vertical writing of *alif* (sometimes still reminiscent of inverted-S-shaped *alifs*), or the peculiar execution of isolated *ǧīm/ḥāʾ/ḫāʾ* whose tail is perpendicular with a minimal inclination towards the direction of writing.[71] In general, all these manuscripts exhibit transitional scripts, i.e. vertically elongated letter shapes with more or less New Style curviness. The colophon page of SA 514 exhibits a rather plain script, whereas the handwriting in BMCL BV 69b and BNU Or. 4225a is a beautiful script with many New Style features, reminiscent of Anthony of Baghdad's slender hand.[72] What appears to be the same hand is responsible for a large number of manuscripts. We count a total of 15 codicological units: 1. BMCL BV 69a; 1. BMCL BV 69b (+ CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. 93, CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 130, CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 148, CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 149, LUL Or. 14238 + SANF Parch. 47); 3. BNU Or. 4225a; 4. BSB Cod.arab. 1068; 5. CUL Or. 1287 (+ BESM Vitr. 41, BESM Vitr. 46, CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 124, Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 150); 6. SA 457d (+ BAV Ar. 1826); 7. SA 457a; 8. SA 460 (+ SA 457c); 8. SA 461 (+ CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 141, CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. 147, SA 457b); 9. SA 514 (+ BSB Cod.arab. 1066, SC 579); 10. SA 516b; 11. SA 542; 12. SANF Parch. 1 (one of the scribes); 13. SANF Parch. 33; 14. SANF Parch. 46; 15. SANF Parch. 47.

This is not the place for a thorough examination of this vast material,[73] yet if Thomas of Fustat, probably to be identified with Thomas the Monk, is responsible for all the above manuscripts, he possibly had some sort of workshop around him, in which scribes would have been active with similar looking hands. These would have been responsible for parts of SA 514 and a number of further manuscripts, such as SANF Parch. 2, SANF Parch. 21, SANF Parch. 22, and SANF Parch. 56. The latter three share many features with Thomas of Fustat's hand but, for instance, the tail of final *mīm* slopes rightwards whereas as in Thomas' hand is slants leftwards. The hand who wrote the colophon and parts of the text in SANF Parch. 1 is not as delicate as Thomas of Fustat's hand and exhibits a rather straight script, on the verge of becoming a common Naskh. Still, Thomas of Fustat might have been responsible at least for one part of the codex.

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[71] For a more detailed discussion of these features, see Tarras, "Building a Christian Arabic Library."

[72] For illustrations of the scripts, see e.g. Meïmarēs, *Katalogos*, pp. 74; 95. See also George, "Le palimpseste Lewis-Mingana de Cambridge," pp. 405–416; Sauget, "La collection homilético-hagiographique"; Tarras, "Building a Christian Arabic Library."

[73] A more thorough study is offered in Tarras, "Building a Christian Arabic Library."

Our last example, SG 116, is a much later Greek-Arabic bilingual manuscript. Suffice it to say here that the Arabic script is rather peculiar, providing an overall angular impression reminiscent of early ninth-century manuscripts, but mixed with softer features, typical of traditional Naskh.[74]

6 General Observations

6.1 Scribal Self-Representation

One of the most common elements of Christian Arabic colophons are expressions of self-depreciation.[75] This is also found in other Christian colophon corpora, as e.g. in the Sinaitic Georgian colophons, which were studied by Adam McCollum. As he points out, "scribal self-depreciation is not unique to Georgian, but a characteristic that spans the centuries of Christian scribal activity."[76] Self-depreciation could be understood as an expressive feature, indicating religiously motivated self-perception, but it must, overall, be viewed as a formulaic element. In fact, in our corpus we find only one colophon in which the scribe speaks about himself without using any of the common self-depreciating terms (RNL Ar. N.S. 263). Here, we consider these terms as pertaining to written acts of scribal self-representation in early Christian Arabic colophons. They also include assertives such as the mention of personal names, sobriquets, descriptions of professions and ecclesial offices, places of origin, as well as hints at student-teacher relationships. These are all features that make colophons not only documentary sources, but also a sort of "ego-document."[77]

