

## **Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies**

### ***Looking Back, Looking Ahead***

#### **Hamburg, 26 September 2016**

The one-day conference *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: Looking Back, Looking Ahead* (Hamburg, 26 September 2016) provided a forum for reflections on the advances in oriental manuscript studies. Twenty-two speakers had the possibility to speak about the latest research projects conducted in France, UK, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark, Israel, and Egypt. The conference was co-funded by the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures and two projects based at the Hiob Ludolf Centre for Ethiopian Studies at Universität Hamburg, *TraCES: From Translation to Creation: Changes in Ethiopic Style and Lexicon from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (funded by the European Research Council) and *Beta maṣāḥāft: Christian manuscripts of Ethiopia and Eritrea* (Hamburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities).

The language traditions covered included Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic, Greek, Hebrew, Persian, Syriac, Turkish, and the problems addressed ranged from manuscript illumination to critical text editing, from cataloguing to material analysis. Several talks (Stephen Emmel, ‘*Foliation by Opening*’ (*P. Gumbert 2010*, §316.12) and *How to Refer to It*; Ralph Cleminson, *Open Recensions, Textus Recepti, and Problems of Edition*) dealt with the fundamental issues insufficiently addressed in the handbook *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies. An Introduction*.

A number of papers and posters updated the international community on the progress in the projects that were already known but have since advanced significantly. Among these, Malachi Beit-Arié spoke of *SfarData – The codicological database of all the Hebrew medieval dated manuscripts: Presentation of its methodology and demonstrating its website retrieval system*, and Marilena Maniaci commented on her poster *MaGi: Manoscritti Greci d’Italia*. Patrick Andrist and Marilena Maniaci also gave a talk on their ongoing research on *New (and renewed) resources in the field of manuscript description (Syntaxe du codex and more ...)* (see this issue pp. 68–77).

The main aim was to give the floor to those projects that have not yet been made widely known to the COMSt community. Thus, Patrick Andrist introduced the European Research Council project *ParaTexBib*, dedicated to paratexts in the Greek manuscripts of the Bible (see this issue pp. 62–67), Stefania Silvestri and Renate Smithuis presented the new project *HeSMaC: Catalogue of the manuscripts in Hebrew Scripts from the John Rylands Library*, Élodie Attia-Kay spoke of the project *Manuscripta Bibliae Hebraicae: Hebrew Bible Manuscripts in Western Europe (England, France, Germany,*

Italy) in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: A Material, Cultural and Social Approach, and Alessandro Bausi (with Eugenia Sokolinski) spoke of the new project *Beta maṣāḥaft*. The poster project presentations included *TraCES* (Alessandro Bausi) and *IslHornAfr: Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach* (Alessandro Gori).

Syriac studies were significantly represented with the talks by Gregory Kessel on *Transmission of Classical Scientific and Philosophical Literature from Greek into Syriac and Arabic*, and by two papers dealing with Galenian corpus, Robert Hawley on *The Syriac manuscript BL Add 14661 and the Greek text of Galen's Simples*, and Natalia Smelova and Naima Afif, *The Syriac Galen Palimpsest Project: research methods and latest discoveries* (see this issue pp. 5–16). The Arabic tradition of the Galen's text was discussed by Matteo Martelli and Lucia Raggetti in their talk *Stone by Stone: Building the Graeco-Arabic Edition of Galen's On Simple Drugs (Book IX)* (see this issue pp. 47–57). The talk by Konrad Hirschler on *Text Reuse in Medieval Syrian Manuscripts* focused on the vicissitudes of Arabic books from Damascus mediaeval library.

The conference was of particular value for researchers who are still working on or have just completed their dissertations and have had limited opportunity to discuss their research results with a wide academic audience. Among them were Rouzanna Amirkhanian-Mézrakian, *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*, Marta Silvia Filippini, *New Evidences in Armenian Codicology: Analysis of a Recently Discovered Armenian Manuscript from the Fourteenth century* (see this issue pp. 38–46), Claudia Colini, *Bound by Tradition. New ways and old paths in Yemeni bookbinding workshops in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries*, Hassan Ebeid, *The Materials and Techniques Used in the Colouring and Preventive Protection of Mediaeval Islamic Paper*, Shiva Mihan, *Hidden from Scholarly Eyes for a Century: An unknown Bāysunghurī manuscript sheds new light on his court and library*, and (as a poster presentation), H. Evren Sünnetcioglu, *Reading and Archiving Practices of Ottoman Imperial Law: A Case Study of the Juridical Opinions of Şeyhülislam Zekeriya Zade Yahya Efendi (1561–1644)*.

The slides of most of the presentations have been published online at <<https://www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/en/comst/conferences/comst2016.html>>; selected papers have been published in the present Bulletin issue.

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