Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Newsletter No. 1

In this issue

Editorial

We would like to heartily welcome you to the first issue of the Newsletter of the European Science Foundation Research Networking Programme in Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies (COMSt)[1].

This Newsletter, aimed at both publicizing the ongoing COMSt activities and providing a place for junior and established scholars to share their project ideas and intermediate or final research results, is the first in a series: the editors are hoping to be able to issue the COMSt Newsletter biannually, and are therefore looking forward to your contributions, *whether you are already involved in COMSt or are simply conducting research in one of related fields.*

Beside the sections already featured in this Newsletter (descriptions of major Projects in manuscript studies; presentations of Individual research in manuscript studies; Conference reports as well as a selection of scholarly Miscellanea), such structural elements as Dissertation abstracts and New publications are foreseen in future, depending on the texts submitted.

We hope that you will find this Newsletter both interesting and informative.

Editors

---

[1]   For detailed information on the COMSt network, please visit our website at *www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST*.

COMSt. Looking ahead

The COMSt programme officially opened with a meeting of the representatives of the nine originally funding European countries[1] on 3 June 2009 at the ESF headquarters in Strasbourg. Its operative phase was kicked off by the Launching conference in Hamburg, on 1-3 December 2009[2]. The declared goals were to enable academic dialogue between scholars working in the same subdisciplines of manuscript studies applied to another language or region, as well as interdisciplinary communication; to establish a standard methodology for Oriental manuscript studies, too often confined to a narrow sectorial and regional dimension; and to make scholars more sensitive to the neighbouring fields and enable teamwork on regional and thematic levels.

In the course of the first programme phase, as a tangible sign of the growing interest in the programme, more member organizations joined in, bringing the total number of officially involved European countries to thirteen by the end of the 2010[3].

At the same time, some necessary measures of strategic readjustment have been taken: the original 'Digital Philology' team was reshaped into a broader 'Digital Approaches to Manuscript Studies' transversal team, which will provide the necessary input to each of the other teams; and the study of illuminated manuscripts as such – not a main theme of COMSt since the very beginning – will be definitely considered within the scope of the 'Codicology' team.

In keeping with the programme goals, and with the working schedule approved by the Steering Committee, five international multidisciplinary workshops were convened in 2010, one by each of the five methodological Teams in which the programme work is organized[4]. The 2010 workshops[5], although different for papers and number of participants, have developed from Hamburg to Istanbul in a similar atmosphere of lively, passionate, and sometimes positively fierce discussions, which have once again confirmed the intrinsic necessity of the COMSt initiative and the urgency of developing a deeper methodological consciousness, and

a dynamic 'grammar' of Oriental manuscript studies – and not really 'contents standards' (which has never been the actual goal of COMSt). In the course of the workshops, animated by early adherents of COMSt as well as by new participants (some joining from outiside Europe, including USA; some becoming closely affiliated), several dozens of projects or case-studies have been presented, technical applications of various scope and ambition have been exemplified, and new perspectives disclosed. We all have learnt a lot. On more than one occasion, a productive encounter has been achieved between established scholars and younger, emerging researchers, between projects leaders and Ph.D. students, all involved in different activities ranging from long and solitary work on text editions to cooperative practical team work, from patient, sometimes endless, cataloguing, to field work on the spot in remote and dangerous areas, from sophisticated technical analysis of materials to theoretical problems of encoding, from libraries and institutions management to questions of stemmatology. All this has given us the vivid and real appreciation of the width of COMSt's spectrum. It has also given us, I dare say, the measure of the challenge we are facing, i.e. the realization of our declared goal: a reference handbook – traditionally printed, but also, with varying degrees of refinement and update, as a web-based tool – to serve as a starting point for even more ambitious scientific enterprises in the near future, and definitively establish a reference standard for researchers and students in Oriental Manuscript Studies.

The real challenge starts now. After enjoying the richness of experiences and scholarly activities, perspectives and human resources which are gathered in the COMSt network (as it has happened in the past for other comparative initiatives), after the initial enthusiasm, one may get the feeling that one's views on some topics differ too much from the others', or one's own methodological approach is not being duly acknowledged. It is essential, however, to not conceal the real problems and reasons of disagreement on specific or even general questions, calling everyone to ecumenical and blurring 'compromise' solutions. On the contrary, it is the time to let differences emerge and make them in turn the object of our scientific reflection. We will probably realize that variances might be sometimes easily interpreted either in terms of terminology or of assumed peculiarities, sometimes of unconsciously accepted practice and scholarly tradition. We all are called to a delicate work of respectful, but critical rethinking.

The most recent COMSt formal activity was the intense and fruitful meeting of the newly established editorial board in Frankfurt on 4 February 2011 that discussed in detail preliminary, yet precise chap-

---

[1]   Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland.
[2]   S. conference report in this issue.
[3]   S. complete list of contributing nations and their representatives ("Steering Committee") under Impressum p. 28.
[4]   For the description of teams and information on team leaders s. *www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/teams.html*.
[5]   23-24 July 2010, Hamburg, 'Digital Support for Manuscript Analysis' (Team 3, 'Digital Approaches to Manuscript Studies'); 22-23 September 2010, Uppsala, 'Cataloguing Projects of Oriental Manuscripts: Evolution of Descriptive Criteria' (Team 4, 'Cataloguing'); 25-26 October 2010, Leuven, 'Textual Criticism of Oriental Manuscripts' (Team 2, 'Philology'); 26-27 November 2010, Pisa, 'Book Materials in Oriental Cultures' (Team 1, 'Codicology. Palaeography'); and 20 December 2010, Istanbul, 'Conservation Studies on Oriental Manuscripts' (Team 5, 'Conservation and Preservation'). S. workshop reports in this issue.

ter outlines of the projected handbook, singled out strategic goals and scientific requirements. The editorial team has agreed in planning the publication of an 'Introductory handbook': this testifies to the COMSt interest in addressing scholars, but especially younger researchers at every level, and is at the same time an answer to the increasingly strong interests that the younger themselves in their turn have manifested towards the COMSt initiative, as evidenced by the number of grants applications and the average quality of the reports.

Alessandro Bausi
COMSt Steering Committee Chair

Projects in manuscript studies

In each issue of the Newsletter we will be featuring some of the COMSt-related large-scale projects[1].

In this issue:

Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari (Università degli studi di Roma "La Sapienza").

Development of the methodology for the characterization of the Dead Sea Scrolls (BAM, Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing, Berlin).

Futūḥ al-buldān series (Cagliari-Naples, Italy).

Islamic Manuscript Database (Leipzig University).

LIGATUS (Camberwell Art College, London).

MaGI. Manoscritti greci d'Italia (Università degli studi di Cassino).

MANUMED (EU – France).

Manuscript Cultures in Asia and Africa (Hamburg University).

The Sinaitic Glagolitic Sacramentary (Euchologium) Fragments (University of Vienna)

Syriac Corpus Project (Brigham Young University).

TITUS: Manuscript-related project data (Frankfurt University).

Trismegistos (University of Leuven).

Turgama: Computer-Assisted Analysis of the Peshitta and the Targum: Text, Language and Interpretation (University of Leiden).

Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari.

The CMCL had the initial aim to form a collection of the images of dispersed fragments of Coptic codices so that scholars could easily browse through them and find which fragments are complementary to which in the sense of having originally belonged to one and the same codex. With time, the project grew into a systematic and analytical archive in which all relevant information on the manuscripts themselves, and also on the Coptic literature in its different manifestations, can be stored and retrieved.

The CMCL database operates on web basis and includes (1) Clavis Patrum Copticorum: list of the authors and works of the Coptic literature with information on man-

uscripts, content, and critical problems; (2) Manuscripts: list (a) of the individual collections, (b) of the Coptic codices either materially preserved or virtually reconstructed, especially from the Monastery of St. Shenoute, Atripe (White Monastery); (3) Texts: electronic edition of Coptic texts with Italian translation. A full edition consists of: reproduction of the manuscripts, diplomatic edition of the manuscripts, critical edition of the text, with translation, index of the words with grammatical explanation, linguistic analysis; (4) History of literature: chronological description of the development of the Coptic literature in 12 parts (only parts 1, 4, 7 are currently available); (5) Grammar: a computational grammar of Sahidic with a list of words according to the grammatical categories; and (6) Bibliography: complete bibliography for Coptic studies. The data are arranged in Unix files, which constitute the tables of a relational database, in turn divided in three sections: one for data about manuscripts, one for data about literature works (the Clavis Coptica), one for the texts themselves.

The electronic text editions, apart from having their own value, are also conceived as the basis for a thesaurus. From the text transcription file, an interactive system of filters produces legible texts in different shapes (diplomatic transcription, critical edition, etc.), indexes, and grammatical and syntactic analysis. The history of the Coptic literature is a complex hypertext, whereas the bibliography is presented in the normal form of an electronic database. The computational grammar system allows obtaining an

Ms. Naples, National Library, IB.III, parchment, 10-11th cent., fols. 79v-80r, Shenoute, Logoi 5: "You, O Lord (W44)".

---

1   If you would like to see your project featured in one of the forthcoming Newsletters please contact us.

automated analysis of Coptic texts, classifying both sentences according to their structure, and the internal sub-structures of a sentence.

Contact: Tito Orlandi, orlandi@rmcisadu.let.uniroma1.it.

Web: http://cmcl.let.uniroma1.it.

Development of the methodology for the characterization of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Dead Sea Scrolls collection comprises approximately nine hundred fragmented ancient manuscripts written on papyrus, parchment and leather. Post-discovery treatments and very old age resulted in such a degree of deterioration that rendered Dead Sea Scrolls material hardly comparable with anything known. Beyond the questions of preservation, preparation techniques and provenance puzzle of the Dead Sea Scrolls presents an appealing challenge for a natural scientist.

The Dead Sea Scrolls project of the Federal institute for Materials Research and Testing (BAM) is dedicated to non-destructive characterization of the support and the inks of the scrolls. To that aim we use diverse X-ray fluorescence techniques, Raman spectroscopy and different infra-red methods including synchrotron radiation based reflectance spectroscopy, optical and electron microscopy.

Combination of the appropriate techniques allows evaluating the impact of the post-discovery intervention, to reconstruct the preparation methods and even to obtain conclusive results concerning the provenance of some scrolls.

Contact: Ira Rabin & Oliver Hahn, BAM, Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing, rabin@fhi-berlin.mpg.de.

Futūḥ al-buldān.

Nicola Melis (University of Cagliari) and Mauro Nobili (University of Naples) announce the publication of a new series entitled *Futūḥ al-buldān* under their general editorship, in collaboration with other Italian and international partners. The *Futūḥ al-buldān* is a well-known work of al-Balāḏurī, one of the most important Muslim historians who lived in the third century of hijra. The reference to classical Muslim historiography in the collection's title is coupled with the semantic spectrum of the Arabic root of the word *fatḥ*. It refers to 'military conquest', as well as to the idea of 'open', 'begin', 'reveal'. Thus, the title of the series is a tribute to the great Muslim historian as well as a synthesis of the ideological framework that underlies the *Futūḥ al-buldān* series, which is to disclose pieces of history of the Muslim societies.

The series aims at publishing original works with a multidisciplinary approach, in the field of Islamic history and cul-

ture, drawing connections between the past and the present. The series will offer junior and experienced scholars the opportunity to present alternative readings and approaches. It will give an accessible overview of a specific aspect or topic. Futūḥ al-buldān wishes to challenge the persistent Eurocentric attitude providing studies based uniquely on European sources. At the same time, it seeks to go beyond the specialist approach focused almost exclusively on the study of the "classical" Islamic sources (i.e., based on Arabic, Persian and Turkish) and on the very 'core of the Islamic world'. Accordingly, the series will highlight those languages and specific areas of the Islamic world wrongly regarded as secondary and of minor importance. All essays will be double-blind peer reviewed.

