

COMAST

Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: Looking back – Looking ahead

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ABSTRACTS

Malachi Beit-Arié, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

SfarData – The codicological database of all the Hebrew medieval dated manuscripts: Presentation of its methodology and demonstrating its website retrieval system

SfarData is a database of all the recorded visible, quantitative and measurable codicological variables - physical, technical, scribal and textual features, as well as images of selected pages of each dated manuscript documented in 250 public and private libraries in situ. The documentation started in 1965 and the database in the 1970, culminating in recent years in its conversion into a website. It contains 900 codicological and scribal variables.

SfarData provides us with precise tools for topological characterization, historical study and the ability to identify the provenance and to assess the chronological demarcation of the many undated manuscripts, even identify their scribes, based on shared codicological parameters and similarity of writing.

A sophisticated retrieval system of a large number of attributes allows elaborate data retrieval, quick sorting, endless querying, linking, classification, clustering and statistical processing has been developed, serving palaeographers, codicologists, art historians and users of manuscripts who wish to localize and date manuscripts.

Konrad Hirschler, Freie Universität, Berlin

Text Reuse in Medieval Syrian Manuscripts

Text reuse, i.e. 'recycling' discarded writing material in order to produce new manuscripts, is an important feature of medieval Arabic manuscript cultures, but has hardly been looked at so far. This paper takes the case study of late medieval Syria (c. 13th-15th centuries) where scribes routinely cut discarded writings into pieces to reuse them as title pages, quires, book bindings and sewing guards. The paper's main question concerns the reasons as to why these reuse practices were so prevalent. While in some cases reuse was mostly a pragmatic decision in order to source cheap paper or parchment, in many other cases these were highly symbolic and meaningful practices: Scribes carefully chose which texts to reuse and where to place them in the new manuscript to express family ties, reinforce communal identity and offer historical interpretation. The parent's marriage certificate could thus have a second life to produce a new quire for one's scholarly text; a folio from the legal text of a great scholarly master from one's home region could serve as a quire's outer folio; and a Latin text could be employed as title page for a work on the Crusading period. Text reuse thus seems to be an integral part of the life-cycles of 'discarded' documents/manuscripts.

Rouzanna Amirkhania-Mézrakian, EPHE, Paris

Les Tables de Canons et l'iconographie de la Jérusalem celeste. Nouvelles perspectives de recherche sur le décor des Tables de Canons d'Eusèbe, basées sur l'étude des manuscrits arméniens enluminés du Moyen Âge

The myth of Heavenly Jerusalem holds a special place in the religious imagery of the Christian world from Antiquity to the Middle Ages. It has generated an important iconographic theme and numerous artistic interpretations within eastern and western pictorial traditions.

Since recent years, great attention has been accorded to this subject in modern research. However, the architectural motif which serves as an artistic framework to the Canon Tables establishing concordances between the texts of the Gospels has been completely omitted from this rich artistic material. The synoptic invention of Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, as well as its artistic decoration integrated Christian codices as early as the beginning of the 4th century and became one of the widespread motifs in Greek, Latin, Armenian, Syrian, Georgian and Ethiopian iconographic traditions.

On a basis of the rich iconographic material within Armenian illuminated manuscripts of the 6th-14th centuries, our paper will highlight the key points of our recent research in order to demonstrate the existence of numerous iconographic ties between Canon Tables' architectural motif and the imagery of Heavenly Jerusalem. Through various analysis and pictorial examples, we will postulate the close relation of Canon Tables' decoration with the artistic formulas and symbolic aspects of Heavenly Jerusalem depictions in eastern and western Christian art.

This approach opens thus new perspectives in oriental manuscript studies offering a fundamental and coherent basis for the future research on the iconography of Canon Tables.

(The paper is read in French)

Stephen Emmel, Universität Münster

'Foliation by Opening' (P. Gumbert 2010, §316.12) and How to Refer to It

This paper concerns a technical matter of how to refer to the pages of a codex that was 'foliated by opening'; see P. Gumbert 2010, §316.12: "Medieval foliations often are not foliations by leaf (with '5' [for example] indicating f.5r+5v), but by opening (with '5' indicating f.4v+5r). Modern foliations always are by leaf (and medieval foliations, if still in use, are so used, irrespective of their original function)." At least from my point of view as a Coptologist, Gumbert's statement requires clarification. I am not yet convinced that his proposed (or implied) definition can be made to work for Coptic codices that were foliated by opening, for reasons that I will try to make clear in my presentation. If my problem with reference to 'foliation by opening' in Coptic codices is really a problem (as I think, but others might not agree), then its solution should be thought about in a comparative context, considering codices foliated by opening in different language cultures. I hope that there might be some members of the audience who can contribute data, discussion, or at least relevant points of view on the problem with which I am concerned. In any case, this paper will be an opportunity for me to clarify the problem in my own mind and to assemble some relevant data, at least for Coptic and Coptic-Arabic bilingual codices.