The most common self-depreciating term is *al-ḫāṭiʾ*, "the sinner." It is normally found before or after the scribe's personal name. In one case, the scribe inserts it between his first name (probably his monastic name) and his *nisba*: *Tūmā al-ḫāṭiʾ al-Fusṭāṭī* (SA 514). In most cases, this term is coupled with one or more quasi-synonymous terms: *al-miskīn*, "the poor," *al-ḥaqīr/al-bāʾis*, "the miserable," *al-ḏānib*, "the wrongdoer," *al-maḏnūb/al-muḏnib*, "the culpable," *al-ḍaʿīf*, "the weak," *al-aṯīm*, "the wretched." Some of these expression are more elaborate, as e.g. *al-ġāfil ʿan nafsihi*, "the self-negligent," or *al-kaṯīr al-ḏunūb*, "the one full of trespasses." One scribe calls himself *al-mutašabbih bi-l-ruhbān*, "the one who imitates the monks"

[74] It also exhibits certain similarities with other Greek-Arabic texts and is difficult to classify, see Hjälm, "Paleographical Study," pp. 50n27.

[75] Troupeau, "Les colophons," p. 227 has collected twelve different self-depreciating expressions some of which are also listed in the following. Those not represented in our corpus are: *ʿāǧiz*, *ḏalīl*, *faqīr*, *ḏamīm*, *šaqī*, and *marḏūl*.

[76] McCollum, "Notes and Colophons," p. 116. See e.g. also Murre-van den Bergh, "'I the Weak Scribe,'" p. 23.

[77] On manuscript paratexts as ego-documents, see Zaki, "From Pilgrim to Resident," pp. 245–246.

(SANF Parch. 40), which is probably to be understand as an expression of self-depreciation as well, in the sense of "the one who is so sinful as to only resemble a monk." A less derogatory, but also little attested, expression is *al-ʿabd*, "the servant." Another way of expressing self-depreciation or at least humility is the phrase used by David of Homs: "I am in urgent need of that [i.e. the addressee's prayers]" (*fa-innī ilā ḏālika muḍṭarr*).

If the scribes mention their manuscripts' commissioners, the attributes they use in addressing them are antithetical to the way in which they speak about themselves. For instance, David of Homs calls the commissioner of SANF Parch. 66: "Yannah the esteemed monk of the Laura of Saint Sabas" (*Yannah al-fāḍil al-rāhib fī sīq Mārī Sābā*)[78] and Thomas of Fustat calls the commissioner of BNU Or. 4225a "the gentle-hearted and <generous> father, distinguished in the faith in God's true word, Abba Moses son of Ḥakīm, the priest of Aḍraḥ" (*al-ab al-wadīʿ <al-karīm> al-šarīf bi-l-īmān bi-kalimat Allāh al-ḥaqq ambā Mūsā b. Ḥakīm al-qissīs al-Aḏraḥī*).[79]

It must be assumed that most, if not all, of the scribes in our corpus were monks. Some of them expressly use the designation *al-rāhib*, "the monk," as a sobriquet (or *laqab*), e.g. Thomas the monk (BMCL BV 69b).[80] The title "abba" (*ambā*) indicates the same. These elements also suggest that the personal names coupled with them are the scribes' monastic names. Thus, Griffith argued, for instance, that "Anthony" is the monastic name of the scribe Anthony David of Baghdad, while "David" is his given name.[81] As mentioned above, the Sinaitic scribe John the priest mentions in his colophon the date he became a monk (*tarāhaba*) at Mount Sinai. In some cases, the *laqab* provides information about the scribes' (former) occupations: David of Homs is called "the carpenter" (*al-naǧǧār*). In three cases (SA 116, SANF Parch. 7, SG 32b), this element of the scribes' names refers to ecclesial offices: *al-šammās*, "the deacon," and *al-qissīs*, i.e. someone in charge of the basilika. SANF Parch. 7 also mentions the office of *basilikarios*, i.e. someone in charge of the basilika.

Many names also exhibit patronymic elements (BL Or. 4950, BAV Ar. 71, SA 116). More importantly, however, is the scribe's (or commissioner's) *nisba*, which tells us something about its bearer's place of origin or former main activity. In our corpus, this onomastic element provides the following geographic coordinates: Aḏraḥ, Baghdad, Damietta, Fustat, Homs, Ramla, Raqqa, and Tiberias. Together

[78] SANF Parch. 66, f. 4v:19.

[79] BNU Or. 4225a, f. 226v:11–13.

[80] Pachomius (Faḫūm), the scribe of SA 436 (f. 42v:9), uses the expression *al-musammā rāhib*, "the one who is called a monk." This may either indicate self-depreciation or that he wore sobriquet *al-rāhib*.