The first two issues currently in preparation are indicative of the chosen scientific method:

1) Pilot issue: a collection of essays from several disciplinary and comparative perspectives that concern the world of Islam.

2) Jean-Louis Bacque-Grammont, Nicola Melis, J. N. Pasquay, The First Description of the Coasts of Sardinia in Ottoman Nautical Instructions (1521-26).

Contact: Nicola Melis, nmelis@unica.it; Mauro Nobili, mauronob81@inwind.it.

Islamic Manuscript Database.

The Leipzig University Library holds ca. 1,700 Islamic manuscripts. The collection, whose beginnings go back to the 17th-century Ottoman wars, covers a wide variety of genres and includes a large and precious collection of Qur'ānic manuscripts. Most of the manuscripts are in Arabic, to a lesser extent in Persian, Ottoman and Turkish.

Witnesses of a library's social life: readers' notes in the Refaiya library.

In the course of a number of projects, partly supported by the German Research Foundation, partly by the German Federal Foreign Office, all Islamic manuscripts in Leipzig are getting digitized and catalogued in databases www.islamic-manuscripts.net, www.refaiya.uni-leipzig.de, www.manuscripts-aceh.org.

While the "islamic-manuscripts" and the "aceh" pages are exclusively focused on digitization, cataloguing, and, in the case of Aceh, restoration and preservation, the "refaiya" project is in addition dedicated to research. This research comprises mainly the history of the private library of the Syrian Rifa'i family in the social, cultural and political context within Ottoman-Syrian history, as well as a research on watermarks including a database linked to piccard-online.

All databases are based on MyCore technology, a non profit open source solution (www.mycore.de). All offer a complete digitization of the manuscripts and can be used in three languages: German, English, and Arabic (the "aceh" project offers Indonesian in addition). The choice of fonts for the transcription follows the standards of the Library of Congress and the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft. The set of languages and respective scripts is being constantly extended, recent additions including Amharic, as well as Javanese, Balinese, and other languages relevant for the Southeast Asian region. Other languages and scripts can be easily set up. We follow a consequent Unicode implementation. The cataloguing format follows mainly the KOHD guidelines, albeit with minor adjustments.

Contact: Verena Klemm, vklemm@rz.uni-leipzig.de.

LIGATUS.

Ligatus is compiling a glossary of bookbinding terms for the accurate description of bookbinding with focus on materials and techniques. This project was initiated following a detailed survey of the manuscripts and printed books from the library of the St. Catherine Monastery in Sinai, Egypt. The Monastery is a unique resource on the history of bookbinding as most of the manuscripts preserve their original bindings.

The variety of historical binding structures observed at the Monastery and elsewhere led to the development of the glossary in a hierarchical fashion, whereby terms are arranged in a parent-child relationship following the structure of a bound book. This allows escalating detail in the description of the binding, from the more general to the more specific components. The structure is generic enough to accommodate any binding structure and therefore the glossary is not limited to specific binding styles.

The glossary is both a collection of terms with definitions and illustrations, but also a robust survey tool which allows the description of specific books. The XML-based glossary is implemented using a RelaxNG schema which is then used for the production of XML documents of bookbinding descriptions.

Contact: Athanasios Velios, a.velios@gmail.com.
Web: http://www.ligatus.org.uk.

MaGI. Manoscritti greci d'Italia.

The project aims at producing an electronic census of the ca. 6,500 Greek manuscripts kept in Italian libraries. Our knowledge of these documents is still limited by the lack of appropriate research tools and particularly by the limited number of available im-

ages. The census, initially based on the recovery of the data provided by existing catalogues, will be complemented by a database of 'first-hand' descriptions, directly created on line by the participants in the project in the form of a shared 'open catalogue' (using the 'Nuova Biblioteca Manuscripta' platform: http://www.nuovabibliotecamanoscritta.it) and enriched by a wide selection of photographs of entire pages and of relevant palaeographical, codicological and artistic details. The general aim of the project is to promote the scientific knowledge of Greek manuscripts held in Italian libraries, through research aimed at a better understanding of their palaeographical, codicological, art-historical and textual features.

Contact: Marilena Maniaci, m.maniaci@unicas.it.
Web: http://www.nuovabibliotecamanoscritta.it/ Greci/index.html?language=it.

MANUMED. Des Manuscrits et des Hommes.

MANUMED is a project network dedicated to preservation and study of manuscripts in the Mediterranean region. It provides technical and financial support for the digitization of manuscripts (originals and microfilms), inscriptions, incunabula, but also oral traditions (folksongs, music, etc.). MANUMED hosts those images free of charge and give access to them in so far the copyright-owners allow that. Far from meeting the ambition of covering entire libraries or museum collections, the project has proved so far particularly effective in dealing with smaller, limited collections and manuscript funds.

MANUMED's new electronic platform E-Corpus (http://www.e-corpus.org/) is a collective digital library that catalogues and disseminates documents, including manuscripts. An electronic newsletter is regulary issued to update all those interested on the new inclusions in the online collection.

The Virtual Library of the Mediterranean Sea (http://data.manumed.org/) aims at establishing a corpus of digital documents, free of copyright, resulting from libraries, archives and museums, public or private collections relative to the Mediterranean countries.

Numerous sub-projects run under MANUMED supervision.

Contact: Stéphane Ipert, s.ipert@gmail.com.
Web: http://www.manumed.org.

Manuscript Cultures in Asia and Africa.

This project, inaugurated in May 2008 and funded by the German Research Association (DFG), brings together a group of scholars working in the field of Asian and African Studies and Computer science, most of them based at Hamburg University. The goal of the project is to contribute to historical and comparative research on manuscript culture in an anthropological perspective. In nine sub-projects, the researchers are integrating evidence from largely neglected areas in current research on media and culture. For the first period of three years, the focus is on the variance of texts and its dependence on the medium of manuscript. The work on the sub-projects and the regular internal meetings are supplemented by interactions with guest lecturers and with visiting fellows spending longer periods of time with the research group. Besides the publications in due course of the results of the sub-projects, the research group is editing a newsletter and preparing a three-volume Encyclopedia of Manuscript Cultures in Asia and Africa (to be published in 2015 by De Gruyter, Berlin) and a Glossary of Technical Terms Related to Manuscript Cultures in Asian and African Languages.

The sub-projects are: Japanese Studies: Variance and Change of Media in Late Medieval Japan: The Tradition of the 'Direct Instructions' (jikidan); Chinese Studies: The Word of Buddha and the Intent of the Benefactor: Media Difference and Text Variance in Sutra Colophons and Votive Inscriptions of Early Chinese Buddhism (4th-7th C); Tibetan Studies: The Manuscript Collections of the Ancient Tantras (rNying ma rgyud 'bum): An Examination of Variance; Sanskrit Studies: In the Margins of the Text: Annotated Manuscripts from Northern India and Nepal; Tamil Studies: Script, Print, Memory: Re-establishing the Caṅkam in Tamil Nadu; Arabic and Islamic Studies: Arabic Didactic Poems, 11th to 17th Centuries: Variants and the Means of Controlling them; Ethiopian Studies: Variance in the Ethiopian Short Chronicles Corpus (18th-20th C); Computer Science: Computer-based Analysis of Asian and African Manuscripts.

Contact: Michael Friedrich, manuscript-cultures@uni-hamburg.de.
Web: www.manuscript-cultures. uni-hamburg.de.

Sinaitic Glagolitic Sacramentary (Euchologium) Fragments.

In collaboration with the Institute for Slavonic Studies (ISS), University of Vienna, this interdisciplinary project is devoted to the recording, investigation and edition of two medieval Slavonic manuscripts discovered in 1975 in St. Catherine's monastery on Mt. Sinai: "Euchologii Sinaitici pars nova" (Cod. Sin. slav. 1/N) and "Missale (Sacramentarium) Sinaiticum" (Cod. Sin. slav. 5/N). The goal of the image processing part lies in the development of techniques and tools for the recording, restoration and analysis of such sources in order to support philological studies. The algorithms developed shall enable philologists to perform their tasks better and faster.

The methodology of the interdisciplinary project is divided into the following tasks:

Image Acquisition: since photographic techniques in the visible range have proven to be insufficient with the objects given, spectral imaging will have to be applied. Multi- and hyper-spectral imaging techniques have become a powerful tool in the scientific analysis and documentation of old manuscripts with "latent" (e.g. palimpsest) texts.

Technical Image Analysis: following their acquisition the digital images have to be registered and analyzed. Preprocessing steps enhance the readability of the text and prepare the images for the following script description and restoration which will be the major part of the technical image analysis.

Material Analysis: in order to complete the overall description of the manuscripts (esp. with respect to their proper dating and localizing) writing materials like inks and colours (pigments) have to be analyzed. This task will be handled by the Institute of Science and Technology in Art (ISTA), Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

Philological Image Analysis: this task aims at the examination of the formal peculiarities of the scripts (palaeographic side) and the form- and function relationship of the writing systems (graphemic side).

Editorial Steps: the editorial steps include the decipherment of latent texts and the preparation of the complete texts of the manuscripts chosen for publication, including commentaries, indices etc.

Contact: Melanie Gau, mgau@caa.tuwien.ac.at.
Web: http://www.caa.tuwien.ac.at/cvl/research/sinai/.

Syriac Corpus Project.

Brigham Young University is preparing an electronic corpus of Syriac literature in collaboration with colleagues at the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford. The long term objective is to prepare a morphologically and lexically tagged corpus of all of Syriac literature. However, the proximate goal is to publish a searchable plain-text corpus of about one million words. In general the project will work diachronically through the corpus of Syriac literature, and this first phase of the project will include all Syriac literature written by the end of the fourth century.

Image source: http://slovo-aso.cl.bas.bg/sinai.html
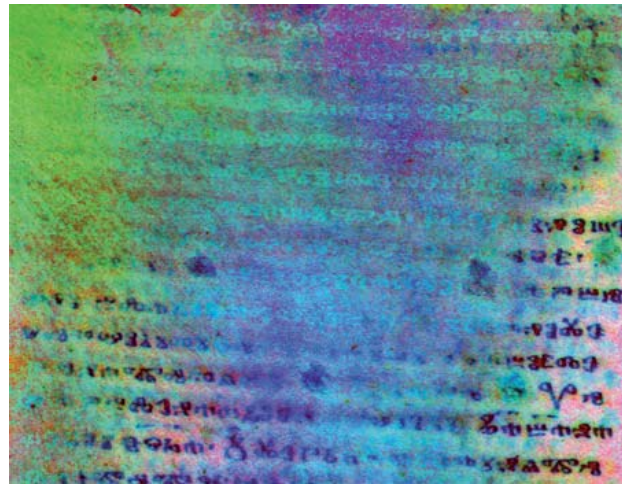
Since the project is research driven, the corpus also represents the current research interests of associated scholars and research partners. Thus far, over five million words have been transcribed from published editions and manuscripts, an electronic lexicon is in preparation, and five years of research has been invested in developing efficient computational tools for segmenting and tagging the corpus.

Contact: Kristian S. Heal, kristian_heal@byu.edu.
Web: http://cpart.byu.edu/?page=112&sidebar.

TITUS: Manuscript-Related Data in the TITUS Project.