Marta Silvia Filippini, ICRCPAL, Rome

New Evidences in Armenian Codicology: Analysis of a Recently Discovered Armenian Manuscript from the XIVth century

The analysis of an Armenian illuminated manuscript (Maštoc') from the XIVth century is presented. The codex was accidentally discovered in 2014 in the Museum of the Friars Minor Capuchin in Reggio Emilia, being extremely deteriorated in 2015 it was taken to the ICRCPAL (Rome) for the analysis and for the conservation treatment.

The huge value of the manuscript is due not only to the quality and to the abundance of the illuminations, but also to the history of the codex, which was saved from the destruction during the genocide of the Armenian population in Turkey from three Mekhitarist monks, that lost their life after having entrusted the manuscript to the Capuchin Friars, missionaries in Trebisonda.

The results of the codicological and diagnostic analysis allows us to confirm the provenience of the codex from the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia and to reconstruct the sequence of events that lead the codex to Trebisonda and then to Reggio Emilia.

The manuscript is written in *bolorgir*, Armenian cursive writing, and richly illuminated. It has a typical Armenian leather binding, blind-tooled with residues of the fore-edge flap and of the fastening (of the leather strips and wooden pegs type), cloth doublures. The technique of the sewing of Armenian raised headbands "S" variant, five needles-sewing is reconstructed and a new Armenian sewing structure is observed and is here illustrated for the first time: a herringbone stitch with supported kettle-stitches.

This kind of structure was observed in several other Armenian codices and it confirms that Armenian bookmaking tradition is the only one in the Near East that involves supported sewing, but also that in Armenia different structures from western ones were developed.

Shiva Mihan, Cambridge University

Hidden from Scholarly Eyes for a Century: An unknown Bāysunghurī manuscript sheds new light on his court and library

This paper introduces a dual-text manuscript produced in 833/1430 at Herat in the library of the Timurid prince, Bāysunghur (1399-1437), which has escaped previous scholarly attention. Its scribe, Sa'd al-Mashhadī, was previously known only for his copy of the *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā* of 'Atā-Malik Juvaynī, as well as reports on his works in the *Arza-dāsht* by Bāysunghur's chief librarian, Ja'far Tabrīzī, where he is referred to as Maulānā Sa'd al-Dīn. However, there is no other information about Sa'd as a calligrapher or an artist in contemporary or later sources. After a brief description of the manuscript, which bears the name of Bāysunghur on its binding, the article attempts to discover a fuller picture of Sa'd al-Mashhadī's identity. A number of biographical dictionaries appear to equate him with a poet called Ḥāfiẓ Sa'd, an exact contemporary who was also a prominent riddle writer, evidently attached to the court of Bāysunghur. This investigation in turn provides further evidence of an intellectual exchange between the courts of Bāysunghur Mīr-zā and Ibrāhīm-Sultan, where the celebrated writer 'Alī Yazdī also composed riddles, including some concerning Sa'd al-Dīn.

Hassan Ebeid, South Valley University, Qena

The Materials and Techniques Used in the Colouring and Preventive Protection of Mediaeval Islamic Paper

The research investigates the materials and processes used in mediaeval Islamic paper-making and colouring with the aim of identifying the purpose for which certain materials were used to colour the endpapers of books. Organic and inorganic colouring materials available at the time are investigated as well as traditional methods of protecting paper from bio-deterioration.

An interdisciplinary methodology combines a literature review and interpretative analysis, the interrogation of primary historic sources, the technical analysis of artefacts and empirical scientific study. These methods include the translation of unpublished Islamic treatises; the use of mass spectrometry and high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC-ESI-MS) to identify dyes in three historic samples; and testing the antibacterial properties of turmeric, weld and saffron against three strains of bacteria that have been identified in an Egyptian museum.