[81] Griffith, "Anthony David," p. 10. In general, all personal names are identifiably Christian names, with sometimes peculiar orthography (e.g. *Bṭqr*, Victor, *Ssnh*, Sissinius). Non-typically Christian names occur among partonyms: e.g. Ḥakam, Ḥakīm. Some of the names are also used by Jews or Muslims: e.g. Mūsā, Sulaymān.

with the names of the three monasteries in the Judean Desert and in the Sinai as well as Jerusalem, our relatively small corpus yields an impressive amount of geographical information about early Christian Arabic scribal networks, allowing us to connect various places from Mesopotamia across Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. This means that Arabic-speaking Christians from a vast geographical area came together in the Palestinian monasteries and nurtured them with artisal skills, perhaps also books.

Another important component of the way in which scribes speak about themselves in colophons are student-teacher relationships, an element that adds to the socio-historical dimension of early Christian Arabic scribal culture. In our corpus, the scribe Michael the Deacon/the Priest, who, if the same person, was apparently active both at Saint Chariton and Saint Catherine, calls himself "student/disciple" (*tilmīḏ*).[82] In SANF Parch. 7, penned at Saint Chariton, he calls his teacher al-Ṭabarānī, "the one from Tiberias," and adds "the brother of the *basilikarios*" (*aḫ al-bāsilīqār*). It is not clear whether Michael himself or his teacher is this brother of the *basilikarios*. In SG 32, Michael's teacher is called Abba Philotheus. Again, it is not certain whether Abba Philotheus is identical to al-Ṭabarānī, if Michael changed his master, or if Michael the Deacon and Michael the Priest are two different persons.[83] Interestingly, another Charitonian scribe, Stephen of Ramla, addresses the commissioner of the manuscript (BL Or. 4950), a certain Abba Basil, as his teacher (*muʿallim*).[84] He also calls him "spiritual father" (*ab rūḥānī*). Both in the case of Michael and Stephen, we may, thus, deal with spiritual discipleship, but as the case of Stephen of Ramla shows, the scribes' spiritual teachers could very well be involved in the process of manuscript production and encourage it. It is likely that by mentioning a recognized teacher or spiritual father, the scribe lends authority to his own work.

6.2 Manuscript Commissioning

Commissioners are mentioned by name in seven of our twenty colophons.[85] In addition, two colophons indicate that the manuscripts were produced for internal use (SA 116, SA 514), while another two colophons refer to an act of commissioning in the *expressive* part (BMCL BV 69b, SANF Parch. 1). Hence, in our corpus it is more common than not that the scribe explicitly addresses manuscript commissioning, which in most cases must have been the initial impetus for the manuscript's pro-

[82] Cf. Treiger, "Palestinian Origenism," p. 64n71.

[83] We are grateful to Alexander Treiger for sharing his thoughts on the issue with us.

[84] Cf. Griffith, "Stephen of Ramlah," pp. 43, 45.

[85] These are: ambā Basīl (BL Or. 4950), Sissina al-rāhib al-Ḥimṣī (SA 75), Isḥāq al-rāhib (BAV Ar. 71, RNL Ar. N.S. 263), ambā Yannah b. Iṣtafan al-Faḫūrī al-Raqqī (SANF Parch. 66), ambā Mūsā b. Ḥakīm al-qissīs al-Aḏraḥī (BNU Or. 4225a), ambā Zaḫaryā al-iskāf (SG 32).

duction. There are basically three ways of expressing manuscript commissioning, either by use of the verbs *istaktaba* ("he commissioned") and *iqtanā* ("he acquired")[86] or by means of the phrase *kataba li-* ("he wrote for"). The latter is used, for instance, in SA 514 where the commissioning party is simply identified as Mount Sinai. Here, the case may be similar to that of SA 116, another manuscript produced at Mount Sinai, in which we read that the scribe "wrote [this book] for himself and for the one who reads in it after him" (*katabahu li-nafsihi wa-li-man qaraʾa fīhi baʿdahu*).[87] It may also be similar to what we read in the Sinaitic colophon of SG 32, where the commissioner is named, but the colophon reads "and let the one who comes to the holy place [i.e. Mount Sinai] after him read in it, [i.e.] the one who climbs the holy mountain and reads well" (*wa-ṣāra li-l-mawḍiʿ al-muqaddas man baʿdahu yaqraʾu fīhi min ṭalaʿa al-ǧabal al-muqaddas man yaḥsunu yaqraʾu*).[88] In any event, manuscript commissioning was not always an economic act, but sometimes certainly a pious one, just as the production of the manuscript itself. Unfortunately, we are generally poorly informed about the economic circumstances of early Christian Arabic manuscript production and manuscript notes have not been systematically studied in this respect. As for the material analyzed here, there is no indication of whether any of the commissioners mentioned by name paid for the production or even the material involved in the production.