The TITUS project ("Thesaurus Indo-germanischer Text- und Sprachmaterialien") was founded in 1987 with the aim of co-ordinating the efforts to establish databases of written texts in ancient Indo-European (and adjacent) languages and to create comprehensive electronic corpora of these languages. Since 1995 the steadily growing materials it hosts have been accessible online (cf. http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/texte.htm), an interactive retrieval engine providing elaborate search facilities (cf. http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/search/query.htm).

Soon after the establishment of the online server, the project started to develop means of providing manuscript images along with the textual materials contained in them. As early as 1995, a subproject was conceived that was devoted to the Tocharian manuscripts of the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz; in the course of this project, all 4074 manuscripts concerned were digitized and electronically edited (cf. http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/tocharic/thtframe.htm), thus paving the way for a thorough digitization of the Berlin Turfan collection (cf. www.bbaw.de/forschung/turfanforschung/dta/). At present the images of Sogdian, Middle Persian, Parthian, and Saka manuscripts are being linked to the respective corpora (cf., e.g., http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/iran/miran/sogd/sogdn-swc/sogdn129.htm). Among the many other Oriental manuscript resources that have been prepared in a similar way, we may mention Avestan (cf. http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/didact/idg/iran/avest/avestmss.htm), Maldivian (http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcc/ind/nind/adhiv/adhiv.htm),
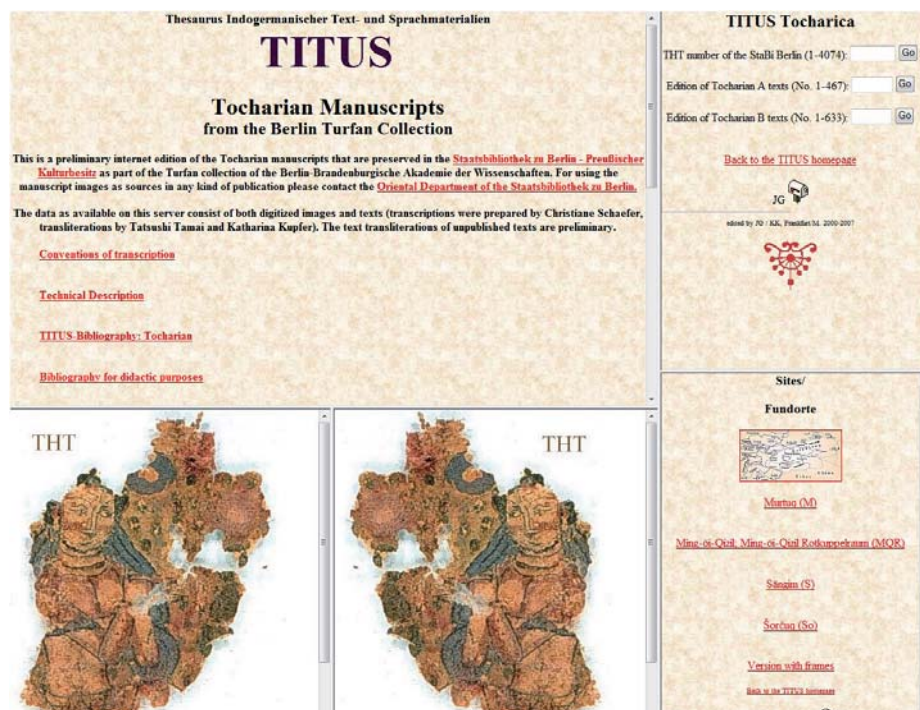
or Georgian manuscripts (cf., e.g., http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/cauc/ageo/xanmeti/grlekt/grlek.htm).

Since 1998, special emphasis has been placed on the decipherment and analysis of palimpsests of Caucasian provenance. In http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcc/cauc/ageo/xanmeti/vienna/vienn.htm, the TITUS server provides access to the Old Georgian palimpsest Codex Vindobonensis georgicus no. 2 of Vienna; and an electronic edition of the Sinai palimpsests Sin.georg. N13 and N55, whose lower layers contain the only manuscript remains of the Caucasian "Albanians" of the Middle Ages as well as some valuable Old Armenian originals, is currently being prepared (printed editions have been published as vols. 1 and 2 of the series "Monumenta Palaeographica Medii Aevi", subseries "Ibero-Caucasica", Turnhout: Brepols, 2007 / 2009).

Due to copyright reasons, the materials are password protected. Interested scholars can apply for access by filling in the form in http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/titusstd.htm.

Contact: Jost Gippert, gippert@em.uni-frankfurt.de.
Web: http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de.

Trismegistos

The metadata database Trismegistos is a platform aiming to surmount barriers of language and discipline in the study of late period Egypt and the Nile valley (roughly BC 800 - 800 AD). It brings together a variety of projects dealing with metadata, mainly of published documents.

It contains databases on persons in Greco-Roman Egypt, on papyrus archives and papyrus collections, on places where texts were written, found or even just mentioned in texts.

The core component is Trismegistos Texts (http://www.trismegistos.org/tm/index.php), which includes papyrological and epigraphic texts, not in Greek, Latin, Egyptian and other languages used in Egypt (currently 111,561 records). Most of the metadata are provided by partner projects, normally limited to texts in a certain language, on a certain writing surface (e.g., papyrus) or of a certain type (e.g., literary vs. documentary). Several existing databases like HGV (Greek documentary papyri, Heidelberg; http://aquila.papy.uni-heidelberg.de/ gvzFM.html), BCD (Coptic Documents in Brussels; http://dev.ulb.ac.be/philo/bad/copte/), DAHT (Demotic texts, Cologne; http://www.trismegistos.org/daht/), Arabic documents (Zürich) and LDAB (literary texts in all languages, Leuven; http://www.trismegistos.org/ldab/) are closely interlinked and easily searchable. The LDAB is not confined to Egypt, but also includes books from the Latin West and from the Near East (e.g. Syriac and Arabic manuscripts).

The core databases (LDAB, DAHT, BCD) allow not only searching but also the automatic creation of graphs, which show the division of texts by date, place, writing material, book form, author and contents.

Contact: Willy Clarysse, willy.clarysse@arts.kuleuven.be.
Web: http://www.trismegistos.org.

Turgama: Computer-Assisted Analysis of the Peshitta and the Targum: Text, Language and Interpretation.

The TURGAMA project concerns a computer-assisted linguistic analysis, incorporating matters of text-historical interest and translation technique, of the Peshitta. It covers two closely related topics: the language and textual history of the Aramaic translations of the Bible (in this case Targum Jonathan) and the language of Classical Syriac documents which (unlike the Peshitta) are not themselves translations.

TURGAMA started in 2005. It is the successor of CALAP (Computer-Assisted Linguistic Analysis of the Peshitta), a joint research project of the Peshitta Institute Leiden and the Werkgroep Informatica at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. CALAP concerned the computer-assisted analysis of Peshitta-Kings (Janet Dyk and Percy van Keulen) and Peshitta-Sirach (Wido van Peursen) and the development of computer programs (Constantijn Sikkel and Hendrik Jan Bosman). The CALAP project leaders were Konrad Jenner and Eep Talstra.

In TURGAMA the CALAP model of computational textual analysis and the computer programs required

The TURGAMA project team at work

for it are further developed, applied to other parts of the Peshitta (Judges and Psalms), and extended towards the Targum (Judges) and a corpus of original (non-translated) Syriac texts, namely the Book of the Laws of the Countries or Dialogue on Fate.

Contact: Wido van Peursen, w.t.van.peursen@religion.leidenuniv.nl.

Web: http://www.hum.leiden.edu/religion/research/research-programmes/turgama.jsp.

Individual research in manuscript studies

Alongside presenting larger research projects, the Newsletter gives the opportunity for individual researchers to inform the broader academic public about their ongoing research. In the current issue we are presenting some of the ongoing projects conducted by younger researchers who were given the opportunity to attend one of the COMSt 2010 workshops.[1]

In this issue:

Zotenberg's Egyptian Recension (ZER) of 1001 Nights.

The Thousand and One Nights may appear the best-known piece of Arabic literature in the world. Numerous editions and translations of the text exist, most of them dating back to the 19th century. Nevertheless the Arabic manuscripts themselves are little

studied. Zotenberg – one of the few to have worked on the topic – distinguished three main groups of manuscripts, basing his analysis on the tales, their succession, and the chronological and geographical origin of the manuscripts. One of these groups, now known as 'Zotenberg's Egyptian Recension' (ZER), includes manuscripts containing exactly one thousand and one nights and copied in Egypt at the end of the 18th or at the beginning of the 19th century. This group is the object of my research.

I am carrying out a precise codicological analysis of each of the thirteen manuscripts of the ZER still existing, whether complete or not. Such a study will allow determining whether codicological features confirm the homogeneity of the group. The collected information will be compared to the conclusions of the narratological and philological study of each manuscript's text.

Another aspect of this research will focus on the context in which this group of manuscripts was created. Arabic manuscripts of the Nights were very scarce in the 18th century. Thus, the question must be asked whether the ZER group was produced to address to a growing demand from the Europeans. ZER is the recension that served as a basis for the ancient editions of the text. But the printed texts do not exactly correspond to any manuscript. The edi-

---

[1]   If you would like to see your research featured in one of the following issues please feel free to contact us. If you are interested in a travel grant to attend one of COMSt workshops please visit *http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/bandi.html*.
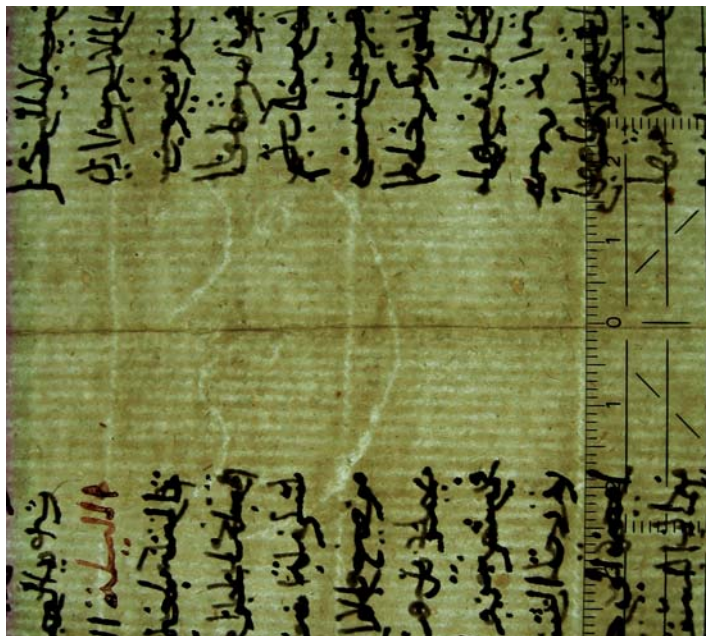
Ms. University of Liège, General Library, no. 2241, fols. 153-154, moonface watermark.

tors preferred to "classicize" the text, rewriting the Nights in proper classical Arabic and thus getting rid of all the signs of Middle Arabic. A close study of the language of the manuscripts will bring to light different aspects of Middle Arabic, a level of language still relatively unknown.

This part of the research will focus on one tale, covering 80 folios on average: the story of Ḥāsib Karīm ad-Dīn. I am preparing a critical edition and a French translation, taking into account all the ZER manuscripts. Regarding the narratological variants, other versions will also be considered since this tale is found in other works.