Results from the literature, including the analysis of original manuscripts, suggest that the process of colouring paper can be traced back to the first half of the eleventh century AD; moreover, fifteen historical recipes used dyeing paper during the Islamic-mediaeval period in Egypt. The recipes prove that processing took place after the formation of sheets of paper, where paper sheets were dipped directly into a dye bath. This job was done by scribes, not papermakers. This research has carried out a preliminary experi-

ment which suggests that some yellow dyes, but not all, could have been deliberately applied in the Islamic-medieval period to the endpapers of books to protect them from bio-deterioration. The probability that the three dyes of turmeric, weld and saffron have useful biocidal properties is supported by a laboratory microbial study. Weld (*Reseda lateola* L.) has been identified in three historic paper samples from the simultaneous detection of Luteolin and Apiginin using HPLC–ESI–MS.

Claudia Colini, Universität Hamburg

Bound by Tradition. New ways and old paths in Yemeni bookbinding workshops in the 19th and 20th centuries

The way a book is bound can give us much information, but unlocking such knowledge is often difficult if only single elements are taken into consideration. Cross referencing multiple relevant elements and putting them into historical/geographical context is a key to learn what the binding can tell us. As a way of example this talk will present the methodology used to identify the trends of Yemeni book bindings in the 19th and 20th centuries by combining and collating the results obtained by different studies – the survey of the Islamic manuscripts in the Oriental Section of Biblioteca Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana in Rome, Italy performed during the first decade of the 2000s by a team of conservators among whom the author; the fieldwork at the Dār al-Maḥṭūṭāt in Ṣana‘ā’, Yemen, carried out by Marco Di Bella between 2004 and 2007; the research on the craft of bookbinding in Yemen at the beginning of the 21st century conducted by Marcella Rubino in 2006. This research, in turn, offered data that could help to understand how and why the artisans’ choices in techniques and style were influenced, both in light of concrete manuscripts and today’s Yemeni book production.

Patrick Andrist, Université de Fribourg / Universität Basel

ParaTexBib: an ERC project dedicated to the paratexts in the Greek manuscripts of the Bible

The project ParaTexBib, or “Paratexts of the Bible. Analysis and Edition of the Greek Textual Transmission”, is an advanced grant ERC project directed by Martin Wallraff (as Principal Investigator) and Patrick Andrist (as Project leader). The 3 main goals of the project are 1) to describe and analyse a representative numbers of Greek New Testament manuscripts containing paratexts; 2) at a more theoretical niveau, to organise these paratexts in an electronic clavis; 3) to edit the most interesting part of them.

The paper presents and briefly discusses two main features of the database, which is at the heart of the project: a) the fact that it was not developed specifically for ParaTexBib, but it uses the IRHT database Pinakes, which was adapted in order to meet the requirements of PTB; b) the construction of a “bridge” between Pinakes/PTB and NTVMR, the electronic codices database of the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung in Münster, so that relevant data can be easily marked in NTVMR and then directly imported into Pinakes/PTB.

Ralph Cleminson, Oxford

Open Recensions, Textus Recepti, and Problems of Edition

It has been recognised since very early times that copying produces variation. As a result, culturally important texts have been subject to correction (διόρθωσις), in order to eliminate variants perceived as erroneous, and to controlled transmission in order to prevent them. This implies that both Antiquity and the Middle Ages had a concept of an “ideal” text which was distinct from any individual witness but which could, in principle, be restored. This is a concept very similar to that of traditional textual critics of modern times, even though the pre-modern ideal may have been conceived very differently.

Ironically, it is the very measures adopted in the transmission of the text – correction and annotation, and controlled transmission leading to an open recension – to try to attain a text that approximated to the ideal that constitute obstacles to the modern critic in the same task. The manuscript evidence is sometimes sufficiently copious for the process to be observed, and – where it provides more than one textus receptus, and/or the original of a translated text – to demonstrate that its results, which tend towards the elimination of minority readings, may suppress variants which according to modern criteria are preferable.

This creates a quandary for the editor. Although the reconstruction of an Ausgangstext is the recognised aim of textual criticism, it may be the textus traditus – equally a reconstruction – that is the cultural artefact that had authority among the people who read it and against which the historical significance of other texts or witnesses must be evaluated. For an edition to be useful it must take this into account.

The argument is illustrated with examples from the transmission of the Slavonic version of the Christian scriptures.