Some information can be adduced from outside the colophon corpus. SANF Parch. 3 has preserved an acquisition note, which cannot be discussed in detail here. But it seems to attest to an event in which two Siniatic monks bought the manuscript in Jerusalem.[89] Swanson has studied the manuscript notes of the tenth/eleventh-century CE Sinaitic bishop Solomon.[90] They also testify to monetary transactions in acquiring manuscripts. Moreover, the monetary value of manuscripts must have necessitated Solomon's prohibition against selling (*bāʿa*) books.[91]

6.3 Expressions Related to Manuscript Production

In our corpus, a number of expressions also refer to the process of manuscript production. First of all, the scribes refer to themselves and their activity with the expression *kātib* (no other designations for "scribe" are attested in our corpus). The word, more generally, designates the profession of both manuscript copyists and

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[86] SA 72 also attests to the use of the participle *muqtanin* ("acquirer"). Cf. also Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts*, p. 176 who lists *iqtanā* among the verbal forms denoting possession. Both *istaktaba* and *iqtanā* occur in BMCL BV 69b, which suggests that commissioning and acquiring may refer to different agents, e.g. a commissioning person and an acquiring institution.

[87] SA 116, f. 205v:12–13.

[88] SG 32, f. 409r:4–5.

[89] The note is transcribed in Meïmarēs, *Katalogos*, p. ١٩ n٨. We are grateful to Alexander Treiger for bringing it to our attention.

[90] Swanson, "Solomon."

[91] Cf. Solomon's note in SA 2; Swanson, "Solomon," pp. 94–95.

secretaries.[92] In our larger corpus, we come across one scribe whose father's occupation was secretary.[93] Some famous Christian scholars, like the Syrian Orthodox philosopher and apologist Yaḥyā Ibn ʿAdī (d. 974 CE), earned their living as professional copyists and book dealers.[94] Professional manuscript producers and sellers were, of course, active in different social settings. But we cannot exclude that the scribes of early Christian Arabic manuscripts, even though mostly active in a monastic milieu, entertained relations to the book market and its agents in more urban centers (e.g. Damascus or Jerusalem). As we have seen above, some scribes also assembled other artisanal skills, like David of Homs, who was a carpenter (the commissioner of SG 32b was a shoemaker).

Related to the expression *kātib* is the verb *kataba*, most commonly used to designate manuscript copying, and *kitāb*. Next to *muṣḥaf* ("volume"), *kitāb* is the most common term designating the manuscript copy. However, it must be noted that in some cases, *kitāb* does not refer to the product of the copying process, i.e. the book, but designates the copying process itself (BL Or. 4950, SA 75, possibly SANF Parch. 1). In SA 436, one of the manuscripts in our larger corpus, we also find the verbal noun *katb*, parallel to *nasḫ* (cf. BMCL BV 47, BNU Or. 4226a). If we compare our findings to those of Troupeau whose corpus, however, includes only one 10th-century CE manuscript (all others 13th through 16th centuries, 24 % Melkite),[95] the vocabulary used to designate the activity of manuscript copying widens in later centuries. Though the verb *kataba* is also most often represented in his corpus, scribes also used the expressions *naqala*, *ʿallaqa*, and *saṭṭara* (*nasaḫa* appears only once). Expressions like *bi-ḫaṭṭ* ("in the handwriting of") do not occur in our smaller corpus and only once in our larger corpus (SA 436), but they are frequent among Troupeau's samples (other similar expressions are: *ʿalā yad*, *bi-yad*, *min yad*, and *bi-qalam*).