This research should provide us with a better knowledge of the history of the book as a material object in Egypt at the end of the 18th century. Moreover, the codicological analysis will yield useful information for the classification of the Thousand and One Nights manuscripts, an indispensable prerequisite for the critical edition. The analysis of the text's language will make an important contribution to a neglected field. The text of the critical edition of the tale of Ḥāsib Karīm ad-Dīn will then constitute a solid basis for investigations into the contents of the story. Finally, this research could be the starting point of a wider project to be led by various researchers: preparing a critical edition of the whole text of ZER manuscripts (more than 1500 ff.).

Elise Franssen
F.R.S.-FNRS Ph.D. fellow, Liège, Belgium

Syriac Monastic Anthologies.

The overwhelming bulk of texts of Syriac monastic literature including translations of Greek patristic writings have survived solely in larger anthologies. These, however, have not yet been throughly explored, nor has it been investigated how many of them are still extant. Some spot-checks have brought to light a number of hitherto unknown texts and authors. In order to reconstruct the otherwise lost texts, as well as to understand which processes of reception and transmission these texts underwent, it is of crucial importance to get a better knowledge of how the genre of anthologies "functioned" in the Syriac tradition.

My project is conceived to pursue two interrelated research objectives: first, a detailed description of form and content of 127 Syriac manuscripts of anthologies will be established. This will include: material aspects (codicological, palaeographical and historical data) and contents (identification of each text). Secondly, the collected data will serve as the basis for a study of the particularities of the history of monastic anthologies.

In particular, the development of monastic anthologies in three ecclesiastical groups of the Syriac tradition (Church of the East, Syriac Orthodox and Chalcedonian Churches) will be explored via synchronic and diachronic study with special attention upon their peculiarities and interdependence.

The research will reveal the main trends and peculiarities in the development of the material and structural aspects (size, script, layout, organization of texts, general title, etc) in the period from 6th to 20th centuries and in the history of contents (by means of registering the presence of each text in the anthologies and thus revealing which texts were included, how often a text appears in the anthologies, when each particular text began and ceased to be transmitted).

Wherever possible, relation between extant anthologies will be established. Similar groups will be identified, based upon the affinity in composition between collections.

The study of the transmission history of the texts will reveal the main peculiarities of texts in the form they were transmitted in the anthologies (e.g., abridgment, emendations, extraction, division, etc.) in comparison to the same texts preserved elsewhere. The study of the reception history will reveal the main peculiarities of texts in comparison to the authentic recensions a) that have their origin in other ecclesiastical tradition (e.g., text of the Church of the East that appear in the anthologies of Syriac Orthodox Church), b) texts of seemingly non-ascetic contents (e.g. popular Greek philosophical works). The study of the historic-sociological background will reveal who were the compilers, scribes, commissioners and readers; centres where anthologies were copied.

Finally, the results of the investigation will be placed into the broader context of the history of Syriac literature and monasticism, showing the importance of monastic anthologies for its study (including examination of the way anthologies affect our knowledge of monastic texts).

Grigory Kessel
Ph.D. candidate, Marburg, Germany

Catalogue of the Gironcourt Collection.

By fall 2011, a "full-scale" catalogue of the de Gironcourt collection of West African manuscripts is

scheduled to appear within the Series Catalogorum of the Istituto per l'Oriente "C. A. Nallino" (Roma) and CNRS (Paris). This collection, brought to Europe by the French ingénieur-agronome Georges de Gironcourt (1878-1960) in 1912, is kept at the Library of the Institut de France.

De Gironcourt, who went to West African on an archaeological mission financed by the Ministère des Colonies, the Ministère de l'Instruction Publique and the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, collected 812 inscriptions in both Arabic and Tifinagh script, as well as about 4,000 loose leaves of Arabic manuscripts. These leaves were bound in 12 volumes, most of them miscellanies including many texts.

The history of the mission and the collection, including its codicological and textual characteristics, are described in detail in the introduction to the catalogue, which also provides an overview of the cultural milieu of early 20th-century West Africa analyzed through the de Gironcourt's fieldwork in the region.

Each catalogue entry contains information on the text, the author and the manuscript. Both de Gironcourt collection signature and the inventory number at the library of the Institut de France are provided. The language is always specified (the collection includes three documents in French). The description includes: the title, both in Arabic and in transcription; information on the author; genre; description of the text's contents; incipit and explicit (or, for non-literary texts, first and last lines); information on the copy's completeness and whether it is part of a miscellany manuscript; bibliography, editions and translations of the texts; indication of other existing manuscript witnesses of the same texts; colophon in Arabic and translation of any included information on copyist and date; palaeographic and codicological characteristics; conditions; additional elements (such as corrections, notes, stamps); information on the binding.

Descriptions are illustrated by high-quality images of sample text pages. Indices complete the catalogue.

Mauro Nobili
Ph.D. candidate, Naples, Italy

New critical edition of the primitive recension of the Arabic text of the "History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria" (Lives 17 to 26), translation and commentaries.

The History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria (HP) is generally regarded as the most important text of Coptic-Arabic historiography, as the main source for Coptic history and, in a larger context, as a major literary source for the history of Egypt and the Middle East. Indeed, the text of the HP consists of a series of biographies of patriarchs and, within this biographical framework, it describes various kinds of events belonging to ecclesiastical, political and social history and described from a point of view that may be taken as reflecting the official position of the Coptic Church.

This text is characterized by a complex textual transmission. Preserved in two recensions, it is considered a historiographical tradition rather than a coherent work, since many authors were involved in its composition: the first part of the corpus consists in a translation of earlier Coptic sources, while the second part was written directly in Arabic from the 11th century onwards. Despite the obvious relevance of the so-called "primitive" recension, which is more ancient and closer to the Coptic sources than the later, more widely read and "Vulgate" autonomous reworked version, the former is not yet available in a critical edition.

In this context, by providing a critical edition of a significant part of this text (Lives 17 to 26), the current PhD project is to be seen as an essential contribution to a much needed international project ("International Coptic-Arabic Historiography Project [ICAHP]") that aims to establish for the first time a critical edition of the primitive recension, amended by both the Vulgate recension and the Coptic sources wherever these are extant. The reason for this is that the three parts of the primitive recension are extant in one unique manuscript each, and that these three manuscripts contain a large number of corrupt readings.

A multidisciplinary method will be used to carry out this research project, based on a three-ways approach.

The first one concerns the critical edition. The work will be based on the classical method but some elements will be adapted to this particular kind of textual tradition. This will be done by adapting the traditional edition methods to new technology. Ultimately, this edition should become a main reference that will generate future research in various disciplines (linguistics and philology, history, science of religions, archaeology, etc.).

The second approach relates to linguistics. It will study the language used in the HP in the light of recent research on Middle Arabic, i.e. the language to be defined as "mixed Arabic", which oscillates between two language levels (classical and colloquial). This part of the project, by creating indices, lemmas and databases, will contribute to the studies of Middle Arabic by clarifying its rules and its localization in time, space, societies and confessional contexts.

Finally, the third approach involves historiography. Besides the necessary comparison to the various (Greek and Coptic) sources with the Arabic text, other, unrelated but relevant late Antique sources concerning specific events will be compared to the HP, with an aim to identify and explain differences between these versions.

Perrine Pilette
Ph.D. candidate, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

Conference reports

The Newsletter will be both publishing short reports on recent COMSt conferences and workshops (full-scale reports are available for download on the COMSt website) as well as on other conferences in related fields attended by COMSt members[1].

In this issue:

COMSt conferences and workshops:

> 1-3 December 2009, Hamburg, 'COMSt launching conference'
>
> 23-24 July 2010, Hamburg, 'Digital Support for Manuscript Analysis'
>
> 22-23 September 2010, Uppsala, 'Cataloguing Projects of Oriental Manuscripts: Evolution of Descriptive Criteria'
>
> 25-26 October 2010, Leuven, 'Textual Criticism of Oriental Manuscripts'
>
> 26-27 November 2010, Pisa, 'Book Materials in Oriental Cultures'
>
> 20 December 2010, Istanbul, 'Conservation Studies on Oriental Manuscripts'

Conferences and workshops in manuscript studies:

> 28-29 January 2010, Leipzig, 'Islamische Handschriften in Deutschland'
>
> 3-5 March 2010, Verona, 'III Incontro di Filologia Digitale'
>
> 7-9 October 2010, Hamburg, 'One-Volume Libraries. Composite Manuscripts and Multiple Text Manuscripts'
>
> 21-24 November 2010, Pisa, 'Studia Stemmatologica'
>
> 25-27 November 2010, Pisa, 'European Society for Textual Scholarship: Texts worth Editing'

COMSt Conferences and workshops

COMSt Launching Conference
The text below is only a summary; a complete report (PDF file) as well as some PowerPoint presentations can be downloaded from http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/conf09.html.
The Launching conference of the ESF RNP Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies (1-3 December 2009) was convened in Hamburg, Germany and attended by 65 scholars.
It was opened by a general project presentation by the ESF representative (A. Ciula), the Steering Committee representative (A. Bausi), the programme coordinator (E. Sokolinskaia) and Team Leaders.
The three main conference blocks were: project presentations (twenty two national and international ongoing projects were presented); team workshops; presentation of the results of the team workshops

---

[1]   If you would like to inform the Newsletter readers about a forthcoming conference or a conference you have attended please feel free to send us your texts that we will consider for publication in the forthcoming Newsletter issues.

and discussion of activity planning.
Beside those presented in this Newsletter (s. above) one could particularly highlight such projects and initiatives as TEUCHOS Zentrum für Handschriften- und Textforschung (Hamburg University, http://www.teuchos.uni-hamburg.de); Katalogisierung der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland (KOHD, http://kohd.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/frameuk.htm and http://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/198450.html); Manuscriptorium (http://www.manuscriptorium.com) platform for a European digital library of manuscripts; the unique quantitative electronic database for codicology, SfarData (Hebrew University, Jerusalem, http://www.sfardata.nli.org.il).
Two projects were presented for Ethiopian studies: ETHIO-SPARE: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia: Salvation, Preservation and Research, which aims at exploring, securing, digitizing and cataloguing manuscript collections in churches and monasteries of Ethiopia (Hamburg University, http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/ethiostudies/ETHIOSPARE/); Mazgaba seelat database for recording Ethiopian art, architecture and culture (http://128.100.218.174:8080, username student, password student). Three presentations dealt with Syriac studies: beside the Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (s. above), Syriac Manuscript Database project was introduced as well as the digital cataloguing of the Syriac manuscripts of the Laurenziana library of Florence.
Technical knowhow was offered, among others, by Matthew Driscoll's exemplification of the possibilities the Text Encoding Initiative (http://www.tei-c.org/index.xml) in its P5 version offers for digitization of texts and particularly for catalogue descriptions of manuscripts.
The parallel team sessions of the five thematic teams of COMSt (Codicology, Philology, Digital Approaches to Manuscript Studies, Cataloguing and Preservation) were a combination of personal project presentations and brainstorming round table discussions as far as future COMSt activities are concerned.
Among the discussion points were the scope of the project, the best mode of activities, the expected results and the desired technical standards. An activity plan was then presented by the team leaders.
ES

Digital Support for Manuscript Analysis

This report is only a summary; a complete report (PDF file) can be downloaded from http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/meet3-1.html.
The aim of the first meeting of COMSt Team 3 (23-24 July 2010, Hamburg) was to give an overview of technical possibilities issues in the field of manuscript studies, mostly focusing on codicology and palaeography, although some other aspects, such as cataloguing and editing, were touched upon.
Relevant projects not sufficiently discussed at the launching conference were presented. Manfred