Gregory Kessel, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften / University of Manchester

Transmission of Classical Scientific and Philosophical Literature from Greek into Syriac and Arabic

The paper will provide a brief presentation of an ERC Starting Grant HUNAYNNET.

It is often taken for granted that the Greek-Arabic translation movement (8th-10th c.) that made the whole bulk of Classical Greek scientific and philosophical literature available in Arabic (and that was later handed over to Europe in Latin translations) owes much to the preceding period in the history of transmission of this scientific and philosophical literature, namely translations into the Syriac language that were implemented by Aramaic-speaking Syriac Christians. The problem of continuity between the two periods however has not been tackled thoroughly in scholarship and thus the actual impact of the Syriac translations on later methods of translation has so far not been measured and assessed. One feasible solution to this problem in our understanding of the background to the Greek-Arabic translation movement is to implement a comprehensive comparison of Syriac and Arabic translations by means of

lexicographical analysis. This project offers a research tool capable of allowing this comparison. It will combine methods of online lexicography and of corpus linguistics with the aim of presenting in a systematic and rationalized way the lexical data from the entire corpus of Syriac scientific and philosophical translations, comparing and analyzing its terminology and translation techniques, first, with the extant Greek originals and, secondly, with Arabic versions. The lexicographic database will be an effective instrument providing definite data for the study of Syriac and Arabic translations and their close connections. It will reveal how the Syriac translations along with underlying methods and tools that were put to use for the first time ever by Syriac Christians eventually determined the prosperity of the Islamic sciences. Fully endorsing a principle of open access the database creates a new instrument for a study of the history of the transmission of Greek scientific literature in Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

Robert Hawley, CNRS, Paris

The Syriac manuscript BL Add 14661 and the Greek text of Galen's Simples

The London manuscript British Library Additional 14661 contains Sergius of Reš 'Aynā's 6th century Syriac translation of Books VI-VIII of Galen's important pharmacological treatise *On [the Powers of] Simple Drugs*. The manuscript itself is also very early; it has been dated to the 6th or 7th century on paleographic grounds (that is, more than five centuries earlier than the earliest extant Greek manuscripts of Galen's *Simples*), a fact which makes this Syriac manuscript not only of interest for Syriac scholars, but also for the history of the Greek text of Galen. Several examples will be discussed in which the Syriac text may be used to correct certain passages of the Greek standard edition of Galen's *Simples* published by Kühn. This paper presents research undertaken in the context of the ERC "Oriental" project (ERC-2010-StG-263783 Oriental), funded by the European Research Council's starting grant program, and hosted by the French CNRS (UMR 8167 Orient & Méditerranée).

Natalia Smelova and Naima Afif, University of Manchester

The Syriac Galen Palimpsest Project: research methods and latest discoveries

The paper will present the results achieved during the first year of implementation of the Syriac Galen Palimpsest Project at the University of Manchester.

The Syriac Galen Palimpsest (hereafter SGP) is a bound manuscript kept in a private collection in the USA. It currently consists of 225 parchment leaves and is a palimpsest throughout. Both texts are written in Syriac, the overtext is an example of a Melkite (Rum Orthodox) liturgical book being a type of the book of Octoechos, while the undertext is a translation of Galen's treatise *On Simple Drugs*, produced in the 6th century by a West Syrian scholar Sergius of Resh 'Aina.

Since 2009, an important contribution has been made to the study of the SGP as a result of the large-scale collaboration between scholars, S. Brock, S. Bhayro, P. Pormann, R. Hawley and his team, G. Kessel, and W. Sellers, which created a strong basis and valuable research tools for further exploration and identification of the palimpsest undertaken now within the framework of the Manchester project.

We shall briefly discuss the technology which has been used to enhance the undertext poorly distinguishable with the naked eye and pass on to the methodology and interim results of the current philological research. Another focus will be the study of codicological structure of both the secondary liturgical codex and the original medical manuscript in their interrelation. We shall demonstrate possible approaches to the codicological study of palimpsests with their opportunities, challenges and limitations.

