

Editorial

From the *Newsletter* to the *Bulletin*

Between the *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Newsletter* (last issue, 8, appeared in July 2014) and the present first issue of the *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Bulletin*, something important happened. What seemed very difficult has been done and the handbook *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: An Introduction* appeared in January 2015. It can be purchased in book form, in two formats and at a very moderate price, and at the same time is freely downloadable, in accordance with the Open Access policy of the European Science Foundation (ESF). It will be a task for the coming months and years to record and register reactions and reviews, while several presentations are already planned, in order to understand better which is the actual follow-up of this enterprise and which will be its impact in the course of time. With this, the project Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies (COMSt) as an ESF Research Networking Programme came to its end. The end was also marked by the formal evaluation of the project, which had started well before the publication of the manual and took other data in consideration. The final assessment report was more than positive in every respect, which is one more reason of great satisfaction since we are confident that the publication of the handbook can but confirm and substantially augment this encouraging result.

The report strongly stressed the wish that the co-operations founded and fostered within the framework of the COMSt network would continue to be fruitful also in the future and we all in oriental and comparative manuscript studies know how crucial it is for our small scientific communities to reach the necessary critical mass. This awareness also encouraged the decision of launching the *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Bulletin* that, on the one hand, should continue the very positive experience of the *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Newsletter* still taking advantage of the coordinating facilities in Hamburg, where the COMSt web site is based, and, on the other, should also support and if possible enhance the impact and follow-up of the handbook, serving as a network basis for eventual and further projects. Some members of the COMSt Steering Committee and COMSt Handbook Editorial Board have accepted to engage directly in the editorial work or to act as members of the Advisory Board, which has come to include additional scholars who have manifested their interest to COMSt in the course of time.

Scope and objectives of the *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Bulletin* remain within the traditional framework of the COMSt interests, yet there is an even more pronounced ambition of documenting immediately, clearly, still with a standard of excellence and according to the most advanced

scholarly requirements, new ideas, experiences, projects and approaches within the whole world of oriental and comparative (even non-oriental, this is in the end the twofold valence of the red dot in our logo) manuscript studies, both in the form of longer articles, notes, projects announcements and reviews.

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