The verb *istaktaba* ("he commissioned") derives from the same verbal root as *kataba*, *kitāb*, and *katb*. In a sense, the juxtaposition of *kataba* and *istaktaba* directly mirrors the social context of manuscript production, i.e. the relation between scribe and commissioner. Other persons involved in handling the manuscript are invoked in the *directive* part of the colophons: the *tarḥīm* formulas, starting with *raḥima Allāh* ("may God have mercy"), mention readers (*man qaraʾa*) and listeners (*man samiʿa*) next to scribes and commissioners. In our larger corpus, there is one instance where also the activity of dictating (*amlā*) is mentioned (BL Or. 5008). This highlights that at least two persons were involved in the production of the manuscripts, namely someone who read out loud an earlier example of the text and another person who wrote down what they heard. This is the sort of prototypical workshop scenario often assumed in the critical assessment of the quality of texts

[92] Déroche et al., *Islamic Codicology*, pp. 185–188.
[93] SA 4, f. 281r:8: Ǧibrāʾīl b. Mūsā (al-maʿrūf bi-)Ibn Ḥylm (?) al-Kātib.
[94] Cf. Endress and Ferrari, "The Baghdad Aristotelians," p. 440.
[95] Troupeau, "Les colophons."

preserved in manuscripts. However, we have only scarce evidence, if at all, that this is what early Christian Arabic manuscript production *normally* looked like in the Palestinian monasteries.

7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study has primarily examined formal and functional features in early Christian Arabic colophons, which are related to the monasteries of Saint Chariton, Saint Saba, and Saint Catherine. In particular, we have been interested in establishing trends in the corpus, from which we may glean insights into the socio-intellectual milieu of early Christian Arabic manuscript production as well as in establishing typical features or practices used in the various workshops. The latter may also be used to further investigate the origin of the many early manuscripts that lack colophons and other paratextual elements.

Although there are exceptions to the rules, we have established some trends in our corpus. The earliest colophons, i.e. those produced in the 9th century CE, are connected to Saint Chariton. Typical of these colophons are the use of multiple calendars (Byzantine, Seleucid, and [other] Alexandrian World Eras, as well as the Hijra calendar have been detected), as well as a widespread practice of incorporating a quotation from Matthew 25:34 into the expressive and/or directive parts of the colophons. In addition, the scripts used in these relatively early Christian Arabic manuscripts are all representatives of "Christian" Early Abbasid hands with comparatively little influence from the more curvy features of New Style scripts. In contrast, manuscripts composed at the monastery of Saint Saba are with few exceptions New Style scripts. Another interesting trend in the Sabaitic corpus is the mention of at least three agents involved in the manuscript production in the expressive part of almost all colophons (scribe, commissioner, reader etc.). In contrast to the practice found in dated Charitonian manuscripts, most of the Sabaitic colophons use only the Hijra year when accounting for the year of completion. In that sense, they are similar to the colophons produced at Sinai. In general, the Sinaic corpus is more complex than the other two corpora and no clear trend that set most of their colophons apart from other scriptoria was found. Based on the dates in our corpus, it appears that the production of manuscripts slowly moved from the two monasteries in the Judean Desert to Sinai and that scribal practice was less standardized there. This may partly be a result of monks moving from one monastery to another where they continued their scribal activity. Several recent scholars have correctly pointed out that a large number of manuscripts were produced around the figure Thomas of Fustat, who may or may not have been the same person as Thomas the Monk. Though we cannot tell much from the rather diverse colophon material, it may well be that the many manuscripts exhibiting the beautiful script with many New Style features found, for instance, in BMCL BV 69 and BNU Or. 4225, belonged to Thomas and that more simple scripts which reflect the overall transitional style of the former but not its distinct curviness, belonged to other scribes in the same workshop. In addition, the writing support easily affects the style of writing,

which may explain the somewhat different handwriting found in SA 514, which bears Thomas' signature.

Whereas Schiegg's categories served our corpus very well, it should be mentioned that declarative aspects, such as book curses, are not reflected in any proper colophon in our material. Such a formulation appears in only one colophon. Yet, on paleographical grounds there is reason to think that this colophon was reproduced by a later scribe and rather belongs to another kind of paratext, similar to later added endowment notes, where such curses are common.

The study has also shown that early Christian Arabic scribes followed the same practice of self-depreciation that we find in other Eastern Christian corpora. We have also seen that it was more usual than not to mention the commissioner's name in the colophon, which indicates that manuscripts were often copied on demand, rather than produced in hope that they would later be sold or traded. Finally, the word most often used when relating to the production of a manuscript at this time was *kataba*. Other options existed, yet the diversity we often find in later colophon material, is not extensively attested in the early corpus.