Lucia Raggetti, Freie Universität, Berlin, and Matteo Martelli, Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities

Stone by Stone: Building the Graeco-Arabic Edition of Galen's On Simple Drugs (Book 9)

In the last two years we have been working on a Graeco-Arabic edition of the 9th book of Galen's *On Simple Drugs*, that also takes into account an abridged Syriac version. The starting point was a non-negotiable complete recension of all the manuscript witnesses. From this angle, the comparison between these manuscripts can yield even more information. The Arabic tradition becomes decisive in the constitution of the Greek text, answering questions that would remain open or even pass unnoticed if asked only in the frame of Greek tradition. Moreover, this approach allows to enter in great detail in the translation technique applied to a text that is scientific and literary at the same time. The refined and consistent methodology of translation puts the Greek tradition in the position to guide the selection of the variant readings in the Arabic text. Our working idea is to look for the point of contact between the Greek and the Arabic traditions, understanding the complex process —in which Syriac was involved as well— that brought about the translation, and from there trying to reach the most ancient stage of the Galenic tradition that is possible to attain. This approach opens new dimensions for the stemmatological and editorial discussion, that deserve to be cautiously explored.

Élodie Attia-Kay, Aix Marseille University

Manuscripta Bibliae Hebraicae: Hebrew Bible Manuscripts in Western Europe (England, France, Germany, Italy) in the 12th and 13th centuries: A Material, Cultural and Social Approach

The project MBH examines the place of the Hebrew Bible in Christian Western Europe during the Middle Ages and the history of the material transmission of the Hebrew Biblical text in England, France, Germany and northern Italy. The different forms that the biblical manuscripts took, together with the contents and socio-cultural uses of these artefacts (scrolls and codices), are at the heart of the project. The focus of this investigation is on the material forms of these 'Bible objects' (their structure, their palaeographical

and codicological characteristics, the layout of the text), features of their contents (text, vocalisation, accentuation, annotations, commentaries), their practical uses and the discourses on these uses. Often overlooked in favour of sources dating back to the Ancient world, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, late medieval Biblical manuscripts are not simply textual receptacles but also the products of a culture that must be placed in socio-cultural context. Planned for 2016-2020, in-depth and concrete analyses of a set corpus of sources (Ashkenazic manuscripts produced up to c. 1300, undated sources and fragments) will allow to put a methodology and data grouping to the test, while also enabling to create a database specifically devoted to medieval Biblical manuscripts alongside a 'Manuscripta Hebraicae Bibliae' web portal, which will bring together digital sources, research tools and bibliographical information in order to scientifically elaborate a typology of Hebrew biblical manuscripts produced in the Middle Age. The MBH Project is funded by the Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR), and is hosted by the Aix-Marseille University (UMR TDMAM 7297).

Marilena Maniaci, Università degli studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale, and Patrick Andrist, Université de Fribourg / Universität Basel

New (and renewed) resources in the field of manuscript description (Syntaxe du codex)

Since the last COMSt meeting, the two speakers decided to pursue their collaboration in several directions, including two publication projects: Firstly, they are working on an Introduction to manuscript cataloguing. It will be a handbook organised in three main parts, in order to stimulate reflection and best practices on the topic:

- 1) A general survey about the functions forms and trends in manuscript cataloguing (both electronic and on-print).
- 2) A chapter on the practice of cataloguing, including discussions about the various ways how to describe them (vantages and inconveniences according to the main objectives) and some recommendations
- 3) A series of case studies taken from printed or on-line catalogues, in order to illustrate the possible good and bad options discussed above. Secondly, together with Paul Canart, the speakers are preparing a slightly revised version of their *Syntaxe du codex*, to be published in English. Main changes deals with the Bibliography, some technical definitions, and additional examples; some section will be retought according to the feedback received by readers and reviewers.

Alessandro Bausi, Universität Hamburg

Beta masaheft: Christian manuscripts of Ethiopia and Eritrea: an integrative approach to a manuscript tradition

The project *Beta masaheft: Manuscripts of Ethiopia and Eritrea* is a long-term project funded within the framework of the Academies Programme. It aims at creating a virtual research environment that shall manage complex data related to predominantly Christian manuscript tradition of the Ethiopian and Eritrean Highlands. The main goal of the project is to create a centralized portal collecting all main available data concerning the manuscript culture. During the first phase, the existing classical manuscript catalogues shall be converted in searchable digital format according to a specifically adjusted TEI XML schema and updated according to our current knowledge. In parallel, metadata shall be collected on the texts transmitted in the manuscripts, some of which shall be digitally edited, on the persons related to manuscript production and textual tradition, and on the places in Ethiopia and beyond. The paper shall present the experiences made and challenges faced by the project in its first months.