Thaller showed, through the example of a digitization project of German charters, how the digital approach is actually consisting in several layers of interpretation and how those layers are built upon one another. M. Thaller stressed the fact that most systematic digitization projects remain underused and that it is therefore important that a project does not confine itself to digitization alone but immediately builds knowledge upon it. Andreas Lammer reported on the D.A.R.E. (Digital Averroes Research Environment) project run at the University of Cologne (Thomas-Institut). His main points concerned the interrelationship of the three versions of Commentaries to Aristotle provided by the author (Short, Middle, and Long), composed in Arabic, but often preserved only in a Latin translation. Lammer largely dwelt upon the structure of the XML databases established by the project, especially upon the "semantic ontology" behind the structure. The final goal of the "ontology" is the global reconstruction of the interrelationship and interaction between manuscript and textual basis (printed editions included), bibliographical primary and secondary data, and their distribution along the historical and geographical axes. Among digitization initiatives presented were MANUMED (Johannes den Heijer; s. also above) and the Ethiopian Manuscript Imaging Project's (EMIP, Steven Delamarter). Two presentations, by Michael Phelps and by Jost Gippert, were related to Multispectral Imaging of Palimpsests, and two talks dealt with natural sciences at the service of manuscript studies: Ira Rabin spoke of creating a writing materials database as a future dating tool, and S. Delamarter showed the results of a case study on X-Ray spectroscopy and a Fourier Transform-infrared analysis of Ethiopian Inks. Other areas where computer sciences could serve manuscript scholars were explored by Bernd Neumann (image restoration and segmentation; palaeography and writer identification; content-based image retrieval; codicological analysis) and Torsten Schaßan. Finally, the TEI P5 model for linking text and images was introduced by Matthew Driscoll and Eric Haswell.

As a result of the workshop, it has been decided to develop databases of digitization projects and digital tool (already available for COMSt members).

<div align="right">ES</div>

Cataloguing Projects of Oriental Manuscripts: Evolution of Descriptive Criteria

The first workshop of COMSt Team 4: Cataloguing (22-23 September 2010, Uppsala) was devoted to several objectives: collect available information on the state-of-the art of cataloguing in COMSt-relevant Oriental cultures; discuss the basic elements of catalogue descriptions; review the computer technologies available and finally plan the team work within the COMSt network.

Among the manuscript traditions covered as far as the state-of-the-art is concerned were Ethiopic (W. Witakowski), Arabic (I. Perho), Syriac (A. Binggeli), Coptic (P. Buzi), Greek (A. Binggeli), Old Slavonic

(P. Ambrosiani). The presentations allowed a comparative perspective as to the differences in practical and methodological approaches and the degree the manuscript patrimony has been catalogued. Other traditions shall be covered in forthcoming workshops.

Some of the fundamental questions of the definitions of manuscript description were then discussed, including the physical (or codicological) description, the palaeographical description, the colophons and the dating of Oriental manuscripts. The issue of complex manuscripts was additionally discussed along with the challenges and benefits of electronic cataloguing (database and XML/TEI-based).

The discussion was fruitful for the elaboration of the Team's COMSt handbook chapter outline. It was further decided to assemble a full bibliography and a glossary for codicological terminology.

For more information visit http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/meet4-1.html.

<div align="right">ES</div>

Textual Criticism of Oriental Manuscripts

This report is only a summary; a complete report (PDF file) can be downloaded from http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/meet2-1.html.

The first COMSt Team 2 workshop (25-26 October 2010, Leuven), co-sponsored by the KULeuven through Caroline Macé's research project CREA/10/004, embedded within LECTIO, the Leuven Centre for the Study of Texts and Ideas in Antiquity, Middle Ages, and Renaissance, was conceived as the first preparatory meeting for the compilation of the Philology chapter of the forthcoming COMSt handbook. It was attended by 50 registered participants, with a particularly large share of junior scholars.

Distinct albeit closely interrelated thematic issues were dealt with in seven sessions. The first was dedicated to the general principles and methodological considerations of critical editions. The key presentations dealt with a comparison between European and Oriental studies (with the examples from Syriac studies, by A. Mengozzi) to the stemmatology perspectives (with the examples from Classical studies, P. Roelli). In the second session, history of manuscripts and textual criticism was in the focus of attention. Main points highlighted were connections between codicology and text history (M. Cronier), particularities of popular literature (Z. Gazakova) and challenges of editing sacred and liturgical texts (W. van Peursen: Peshitta, U. Zanetti: Greek, Coptic, Arabic lectionaries). The third session, on specificities of textual transmission and editorial responses, further highlighted particular texts pertaining to specific settings, with a focus on matters of both interpretation and presentation. The papers dealt with Coptic translations from Greek (H. Lundhaug), a database of Quranic traditions (Corpus Coranicum, M. Marx), the methodological pitfalls of editing a text that only survives in translation (S. Moureau) and editing documentary papyri (W. Clarysse). In the fourth session, devoted to

layout and presentation, it was discussed mainly to what extent, an editor should observe formal features of the text as found in the manuscripts, or, on the contrary, apply alien, mostly modern, criteria of spelling (P. La Spisa, for Arabic), punctuation and interpunction (A. Giannouli, for Byzantine Greek). The fifth session gave floor to eight junior scholars attending the workshop to introduce their PhD projects. The sixth and seventh sessions were devoted to the problems of electronic editions. First, a survey of new tools available (esp. T. Andrews) was presented, along with such specific custom tools as identification tool for Greek quotations (I. de Vos), Classical Text Editor (S. Moureau). Several ongoing projects were presented (Greek Gnomologia, D. Searby; Arabic-Latin text edition, A. van Oppenraay), and the Interedition COST-Action was introduced (J. van Zundert, www.interedition.eu).

The public workshop was followed by a round-table internal philology team discussion, mainly devoted to the layout of the future Handbook. With regard to the methodology of textual criticism in the sense of preparing critical editions, a certain variety of practices has been reviewed, with a sufficient amount of coherence to allow for an analytical overview in the chapter as well as for certain recommendations. For the section on textual history and transmission, a good number of valuable observations have resulted from the workshop: e.g., studies on source criticism, internal transmission, identification of multiple recensions and their – sometimes problematic – distinction from separate texts in the case of fluid traditions, as well as secondary traditions and parallel texts, can and must be carried out as necessary steps towards a critical edition, but also deserve a status of their own, independently of such editions. For a section on specific categories of text requiring specific approaches, the workshop has opened our eyes to the problem of "sacredness", or rather, (a type of) authority in a general religious setting. The workshop has moreover given the impression that the issue of sociolinguistic register as expressed in texts – and the question as how to deal with this in editions – is particularly alive among the Arabists. The team members specializing in other languages will explore the possibilities of adding material from a comparative perspective. For the use of punctuation, the experience with Byzantine texts may give us a useful framework.

ES

Book Materials in Oriental Cultures

The first workshop of Team 1 (26-27 November 2010, Pisa) was devoted to book materials in Oriental manuscripts. An effort has been undertaken to have most COMSt Oriental cultures covered during one single workshop. Extensive presentations highlighted the state of art and new codicological research on Arabic (F. Déroche, P. Sijpesteijn, P. Canart), Armenian (D. Kouymjian), Coptic (P. Buzi, S. Emmel), Ethiopic (E. Balicka-Witakowska), Georgian (J. Gippert), Greek-Byzantine (F. Albrecht, P. Canart, M. Maniaci), Hebrew (M. Zerdoun), Pales-

tinian Aramaic (A. Desreumaux), Syriac (F. Briquel Chatonnet, P.G. Borbone, M. Farina).

All presentations focused on our knowledge of book materials in diachronic perspective; some additionally provided a statistical analysis of material distribution (Kouymjian, Maniaci) or case studies of specific collections (Farina; Gippert). The problem of palimpsests was addressed in several presentations (Albrecht, Gippert, Desreumaux).

The contributions provided a comprehensive presentation of the usages of materials (papyrus, parchment, paper, palm leaves, but also ostraca) in different cultures and epochs.

Additionally, the report of I. Rabin presented the possibilities of modern technologies in the research about manuscripts. In particular, she focused on the natural sciences methods for dating parchment manuscripts, including grain (hair follicle scheme) analysis, DNA analysis, IR reflectography, Raman analysis (chemical composition), XRF analysis (elemental composition) as well as multi instrumental approach.

Full audio and video recording of the workshop will soon be available on the website of the University of Pisa (iTunes U).

The results of the workshop as well as of the subsequent round-table internal discussion in Team 1 will form the basis for the respective chapter of the forthcoming COMSt handbook.

For more up-to-date information visit http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/meet1-1.html.

ES

Conservation Studies on Oriental Manuscripts

On 20 December 2010, the first open meeting of Team 5 took place in Istanbul (the team had previously met in London on 8 March in an informal setting for a team-internal discussion). It was convened immediately following the inauguration of the exhibition of the Aga Khan collection, including manuscripts, in the Sabanci museum. The participants thus had the possibility to get a close view at the exhibits as well as the chance of visiting a local conservation laboratory.

Most presentations dealt with real-life problems encountered by researchers and conservators: difficulties of organizing a digitizing mission (E. Balicka-Witakowska), challenge of digitizing a microfilm collection when the actual manuscripts may have partially disappeared or be inaccessible (T. Pataridze, A. Schmidt), conservation surveys (A. Revithi, S. Fani), case studies of conservation efforts (J. Moukarzel). Manuscript binding as a particular focus of attention of conservators was reflected in a number of presentations (F. Vinourd, K. Scheper, N. Sarris). A discussion evolved upon the presentation of a conservation lexicon project (P. Hepworth), from the necessity of incorporation of more ongoing research. A particular aspect was dealt in the paper devoted to the ethic issues of conservation and preservation (Z. Genadry).

The public workshop was followed by a team-internal discussion aimed at elaborating a concept

for the COMSt handbook and planning of the next meeting.

For more information visit http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/meet5-1.html.

<div align="right">ES</div>

Conferences and workshops in manuscript studies

Islamische Handschriften in Deutschland

On 28-29 January 2010 the team of the German Research Association-sponsored project on Database-supported Recording, Research and Digital Presentation of the Refaiya Family Library of Damascus at Leipzig University Library invited scholars and librarians to discuss the problems connected with preservation and cataloguing of Islamic manuscripts from German collections.

The workshop provided the opportunity for the library representatives to speak about their collections, highlighting the present state of the collections' availability, digitization and cataloguing. The following collections were presented: Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin (J. Gonnella), German Oriental Society, Saxony Anhalt (L. Guhlmann), Saxon State and University Library Dresden (Th. Haffner), Research library Gotha (C. Hopf), Francke Foundations Halle (E. Pabst), State Library Berlin (Ch. Rauch), Bavarian State Library Munich (H. Rebhan).

Projects connected with digitization and cataloguing introduced during the workshop included the Leipzig own islamic-manuscripts and Refaiya (V. Klemm), Manuscript Cultures in Asia and Africa (with the presentation by B. Neumann focusing on digital tools development) and MENALIB: Virtual library Near East (L. Wiederhold). On this occasion, the opportunity was used by E. Sokolinskaia to present the structure and objectives of the COMSt network.

Several specific digital cataloguing issues were highlighted by Ch. Mackert (a database of watermarks), B. Librenz (secondary database catalogue entries in Refaiya), and R. Scholl (the papyri internet portal). T. Seidensticker spoke about the KOHD cataloguing approaches as applied to modern necessities.

