

**Goals and strategies for developing a manuscript database  
with a focus on comparative codicology**

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Last year, a think tank at the LMU University of Munich worked on the principles of a new database structure with a view to the creation of an interdisciplinary project about antique and medieval biblical manuscripts from different culture areas such as Greek, Syriac, and Ethiopic. Analysing them from a codicological perspective is one of the central and most innovative goal of this project, with a particular accent on understanding and comparing their physical and textual structures at various levels. This raises questions such as: what kind of electronic tools do we need to record, display, and use this structural information in ways that are much more nuanced and flexible than the capabilities of current database interfaces? How can these tools be developed? What are the theoretical and practical implications for the data structures and the database design?

This paper presents the main preliminary conclusions of this working group and widens their scope to make them fruitful for any type of ancient manuscript database in the current scholarly landscape, which continues to produce very heterogeneous manuscript databases in very different contexts with a wide variety of purposes.