Stefania Silvestri and Renate Smithuis, University of Manchester

HeSMaC. Catalogue of the manuscripts in Hebrew Scripts from the John Rylands Library

The John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, holds a small collection of Hebrew manuscripts, one of the most significant for its variety. As part of an externally funded project (1/4/15-1/3/18) we are currently producing an online catalogue of all the objects, which comprise codices, scrolls, amulets and other texts in Hebrew scripts. The great diversity of the collection poses several methodological challenges that must be solved through a combination of uptodate methods in the cataloguing, conservation and digitisation of the manuscripts.

Posters

H. Evren Sünnetcioglu, Central European University

Reading and Archiving Practices of Ottoman Imperial Law: A Case Study of the Juridical Opinions of Şeyhülislam Zekeriyazade Yahya Efendi (1561-1644)

As part of an ongoing dissertation project, the focus of this presentation is on the seventeenth-century compilations of the juridical opinions (*fetva*) issued by a prominent chief jurist (şeyhülislam) of the Ottoman Empire, Zekeriyazade Yahya Efendi (b. 1561 - d. 1644) [hereafter, Yahya], in order to reflect upon the dynamics of the juridical opinions' legislative aspects and circulation across the Ottoman Empire. Studies to date have not considered the compilations of chief jurists' juridical opinions in their entirety, disregarding the paratextual elements such as table of contents, marginal annotations and additions, glosses, and prefaces that bear distinct stamps of reading and archiving practices. In the presentation, I will explore two different copies of the same compilation produced by the student and chief secretary of Yahya, Mehmed Efendi of Bursa, who later became the chief jurist. One of the copies was held in the foundation (waqf) library of Hagia Sophia at the seat of the Empire in Istanbul, while the other circulated in Ottoman Bosnia and was held in Karadžoz Begova Library in Mostar as a component of a multiple-text manuscript. The goal is to demonstrate the initial findings of my research on the reading and archiving practices on Yahya's juridical opinions and consider the reflections of the regional dynamics on the basis of the differences of the paratextual elements between the two copies. In this way, I explore how Yahya's legislative contributions during the unstable seventeenth century were received and circulated in different parts of the Empire through the medium of manuscript with an eye to the tensions between universal and doctrinal aspects of law and its practical ramifications and variants in different localities.

Marilena Maniaci, Università degli studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale

MaGi: Manoscritti Greci d'Italia

Within the framework of the research programme "BIM - Bibliotheca Italica Manuscripta", the universities of Bologna, Cassino, Pavia-Cremona, Udine, and Venice are realising the electronic cataloguing and documentation of around 6,500 Greek manuscripts held by Italy's major and minor libraries. Second only to Greece, Italy boasts the richest Greek manuscript heritage among all European nations, thanks to the persistent vitality of Greek culture in central and southern Italy during the Middle Ages.

The analytical cataloging process takes place directly online, partly from scratch, and partly as an updated conversion of previous descriptions. The work is carried out using a specially adapted version of "Nuova Biblioteca Manoscritta" software combined with an online database which provides access to the catalogue.

Alessandro Bausi, Universität Hamburg

TraCES: From Translation to Creation: Changes in Ethiopic Style and Lexicon from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages

The project TraCES (ERC Advanced Grant) aims at an analysis of the Classical Ethiopic language (Ge'ez) as it has been transmitted in manuscripts and texts. An innovative annotation tool is being currently designed in Hamburg for linguistic mark up of this Semitic language, written in a vocalized consonantal script. Once a significant annotated corpus is created, frequency and collocation analysis will for the first time reveal changes in grammatical and lexical choices across centuries. At the same time, a first online dictionary of the Ge'ez language is being created. Linking the corpus to the dictionary will result in a first-ever thesaurus of Ge'ez.

Alessandro Gori, Copenhagen University

IslHornAfr: Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach

The project IslHornAfr (ERC Advanced Grant) provides a pilot study of the Islamic history in Africa as it is reflected in the literary traditions of the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia). Texts contained in the manuscripts from the region that have been known previously or have been for the first time discovered by the project field missions are being classified according to their genres, contents, titles, authors, places of creation, number of witnesses, distribution of witnesses, and linguistic and graphic peculiarities. A new comprehensive picture of the Islamic literary environment in the Horn of Africa, of the manuscript production, and book circulation, shall emerge as a result.