Three round table discussions provided an opportunity of knowledge and opinion exchange in such fields as cataloguing, digital tools and possible co-operation networks.

The general programme and list of presentations can be downloaded from http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~orient/orientNeu/index.php?page=aktivit%26a uml%3Bten.

<div align="right">ES</div>

III Incontro di Filologia Digitale

On 3-5 March 2010, the III Incontro di Filologia Digitale took place in Verona. It was organized by the Department of Linguistics, Literature and Communication Sciences of the University of Verona, under the auspices of a scientific committee composed of Italian scholars in German and English

Philology who are also pioneers in the application of digital philology in Italy, Paola Cotticelli Kurras, Adele Cipolla and Roberto Rosselli del Turco. Alfredo Trovato and Mariachiara Pellegrini coordinated the event.

It was the third in a series of meetings focusing on a specific conception of digital philology, where besides philological manuscript studies, applications to language studies are also considered – both historical (use of digital techniques for the research on epigraphic texts: s. papers by Federico Giusfredi and Alfredo Rizza, 'Zipf's Law and the Distribution of Signs'; Manuela Anelli, Marta Muscariello and Giulia Sarullo, 'The Digital Edition of Epigraphic Texts as Research Tool: the ILA Project'; Margherita Farina, 'Electronic analysis and organization of the Syro-Turkic Inscriptions of China and Central Asia'; Mariachiara Pellegrini and Alfredo Trovato, 'Analisi informatica dei fenomeni di interferenza grafematica nelle iscrizioni di Selinunte') and corpus linguistics, in this case, applied to Italian (Manuel Barbera, 'Intorno a Schema e storia del 'Corpus Taurinense''), Sumerian (Marco Tomatis, 'Aspetti computazionali e metodologici della disambiguazione del 'Corpus Taurinense'') and Latin (Stefano Minozzi, 'Latin WordNet: una rete semantica per il latino').

Specific technical questions of text-recognition for printed editions with apparatus (Federico Boschetti, 'Modello collaborativo per migliorare l'accuratezza dell'OCR del Greco antico'), treatment and encoding of critical editions of fragments (Matteo Romanello, 'L'edizione critica digitale di frammenti: problemi teorici e soluzioni tecniche'), extended Unicode standard (Odd Einar Haugen, 'Do we need all these characters? On the transcribing and encoding of medieval vernacular') and encoding of manuscripts-related information (Matthew James Driscoll, 'Mapping the manuscript matrix') were also presented.

General theoretical problems of digital philology as a discipline in its own right were approached (Rosselli del Turco, 'Filologia digitale: ragioni, problemi, prospettive di una disciplina'; Marina Buzzoni, 'The 'Electronic Hêliand Project': theoretical and practical updates'). A last section was mainly devoted to illustrating institutional and practical developments of specific projects (Franco D'Agostino and Matteo Scalzo, 'Toward a Knowledge Based Approach to the Sumerian Culture'; Enrica Salvatori, 'Umanista esperto di informatica o informatico umanista? Ragionamenti su discipline, ricerche e professioni a cinque anni dalla nascita di Informatica Umanistica all'Università di Pisa'; Paola Cotticelli Kurras, Alfredo Rizza and Alfredo Trovato, 'Lessico di Linguistica On line: A Linguistics Lexicon Archive'; Adele Cipolla and Federica Goria, 'Open BMS: a New Software for a Snorri's Edda Annotated Bibliography'). The conference was also the occasion for the presentation 'Il progetto COMSt - Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies' by Alessandro Bausi, who also gave an overview paper on digital philology in Ethiopian Studies ('Etiopistica e filologia digitale').

Selected presentations are available at http://www.dfll.univr.it/?ent=iniziativa&id=2929.

<div align="right">AB</div>

One-Volume Libraries. Composite Manuscripts and Multiple Text Manuscripts

The research unit Manuscript Cultures in Asia and Africa of Hamburg University convenes annual international interdisciplinary conferences devoted to particular aspects of manuscript studies. In 2009, the focus was on colophons (s. http://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/OnColophons.pdf); last year, the complex manuscripts.

The conference One-Volume Libraries: Composite Manuscripts and Multiple Text Manuscripts (7-9 October 2010, Hamburg) brought together scholars from Italy, Japan, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK who discussed the state of the art on the conference topic in the manuscript cultures of their specialization as well as introduced their own research results in this context. The language cultures covered included Arabic (G. Endreß; A. Gori for Ethiopian Islamic manuscript tradition), Chinese (M. Friedrich, I. Galambos), Coptic (P. Buzi), Ethiopic (A. Bausi), Greek (M. Maniaci), Hebrew (A. Shivtiel), Japanese (N. Gülberg), Latin (A. Camplani), Malay (U. Kratz), Ottoman Turkish (J. Schmidt), Sanskrit (G. Melzer, H. Isaacson), Tibetan (S. van Schaik).

An interesting case study was offered by the interconnected presentations by A. Bausi and A. Camplani, who explored the ways of a miscellany collection in different traditions and illustrated the necessity of a multidisciplinary approach in a research aiming at the reconstruction of text transmission history.

The contribution of M. Maniaci illustrated the usefulness of a quantitative statistical approach in exploring trends and tendencies in transmission and diffusion of certain manuscript types.

Presentations were followed by a discussion chaired by such leading scholars in manuscript studies as François Déroche (EPHE, Paris) and Peter Gumbert (Leiden). The latter was particularly instrumental in arriving at a clearer definition of the nature of a composite manuscript and providing advice as to the treatment of such manuscripts by codicologists, philologists and, above all, cataloguers of manuscripts.

The conference was completed by a presentation of the concept of the Encyclopedia of Manuscript Cultures in Asia and Africa.

Some of the conference abstracts are available from http://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/Abstracts-One-Volume-Libraries.pdf.

<div align="right">ES</div>

Studia Stemmatologica

The Finnish Cultural Foundation is supporting a series of meetings called "Studia Stemmatologica", organized by Tuomas Heikkilä, Teemu Roos and Petri Myllymäki (http://cosco.hiit.fi/stemmatologica/). After a first workshop in Helsinki (January 27-30, 2010) and a second one in Uppsala (June 20-23, 2010), the third meeting took place in Pisa on November 21-24, 2010. The aim of this research network is to reassess the role of "stemmatology" in textual scholarship, to compare different methods and approaches, and to formalize and computerize some steps of the stemmatological method. The production and usage of data from artificial textual traditions is an important element in this project: several textual traditions have been created over the last few years, in order to allow experimenting on them in a controlled way (see, e.g., P.V. Baret, C. Macé, P. Robinson, et al., "Testing Methods on an Artificially Created Textual Tradition", in: *The Evolution of Texts: Confronting Stemmatological and Genetical Methods. Proceedings of the International Workshop held in Louvain-la-Neuve on September 1-2, 2004*, ed. by C. Macé, P. Baret, A. Bozzi and L. Cignoni, Roma - Pisa, 2006 [Linguistica Computazionale 24], pp. 255-283; and T. Roos & T. Heikkilä, "Evaluating methods for computer-assisted stemmatology using artificial benchmark data sets", *Literary and Linguistic Computing*, 24, 2009, pp. 417-433). Next to some significant technical improvements realized, stimulating debates are going on about the status and goals of stemmatology, since it seems that scholars dealing with different textual traditions from different periods of time may have different views in this matter.

For more information contact Tuomas Heikkilä, tuomas.m.heikkila@helsinki.fi.

<div align="right">CM</div>

ESTS: Texts worth editing

The European Society for Textual Scholarship (www.textualscholarship.eu) has been in existence for almost 10 years. The main goal of the Society is to bring together textual scholars who are usually never meeting each other because they are working on different languages, different periods of time, and different types of texts. The Society is meeting every year in a different city, and is publishing a scholarly journal entitled "Variants". The 2010 conference was held in Pisa and Firenze on November 25-27. The theme of the conference was "Texts worth editing".

Some lectures addressed more general issues (editing context, texts to be edited and texts to be scanned; how to deal with large texts corpora, of letters or newspapers for example; mass digitization...), or offered surveys of available (or desirable) tools (using website metrics to measure a digital edition's effectiveness and to profile its users; "Manuscriptorium"...). The inaugural plenary session was particularly enlightening in that respect: "Recent trends and theory in tool development in textual scholarship".

Many different languages and periods of times were represented: Slavic Texts, modern Bulgarian literature, Croatian medieval literature: Marulic's Repertorium (in Latin), the avant-garde French author Blaise Cendrars, Portuguese experimental poetry of the 1970s and 1980, Lithuanian literature, Hel-

lenistic and Byzantine Greek literature; St Patrick's confession (in Latin), popular medical texts in old Danish, Hugo Claus, Japanese Literary Studies, Sanskrit epic... English literature is often the most represented, and this conference was not an exception: Hêliand, Exeter Book, Wycklyffes Wycket, John Donne, English and Scottish Popular Ballads, Darwin, William Blake, James Joyce, Vladimir

Nabokov. Italian literature was not forgotten: Boccaccio's Teseida, Pietro Giannone, Antonio Gramsci. In addition, three panels were organized by the participants: "Selecting Texts with Porous Boundaries" (on Medieval Latin literature), "Editing Middle English material in Spain", "Marginal texts and collected editions" (Jane Austen, Jonathan Swift).

CM

Miscellanea

Another recurrent Newsletter section, the Miscellanea, will continuously accommodate small pieces of research, drafts, interim project reports, case studies, bibliographic surveys etc. shared by COMSt members to encourage interdisciplinary academic dialogue and bridge the mental and geographical gap between fields and persons. Contributions from all fields and of any type are welcome, both from experienced and junior scholars.

In this issue:

Alessandro Bausi. *The "True Story" of the Abba Gärima Gospels*.

Caroline Macé. *Latin and Armenian Translations and the Prehistory of the Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus*.

Denis Nosnitsin. *The Manuscript Collection of Däbrä Maʿṣo Qəddus Yoḥannəs (Təgray, Ethiopia): A First Assessment*.

The "True Story" of the Abba Gärima Gospels[1]

Christianized already in the middle of the fourth century, penetrated and permeated by the new faith in the early sixth century at the latest, the Kingdom of Aksum left a deep imprint on the region where its civilization originated and developed since the first century A.D. It lastingly shaped the highlands and the Red Sea Coast of the present-day Ethiopia and Eritrea with its culture and its faith as accepted by the Egyptian Church of Alexandria, from which the Ethiopian Church depended until the second half of the twentieth century. Exotic at first glance, this remote area of the Christianity has preserved surprising cultural archaisms, as it often happens for lateral, peripheral, and provincial areas, less prompt to accept innovations from the distant metropolitan centres. This culture is therefore an interesting and familiar witness to the early and late antique Christian cultural background.

Within this context it might be worthwhile to comment on the news of a purported

discovery in Ethiopia "of the most ancient illuminated Bible", announced and spread in June and July 2010 by numerous press agencies and authoritative newspapers (*The Art Newspaper*, *The Independent*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, etc.), and subsequently resumed and emphasized by newsgroups, mailing-lists, etc. Periodical (re)discoveries of Palaces of Queen of Sheba, Arks of the Covenant, Tablets of the Law, and Lost Tribes of Israel are so frequent in Ethiopia that they have been commonly featuring in popularizing historical and archaeological magazines, occasionally also in international best-sellers. But the news of the discovery of an ancient – the most ancient! – illuminated Bible is less trivial, making it necessary to ask, what is in fact new, and what is true.

