

The Emergence of Multiple-text Manuscripts Hamburg, 9 to 12 November 2016

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures at Hamburg University organized a four-day conference dedicated to the ‘multiple-text manuscript’ from 9 to 12 November 2016. It was a next step from the conference ‘One-Volume Libraries. Composite Manuscripts and Multiple Text Manuscripts’ (7 to 9 October 2010, see conference report in COMSt Newsletter 1 (2011), 16), whose proceedings have now been published with the De Gruyter and are available online at <<https://www.degruyter.com/view/product/476788>>.

The conference illustrated the wide range of what can be defined as a ‘multiple-text manuscript’ (MTM) in various traditions, from Ancient Mesopotamia to India, from Coptic Egypt to China, from Bohemia to England, from Ethiopia to Russia.

Several speakers focused on the changes of the composition of miscellaneous manuscripts in time. Paola Buzi (Rome) in her talk *The Ninth-Century Coptic Book Revolution and the Emergence of MTMs* showed how the number of multiple-text manuscripts was an exception limited to apocryphal collections prior to the sixth century and became a norm in Coptic manuscripts after the ninth century, the time which also coincided with parchment replacing papyrus as the main medium. Konrad Hirschler (Berlin), *Composing / Editing Arabic Multiple-Text Manuscripts in the Late Medieval Period*, focused on how the historical library catalogues help us understand the way the MTMs became the default format in Arabic literature.

The issues of canonization of multiple-text collections were touched upon in the talks of, among others, Lara Sels (Leuven), *The Emergence of MTMs in Slavonic: On Mixed Content Manuscripts and Erotapokriseis*, Francesca Maltomini (Florence), *Poetic MTMs in the Byzantine era*, Lucia Raggetti (Berlin), *Rolling Stones Do Gather: MS Istanbul Aya Sofya 3610 and Its Collection of Mineralogical Texts*, and Alessandro Gori (Copenhagen), *Text Collections in the Arabic Manuscript Tradition of Harar: the Case of the Mawlid Collection and of šayḥ Hāšim’s al-Faḥ al-Raḥmānī*.

Several speakers also considered the compilers and their intentions when creating anthologies, among them François Déroche (Paris), *The Prince and the Scholar. About the Use of Miscellanies in Late Medieval Marocco*, Nuria Martínez de Castilla (Paris), *Morisco Single Volume Libraries*, Lucie Doležalová (Prague), *Selection, Association, and Memory: Personal MTMs in Late Medieval Bohemia*, and Alexandra Gillespie (Toronto), *Bookbinding as Codicology – Medieval English Manuscripts and the Case of Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales*.

The margins of the definition of a ‘multiple-text manuscript’ were explored and expanded by Niek Veldhuis (Berkeley), *Multiple-Composition School Extracts from Mesopotamia*, Andreas Lehnardt (Mainz), *Hebrew and Aramaic MTMs Discovered in Binding Fragments*, and Nikolay Dobronravyn (St. Petersburg), *A Fluid Standard: Text Selection in the kundi Manuscript Books in Brazil*.

Biblical manuscripts were approached as ‘multiple-text manuscripts’ by several speakers. Ronny Vollandt in his talk on *MTMs in the Judaeo- and Christian Arabic Tradition* showed that the Old Testament manuscripts were frequently composed of distinct blocks, written by different hands. Matthew Crawford (Melbourne) spoke of *The Eusebian Canon Tables as a Corpus-Organizing Paratext within the Multiple-Text Manuscript of the Fourfold Gospel*.

The final discussion (led by Marilena Maniaci, Cassino) tried to approach and where possible normalize the multiple terminology used by the speakers. A multiple-text manuscript should be seen as a complex, or a miscellaneous, manuscript with more than one text, irrespective of the circumstances in which this multiplicity evolved. Both codicologically simple and composite manuscripts may be both single- or multiple-text ones. Multiple-text manuscripts may present either an unbroken sequence of texts, or a set of combined units, may be unitary or non-unitary. In defining a multiple-text manuscript one should always consider the structure of the manuscript, and distinguish the various codicological and textual layers. Among other things, this understanding would mean that multi-block manuscripts (such as the Old Testament ones mentioned above) are not necessarily multiple-text manuscripts and should not be treated as such. Also the Four Gospels, once they have been organized in one manuscript with the Canon tables, should not be regarded as a miscellaneous manuscript. Polyglot manuscripts, or manuscripts where interlinear or marginal translation was provided, can only be regarded as multiple-text manuscripts if the translation was not part of the original scribal project. Finally, a holistic approach is necessary when analysing multiple-text manuscripts. While a universal taxonomy is not possible, a deep understanding of all the phenomena involved and a sensitivity are very much desired.

For the full programme and presentation abstracts visit <https://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/cal-details/CSMC_2016_Emergence_MTM_programme.pdf>. Proceedings shall be published in the Studies in Manuscript Cultures monographic series.

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