

**At One Remove: Versions and Other Indirect Evidence  
for the New Testament  
Birmingham, 4–6 March 2019**

The eleventh Birmingham colloquium on the textual criticism of the New Testament took place from 4 to 6 March 2019, convened by Hugh Houghton, the Director of the Institute for Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing. This time, non-Greek versions of various New Testament texts, in particular when they add information in our search for the Greek Vorlage, were in the focus of attention.

In his opening paper, ‘Versional Evidence in the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (1898–2012)’, Gregory S. Paulson (Münster) illustrated how the editors of the most authoritative critical Greek text have been increasingly considering parallel versions in their reconstruction, in particular, since the third edition that considered, speaking of oriental traditions, Syriac and Sahidic Coptic, among others.

Coptic biblical tradition was explored by Hans Förster and Matthias Schulz (Vienna) in their paper ‘The Coptic Version of the Gospel of John – Translating an Understandable Text into Coptic’. For his recent project, they explored not only the most representative Sahidic tradition, but also considered translations in Bohairic, Lycopolitan, and Achmimic; the attested variants relevant for the Greek text have already been incorporated into the apparatus of the 28th edition of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*.

The Syriac text of the Gospels was addressed, in his highlight lecture, by David Taylor (Oxford, ‘New Developments in the Text of the Old Syriac Gospels’), who heavily drew on the palimpsest manuscript with fragments from the Gospels in Old Syriac (sixth century), only recently first described as Sinai New Finds Syriac 37 + 39 (only two other witnesses to Old Syriac Gospel tradition had been previously known). Ian Mills (North Carolina) spoke on ‘The Old Syriac Gospels and Tatian’s *Diatessaron*, Revisited: The Text Critical Use of a Rival Tradition’. Emanuele Zimbardi (Rome/Berlin) focused on how Syriac translation of the New Testament influenced non-biblical Greek tradition in his talk on the ‘Use of Syriac and Greek New Testament for the Biblical Quotations in a *mēmrā* by Ephrem translated into Greek’.

Among other oriental text traditions explored, there was Old Church Slavonic (Neza Zajc (Ljubljana), ‘The Old Church Slavonic Translations of Acts and Matthew by St Maximos the Greek’), Christian Arabic (Elie Dannaoui (Balamand), ‘The Textual Value of the Arabic Text of L2211: The Case of Mark’), Robert Turnbull (Melbourne), ‘The Textual Affinities of Codex Sinaiticus Arabicus and its Family’), and Caucasian Albanian (Simon Crisp

(Birmingham), ‘The Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests and their Significance for New Testament Textual Criticism’).

Influences upon the transmitted text coming from the mother tongue of the scribe, who may have been non-native in Greek, were highlighted by Alan Taylor Farnes (Utah) in his paper on ‘The Scribal Habits of Non-Native Greek Scribes’. The place of the multiple traditions in Byzantine biblical lexicography was approached by Reinhart Ceulemans (Leuven) in the second keynote speech of the colloquium, ‘Biblical Lexicography in Late Antiquity and Byzantium’.

Full programme is available at <<http://cal-itsee.bham.ac.uk/itseeweb/conferences/11Coll-timetable.pdf>>.

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### **Scribal Habits in Middle Eastern Manuscripts Princeton, 10–11 May 2019**

The workshop ‘Scribal Habits in Middle Eastern Manuscripts’ was convened by Sabine Schmidtke and George A. Kiraz and took place in the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, on 10 and 11 May 2019.

The idea behind the workshop was to focus on the role of the scribe in creating the manuscripts and understand better the process by which the manuscripts were produced. It brought together scholars from various disciplines to study how the scribes shaped the transmission of literary texts they copied. The workshop dealt primarily with Middle Eastern manuscripts written in Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Armenian, Coptic and other languages.

Greek scribes of the New Testament were in the focus of the talks of Alan Taylor Farnes, ‘Direct Copies as Test Cases in the Quest for Scribal Habits’ and of Thomas C. Schmidt, ‘Scribes and the Book of Revelation in Eastern New Testaments’. Greek biblical scribal habits were further addressed by Michael Dormandy in his paper ‘“We are the sum of our habits”: Aggregate Scribal Habits of Whole Bible Manuscripts’.

Techniques of Coptic scribes writing in Greek were explored by Elizabeth Buchanan in her paper ‘Connecting the Dots: Using Diaeresis as a Source of Information about Scribal Practices in Greek Papyri in Sixth-Century Egypt’. Diacritical practices were also the interest of Julia G. Krivoruchko, this time applied to (Levantine) Jewish scribes writing Greek in Hebrew characters: ‘The *niqqud* in medieval Judeo-Greek manuscripts: research expectations vs. scribal practice’. Jewish scribal practices in Hebrew texts were dealt with by