In 1960 the art historian Jules Leroy – a specialist in Christian Oriental illuminated manuscripts – published the first images of a codex, already known from a few scanty notices of a few travellers. The age and the importance of the codex, preserved in

Fig. 1. Ms. Ǝnda Abba Gärima I, the 'Canons of Eusebius' from the Gospel book Abba Gärima I and II (= I and III in Heldman 1993) before the restoration. Left: canons I 1 and 2 from Abba Gärima II, right: canons I 1 and 2 from Abba Gärima II, from *Ethiopian Church …* 2009, p. 108

Fig. 2. Removing vellum guards, photo from Winstanley 2007, p. 5.

the monastery of Ǝnda Abba Gärima, near Adwa, in Təgray, the cradle of Christian Ethiopia, were immediately evident, and Leroy promptly took sides – as it appears from the title of his publication: *L'Évangéliaire éthiopien du Couvent d'Abba Garima et ses attaches avec l'ancien art chrétien de Syrie*. According to him, the illuminations strongly corroborated the hypothesis of direct links between Ethiopian and Syrian Christianity, vigorously extending its significance and momentum in art history.

The paintings on parchment of the Ethiopic codex do not illustrate Biblical episodes, and include only two iconographic typologies. The 'Evangelists', portrayed as standing haloed figures, either en face or in profile, in both cases with a book, either closed and held in their hands, with the sign of the cross in evidence, or on a bookstand. The second typology comprises the series of decorative arcades framing the 'Letter of Eusebius to Carpianus' followed by the 'Canons of Eusebius', texts which often followed the Gospel in late antique and medieval codices. The canons, whose invention is attributed to Eusebius of Caesarea, determine the concordance between the parallel passages of the Gospels (synoptic and John) according to numbered sections (so-called 'Ammonian sections') distributed in ten parallel columns. These occupy a variable number of pages according to the cultural and linguistic areas (canon I: parallels in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; II, Matthew, Mark and Luke; and so on). The series is completed with a full-page aedicula representing the 'Fountain of life' or a templet, the precise interpretation of which has long challenged, and still challenges, art historians. Leroy established the Syro-Ethiopian affinities only on the base of the number of pages of the canons – without any consideration of philological and textual data.

When in 1968 Leroy published new illuminations from another very ancient manuscript from Ǝnda Abba Gärima, it became apparent that the matter was much more complex: the two manuscripts of Ǝnda Abba Gärima contained two distinct ancient Gospel books, the respective illuminations of which had been mixed up. When correctly reconstructed, the first manuscript had two pages for the 'Letter of Eusebius' plus eight pages for the 'Canons', and the second manuscript three pages for the 'Letter' plus seven pages for the Canons. (To be precise, the second manuscript was bound together with a third Gospel book, still ancient, but with certainly more recent canons). The new discovery, from which Leroy did not draw all the necessary consequences, nullifies the apparent iconographic affinity of Ethiopian and Syrian canons, the latter displaying them in a much longer series of pages (e.g., 19 pages in the famous Rabbûlâ Gospel Book of the Biblioteca Medicea of Florence, Plut. I, 56), and demonstrates instead that the Ethiopic typology depends upon Greek prototypes.

The second series of the canons presents one more surprise. At the end of the series and after the aedicula a building appears, which is actually a *unicum* with no parallels in other traditions: a quadrangular building with two deer at the sides, which has been variously reconnected to the iconography of the Sasanian garden or to other late antique motifs. What is more important, the aedicula and second building could go back to the most ancient iconography of the canons, as it would appear from possible comparisons with western models (e.g., with the Carolingian Gospel Book of Saint-Médard de Soissons, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms. Lat. 8850), where aedicula, quadrangular building and deer emerge.

We owe to Donald Davies – an enthusiast for Ethiopic manuscripts who was the first to take a full set of pictures of the Ǝnda Abba Gärima manuscripts (besides many others) – the documentation

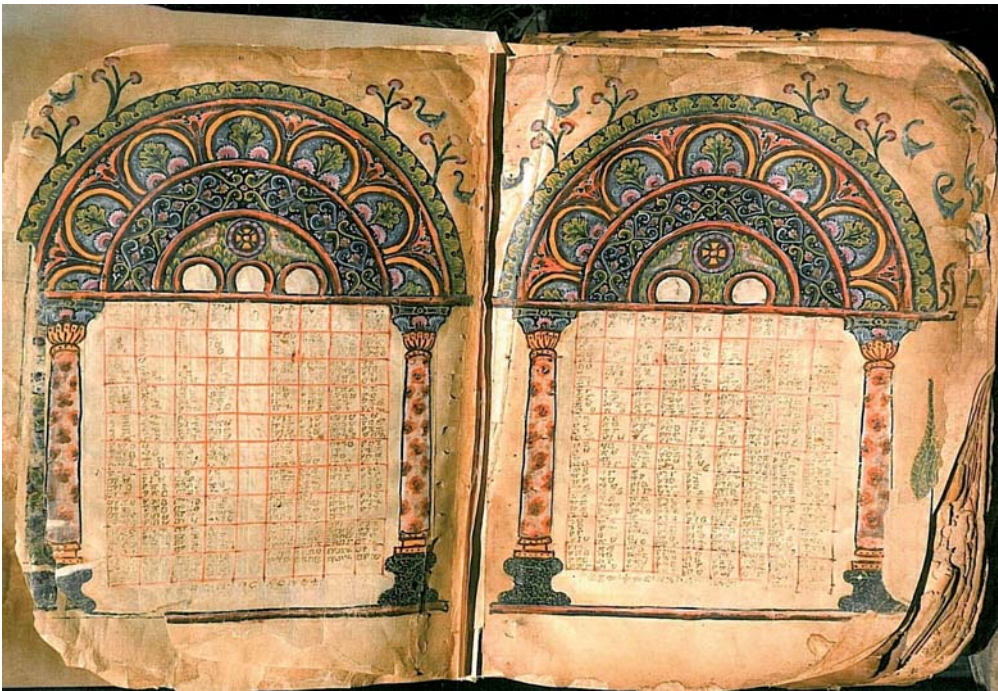Fig. 3. Abba Gärima I, Reattaching front boards, from Capon 2008, p. 9.

Fig. 4. Abba Gärima II. An opening after the restoration, from *Ethiopian Church* … 2009, p. 113

manuscripts (of the painted leaves only) within the framework of cooperation between Mercier's project and the English restorers Lester Capon and Mark Winstanley. The restoration, conducted in situ in autumn 2006, is described in detail in *Ethiopian Church. Treasures & Faith*, a beautiful volume published in 2009 by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church under the direction of Mercier and Daniel Seifemichael Feleke. Winstanley and Capon had previously briefly described it themselves in two notes, in Skin Deep 2007 and 2008, respectively. Capon's description includes the important remark that the binding of the first of the two manuscripts bears traces of deteriorated papyrus: and this, as far as we know, would be the first evidence for papyrus as book material in Ethiopia.

As it clearly appears, the problems posed and the considerations suggested by the Abba Gärima Gospels are many and manifold. Leaving aside the problem of C 14 radiocarbon dating – on which certainly opinions vary – the possibility remains that painted leaves and text-only leaves could have different stories, which should be ascertained with a proper codicological analysis. On the other hand, philological, linguistic and palaeographical elements still prevent – or cannot prove – an early *ante* 650 dating for the Ethiopic text of the Gospels of Abba Gärima, which one, however, cannot exclude for the painted leaves. The philological study of the Ethiopic version of the Gospels, moreover, has confirmed what was already known, i.e. that the Ethiopic Bible depends upon a Greek *Vorlage*, contrary to the earliest superficial interpretations. Everything being taken into account, the Abba Gärima Gospels remain the most ancient Ethiopic manuscripts known so far and an exceptional, not yet sufficiently investigated witness to the cultural life of ancient Ethiopia, and more widely of late antique Christian manuscript culture.

on which the first scientific description of the two (but three) Abba Gärima Gospel books is based. It appeared in 1979 in a typewritten and unfortunately little known catalogue prepared by William F. Macomber. The fundamental studies on text and tradition of the Ethiopic New Testament by Rochus Zuurmond, with the critical edition of the Gospel of Mark in 1989 and Matthew in 2001, and by Michael G. Wechsler, with John in 2005 (Luke is still missing) were equally based on Davies' documentation.

In the meantime, the quest has continued, as specialists of Ethiopian art history have never ceased to investigate the Gospels of Ǝnda Abba Gärima, and to examine them directly whenever possible. On different grounds, both Marilyn E. Heldman and Jacques Mercier have promoted the early dating of the 4th/5th to 6th/7th century for the manuscripts. Heldman, who justified her dating by an art historical analysis, presented her view in the nice catalogue (*African Zion*) of a 1993 exhibition where a description of the manuscripts was included, even though the Abba Gärima manuscripts were not exhibited. More recently, in a 2000 contribution in the prestigious *Comptes rendus* of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, Mercier presented for the first time the results of a C 14 radiocarbon analysis of two parchment fragments taken from illuminated leaves of the second Gospel book. The analysis yielded the following results: 430-650 A.D. for a leaf containing the end of the *Letter of Eusebius* and canon I; and 330-540 A.D. for the painting of an Evangelist.

These data, to be calibrated within a range error of 50/100 years (with a possible dating to the 6th/7th century A.D.), have been thus well known for ten years now. They were refreshed and revived in the summer 2010, triggered by the news – not so new either – of the restoration of the Ǝnda Abba Gärima

Bibliography.

– For general information and updated bibliography on Christian Ethiopia: *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, Vol. 1. *A - C*, ed. Siegbert Uhlig, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003; Vol. 2. *D - Ha*, 2005; Vol. 3. *He - N*, 2007; Vol. 4 *O - W*, 2010 [= *EAE* I-IV].

– On the Christianization of Ethiopia: Gianfranco Fiaccadori, *Teofilo Indiano*, Presentazione di R. Farioli Campa-

nati, Ravenna: Edizioni del Girasole, 1992 (Biblioteca di "Felix Ravenna" 7); Id., "Bisanzio e il regno di 'Aksum. Sul manoscritto Martini etiop. 5 della Biblioteca Forteguerriana di Pistoia", *Bollettino del Museo Bodoniano di Parma* 7, 1993 (= *Quaecumque recepit Apollo. Scritti in onore di Angelo Ciavarella,* ed. A. Gatti), pp. 161-199; Heinzgerd Brakmann, *Die Einwürzelung der Kirche im spätantiken Reich von Aksum*, Bonn: Borengässer, 1994; Antonella Brita, *I racconti tradizionali sulla «seconda cristianizzazione» dell'Etiopia*, Napoli: Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Dipartimento di Studi e Ricerche su Africa e Paesi Arabi, 2010 (Studi Africanistici Serie Etiopica 7); Philippe Luisier, "Les voies de pénétration du Christianisme et de l'Islam en Éthiopie. Une comparaison", *Civiltà del Mediterraneo* 16-17 (Dicembre 2009 - Giugno 2010) (= *L'Islam in Etiopia. Bilanci e prospettive. Atti del Convegno, tenutosi presso l'Università degli Studi di Napoli "Federico II", il 18 e 19 giugno 2008*, eds. Alessandro Gori & Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti, Napoli: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2010), pp. 59-87.