The present study has by no means been exhaustive and much work remains to examine the material in greater depth. Not all of Schiegg's categories have for instance been attended to. In addition to the paleographical study included here as a means to add an additional level of information to the colophons' larger context, other codicological aspects, such as quire marks and the number of folios included in a quire, are still to be examined. In addition to the documentary evidence that can be gleaned from colophons, paleography and codicological practices will surely further our understanding of early Christian Arabic workshops. Most importantly however, the colophons in our study were restricted to those which more or less explicitly mention one of the three most famous centers in the area. In the future, findings in this study must be carefully analyzed within the larger colophon corpus and eventually also with later dated material. Nevertheless, we hope that the present study will encourage further study into this important manuscript material, where colophons, along with codicological and content related studies, will help us reconstruct and better understand the worldviews, practices, and social-intellectual milieus of Christian Arabic communities.

APPENDIX: MANUSCRIPT SHELFMARKS

Note that in the following, the use of lowercase letters (a, b, c …) after call numbers signifies that more than one codicological unit is preserved under one shelfmark and refers to its place in the present manuscript, e.g. BNU Or. 4225e refers to the fifth codicological unit preserved under the shelfmark BNU Or. 4225.

BAV Ar. 71 = Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. Vaticanus Arabicus 71
BAV Ar. 1826 = Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. Vaticanus Arabicus 1826
BESM Vitr. 41 = Beuron, Benediktiner Erzabtei Sankt Martin, Ms. Vitrine 41
BESM Vitr. 46 = Beuron, Benediktiner Erzabtei Sankt Martin, Ms. Vitrine 46

BL Or. 4950 = London, British Library, Ms. Oriental 4950
BL Or. 5008 = London, British Library, Ms. Oriental 5008
BMCL BV 47 = Bryn Mawr, Bryn Mawr College Library, Ms. Special Collections BV 47
BMCL BV 69a = Bryn Mawr, Bryn Mawr College Library, Ms. Special Collections BV 69(a)
BMCL BV 69b = Bryn Mawr, Bryn Mawr College Library, Ms. Special Collections BV 69(b)
BNF Ar. 6725c = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabic 6725(c)
BNU Or. 4225a = Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, Ms. Oriental 4225(a)
BNU Or. 4225e = Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, Ms. Oriental 4225(e)
BNU Or. 4226a = Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, Ms. Oriental 4226(a)
BNU Or. 4226b = Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, Ms. Oriental 4226(b)
BSB Cod.arab. 1066 = Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Ms. Codex arabicus 1066
BSB Cod.arab. 1068 = Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Ms. Codex arabicus 1068
CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. 93 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic 93
CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 124 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 124
CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 130 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 130
CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 140 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 140
CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 141 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 141
CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 147 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 147
CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 148 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 148
CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 149 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 149
CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 150 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 150
CUL Or. 1287 = Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Ms. Oriental 1287
LUB Cod. Gr. 2 = Leipzig, University Library, Ms. Codex Graecus 2
LUL Or. 14238 = Leiden, University Libraries, Ms. Oriental 14238
RNL Ar. N.S. 263 = Saint Petersburg, Russian National Library, Ms. Arabic N.S. 263

SA 1 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 1
SA 2 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 2
SA 4 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 4
SA 72 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 72
SA 74 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 72
SA 75 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 75
SA 116 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 116
SA 155 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 155
SA 309 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 309
SA 431 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 431
SA 436 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 436
SA 457a = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 457(a)
SA 457b = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 457(b)
SA 457c = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 457(c)
SA 457d = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 457(d)
SA 460 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 460
SA 461 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 461
SA 514 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 514
SA 516b = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 516(b)
SA 542 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 542
SC 579 = Oslo/London, Martin Schøyen Collection, Ms. 579
SG 32 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Greek 32
SG 34a = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Greek 34(a)
SG 34b = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Greek 34(b)
SANF Parch. 1 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 1
SANF Parch. 2 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 2
SANF Parch. 3 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 3
SANF Parch. 7 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 7
SANF Parch. 14 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 14
SANF Parch. 16 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 16
SANF Parch. 21 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 21
SANF Parch. 22 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 22
SANF Parch. 24 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 24
SANF Parch. 33 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 33

SANF Parch. 36 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 36
SANF Parch. 40 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 40
SANF Parch. 46 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 46
SANF Parch. 47 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 47
SANF Parch. 56 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 56
SANF Parch. 66 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 66
St. Andrews 14 = St. Andrews, St. Andrews University Library, Ms. 14

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