

Manuscripts East and West – Towards Comparative and General Codicology.

A Conference in Honour of Malachi Beit-Arié

Hamburg, 17–19 October 2017

From 17 to 19 October 2017, the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures at Universität Hamburg organized a conference in honour of the 80th birthday of Malachi Beit-Arié, one of the leading scholars in manuscript studies worldwide. The scholars and scientists working on diverse Asian, African, and European manuscript cultures contributed to a general methodological re-assessment of manuscript research and to new comparative perspectives on codicology and palaeography.

Quite naturally, a significant part of papers were dealing with the Hebrew manuscript tradition. The social contexts of manuscript production were studied by Sarit Shalev-Eyni (Christian urban settings of the city of Esslingen) and Judith Olszowy-Schlanger (medieval Muslim world, exemplified by the Cairo Genizah). The fates of the Firkovich collection of manuscripts were traced by Shimon Iakerson.

Several papers dealt with various aspects of Hebrew codicology. The layout (in particular, the *mise-en-ligne*) was discussed by Nurit Pasternak. Hebrew manuscript fragments reused in the bindings of renaissance music manuscripts in the ‘Sabbateni collection’ were studied by Edna Engel, who, following some codicological and palaeographical hints, succeeded in dating them to the thirteenth century. Colette Sirat offered a comparative perspective on Hebrew vs Latin codicology. A new project in Hebrew manuscript studies, KTIV – The International Collection of Digitized Hebrew Manuscripts, was introduced by Oren Weinberg. Tamar Leiter spoke of the forthcoming integration of the SfarData database into KTIV.

Other COMSt-relevant traditions covered included Greek, Arabic, Syriac, Coptic, and Ethiopic. In addition, several papers dealt with occidental (Latin) and far oriental (Nepalese, Chinese) manuscript traditions.

Ancient Greek manuscripts (of Aristotle) were studied by Christian Brockmann. Greek (also Byzantine Greek) manuscripts were taken as the basis for a general study on the colophons offered by Marilena Maniaci and Pasquale Orsini.

Arabic manuscript tradition was discussed by François Déroche and Nuria Martínez de Castilla, who focused on Moroccan manuscript bindings. A particular Arabic-language tradition, Qurans from Indonesia, was analysed by Edwin Wieringa. African manuscripts in Arabic script and their layout were at the centre of the talk by Dmitri Bondarev.

The commonalities and variation in the quire production among the different Syriac-language communities through time were studied by Grigory Kessel. New findings in the field of Coptic manuscript studies, in particular within the framework of a recent PAThs project based in Rome, were highlighted by Paola Buzi. An overview of the state of the art in Ethiopian manuscript studies (including issues in codicology and philology) was presented by Alessandro Bausi.

Several papers dealt with what scientific research can contribute to manuscript studies. Henk De Groot discussed the questions that scientific parchment analysis may try to answer. Sarah Fiddymont presented the actual results of an ongoing parchment analysis project, that aspires, through protein analysis, to build up a picture of geographic distribution and craft production quality through time. The study revealed information not only about animal species and sex but also the history of the book object through microbial fingerprints. Ira Rabin showed convincingly how instrumental analysis of writing materials can facilitate codicological studies (in this case on the example of some Hebrew manuscripts). A successful attempt of a virtual reconstruction of palimpsested codices (on the example of some Caucasian manuscripts) was demonstrated by Jost Gippert.

Programme and selected abstracts are available at https://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/register_beitarie2017.html.

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The Zograf Library and Archives: Research Approaches to Digitizing, Cataloguing, and Editing the Sources

Sofia, 27–28 October 2017

The library of the Zograf Monastery on Mount Athos is among the richest monastic repositories in the Slavic area that have been continuously used for centuries—from the Middle Ages till present day. Since 2014, the project ‘The Zograf Digital Archive’ at the University of Sofia ‘St. Kliment Ohridski’ has had the ambition to examine the library and archive repository of the monastery in its entirety, combining the expertise of a number of scholars from different fields. Thus over 400 manuscripts have been digitized by the monastery and made available in the *Zograf electronic research library* located in Sofia University (<http://www.slav.uni-sofia.bg/zograflib/>).