– Press news on the Gospel Books of Abba Gärima: Martin Bailey, "Discovery of earliest illuminated manuscript", *The Art Newspaper*, 214, June 2010; Jerome Taylor, "Unearthed, the ancient texts that tell story of Christianity. A British bookbinder has restored ancient copies of the gospels dating back to the fourth century", *The Independent*, 6 June 2010; Steven Morris, "British specialists help save Ethiopia's ancient Garima Gospels", *The Guardian,* 5 July 2010; Laura Roberts, "Manuscript found in Ethiopian monastery could be world's oldest illustrated Christian work. A manuscript found in a remote Ethiopian monastery could be the oldest illustrated Christian work in the world, experts have claimed", *The Daily Telegraph,* 5 July 2010; Alessandro Bausi, "Com'è antico il cuore dell'Etiopia cristiana. Complessa e affascinante la vicenda dei manoscritti di Abba Garimà", *L'Osservatore Romano*, 4 August 2010.

– Studies by Jules Leroy: "L'Évangéliaire éthiopien du Couvent d'Abba Garima et ses attaches avec l'ancien art chrétien de Syrie", *Cahiers archéologiques*, 11, 1960, pp. 131-143; Id., "Recherches sur la tradition iconographique des Canons d'Eusèbe en Ethiopie", *Cahiers archéologiques,* 12, 1962, pp. 173-204; "Un nouvel évangéliaire éthiopien illustré du monastère d'Abba Garima", in: *Synthronon. Art et Archéologie de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Age. Recueil d'études par André Grabar et un groupe de ses disciples*, eds. André Grabar & al., Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1968 (Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques 2), pp. 75-87.

– On the Gospel Book of Rabbûlâ: *Il tetravangelo di Rabbula*, *Firenze, Biblioteca medicea laurenziana, Plut. 1.56. L'illustrazione del Nuovo Testamento nella Siria del VI secolo*, ed. Massimo Bernabò, Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2008 (Folia picta 1).

– On Syriac Influences in Ethiopia: Paolo Marrassini, "Ancora sul problema degli influssi siriaci in età aksumita", in: *Biblica et Semitica. Studi in memoria di Francesco Vattioni*, ed. Luigi Cagni, Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici 1999 (Series Minor 59), pp. 325-337; Witold Witakowski, "Syrian influences in Ethiopia", in: *EAE* IV, pp. 782b-784b.

– On the 'Canons': Carl Nordenfalk, *Die spätantiken Kanontafeln. Kunstgeschichtliche Studien über die eusebianische Evangelien-Konkordanz in den vier ersten Jahrhunderten ihrer Geschichte*, 2 vols. [Textband - Tafelband], *Die Bücherornamentik der Spätantike* 1, Göteborg: Oscar Isacsons Boktryckeri A.-B., 1938; Id., "Canon tables on papyrus", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 36, 1982, pp. 29-38; Id., "The Eusebian Canon-Tables: Some Textual Problems", *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 35, 1984, pp. 96-104.

– Studies by Davies, Zuurmond and Wechsler: Donald M. Davies, "The dating of Ethiopic manuscripts", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies,* 46/4, 1987, pp. 287-307; William F. Macomber, *Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts from Abbā Garimā, Ašatan (Church of St. Mary)…*, Collegeville, Minn.: privately reproduced, 1979, pp. 1-11; Rochus Zuurmond, *Novum Testamentum Aethiopice: The synoptic gospels. General introduction. Edition of the Gospel of Mark*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1989 (Äthiopistische Forschungen 27); Id., *Novum Testamentum Aethiopice. The Gospel of St. Matthew*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001 (Aethiopistische Forschungen 55); Id., "The textual background of the Gospel of Matthew in Ge'ez", *Aethiopica* 4, 2001, pp. 32-41; Michael G. Wechsler, *Evangelium Iohannis Aethiopicum*, Lovanii: In aedibus Peeters, 2005 (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 617, Scriptores Aethiopici 109).

– Studies by Heldman and Mercier: Marilyn E. Heldman et al., *African Zion. The sacred art of Ethiopia. Catalogue by Marilyn Heldman with Stuart C. Munro-Hay*, ed. by Roderick Grierson, New Haven - London: Yale University Press, 1993; Jacques Mercier, "La peinture éthiopienne à l'époque axoumite et au XVIIIᵉ siècle", *Académie des Inscriptions & Belles Lettres. Comptes Rendus*, 2000, pp. 35-71.

– Other studies on the Ethiopian 'Canons': Marilyn E. Heldman, "Canon tables", in: *EAE* I, pp. 680a-681b; Alessandro Bausi, "Some short remarks on the Canon tables in Ethiopic manuscripts", *Studi Magrebini*, 26, 1998-2002 [2004] (= *Scritti in onore di Clelia Sarnelli Cerqua*, ed. Carmela Baffioni, Napoli: Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", 2004 [Centro di Studi Magrebini]), pp. 45-67; Id., "Ǝnda Abba Gärima", in: *EAE* II, pp. 284a-286a; Gianfranco Fiaccadori, "Eusebios of Caesarea", in: *EAE* II, pp. 454a-456a.

– Recent restoration of the Abba Gärima Gospels: Mark Winstanley, "Tsbook - (Tigrinya for Good). An Ethiopian Odyssey – and the repair of the illuminated pages of the 6th-century Gospel of Abba Garima", *Skin Deep* 23, Spring 2007, pp. 2-10; Lester Capon, "Extreme bookbinding - a fascinating preservation project in Ethiopia", *Skin Deep,* 26, Autumn 2008, pp. 2-11; Jacques Mercier, "Restoration of holy treasures & installation of a new museum", in: *Ethiopian Church. Treasures & Faith*, eds. Jacques Mercier & Daniel Seifemichael Feleke, [Paris:] Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church [Archange Minotaure], 2009, pp. 108-24.

– Palaeographic and linguistic evaluation: Siegbert Uhlig, *Äthiopische Paläographie*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1988 (Äthiopistische Forschungen 22), pp. 144-76; Alessandro Bausi, "Ancient features of Ancient Ethiopic", *Aethiopica* 8, 2005, pp. 149-169.

– On the notion of a 'codicological unit': J. Peter Gumbert, "Codicological units: towards a terminology for the stratigraphy of the non-homogeneous codex", *Segno e Testo. International Journal of Manuscript and Text Transmission* 2, 2004 (= *Il codice miscellaneo. Tipologie e funzioni. Atti del Convegno internazionale. Cassino 14-17 maggio 2003*, eds. Edoardo Crisci & Oronzo Pecere, Cassino: Università degli Studi di Cassino, 2004), pp. 17-42.

Alessandro Bausi
Hamburg University

Latin and Armenian translations and the prehistory of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus

The crucial importance of translations for our knowledge of Greek literature, pagan and Christian, has been often underlined, especially in the case of texts poorly preserved in their original language[1]. As for "overabundant" traditions, to adopt the expression coined by Amand de Mendieta[2], the recourse to indirect tradition may seem at first sight less necessary. Nevertheless, according to the basic principles of the genealogical method in textual scholarship, the number of preserved witnesses does not guarantee a priori the "quality" of the preserved text. The case of the Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus offers a good illustration to this point.

Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. 330-390), one of the Cappadocian Fathers, also known as Gregory the Theologian, and once bishop of Constantinople (380-381)[3], has left us with a corpus of texts (discourses, letters, poems), which constitutes an exemplary model of Christian literature[4], with an autobiographical dimension which would be rarely equalled in the Middle Ages[5]. For several reasons I do believe that Gregory himself compiled, composed, and arranged this corpus as such before his death, and that almost nothing was left to chance in the literary construction which Gregory wanted to leave for posterity, except that he could not avoid that any text transmission goes its somehow unpredictable and haphazard way.

The forty five sermons of Gregory came down to us in an impressive number of Greek manuscripts[6], which discourages any modern editor[7]. The number of manuscripts varies from one sermon to the other, amounting to between 100 and 700 for the most popular ones[8]. The Greek manuscripts consist of complete and partial collections of Gregory's sermons[9], on the one hand, and of miscellaneous homiletic compilations[10], on the other hand. The oldest ones date from the beginning of the 9th century, while manuscripts produced after the end of the 16th century were not taken into account in the *Repertorium Nazianzenum*. An *editio princeps* was published in the first half of the 16th century[11]. The Greek manuscript tradition is intricate and no complete history of it could be sketched with satisfactory accuracy. The geographical origin of some manuscripts or groups of manuscripts aroused vivid debates amongst scholars[12].

The sermons (not all of them though) were translated several times already in late Antiquity and early Middle Ages. Rufinus of Aquileia (ca. 340-410) translated nine sermons (2, 38, 39, 41, 26, 17, 6, 16, 27) before the end of the 4th century[13]. An anonymous Armenian translation of forty one sermons, divided into four sub-collections, may be dated from around 500[14]. Several Syriac translations or revisions of translations came to light between the second half of the 5th century and 625[15]. Translations in other languages during the Middle Ages (Coptic, Ethiopic, Georgian, Arabic, and Slavonic) are also found, but they are either fragmentary or from a later period.

One may doubt that those translations, despite their venerable age and cultural interest, could add much to our knowledge of a text preserved in so many manuscripts in its original language. And yet, a close examination and comparison of the Armenian and Latin translations of sermon 2 has shown that those two translations were actually preserving some readings, which are not extant any more in Greek[16]. I will leave aside the methodological issues that arise when trying to determine the underlying model of a translation, since both the text in its original language and the translation are the products of manuscript transmissions. The question is more acute in this case, since the comparison involves two translations of a very different nature: while the Latin translation was made "ad sensum", the Armenian one is slavishly following its model. Alone, the Latin translation would be of little help to reconstruct the Greek text which was circulating in the first centuries after its composition, but the confrontation of both Latin and Armenian translations with the Greek text leads to the following two conclusions: (1) for the largest part (more than 95%), the oldest translations agree with (at least part of) the Greek manuscripts, which means that the text has remained extraordinarily stable throughout its history; (2) on few minor points the Latin and Armenian translations agree against all preserved Greek witnesses, and it is extremely difficult to assert with any certainty which is "right", I mean which, of the Greek tradition or of the Latin / Armenian model(s), has preserved the primary reading[17]. The answer to this question is crucial, because, logically, the witnesses which share the secondary reading are

---

[1] S. Cavallo 1995; in particular for Armenian translations Morani 1990.

[2] Amand de Mendieta 1987.

[3] S. McGuckin 2001. A brief account (quite hagiographic) on Gregory's life by J. Bernardi can be read in ed. Tuilier et al. 2004: ix-xli.

[4] Cf. Bernardi 1968: 256-58.

[5] Cf. McLynn 1998.

[6] A check-list is provided in Mossay et al. 1981-98. See also *http://pot-pourri.fltr.ucl.ac.be/manuscrits/GRECS/DEFAULT.HTM.*

[7] Only two sermons (10 and 12) have been edited on the basis of the entire manuscript tradition so far in Mossay 2006, but this edition is far from being critical (see my review: Macé 2008).

[8] Sermon 35, preserved in some 25 manuscripts only is most probably inauthentic.

[9] S. Somers 1997.

[10] S. Ehrhard 1937-52.

[11] S. Bertolini 1988.

[12] S. for example Hutter 2009.

[13] Engelbrecht 1910.

[14] Lafontaine - Coulie 1983.

[15] Detienne 2000; s. also the introductions by J.-C. Haelewyck to the volumes of edition of the Syriac translation, Haelewyck 2000ff.

[16] Dubuisson - Macé 2003.

[17] I am using the term "primary" instead of "correct" (which is a matter of grammatical correctness) or "original" (which would need to be approved by the author himself) reading. In the same way, I am using the term "secondary reading" instead of "mistake", because the (grammatical or factual) mistake is, in my opinion, only one kind of "secondary reading", or, more accurately, only one of the ways to point out at a "secondary reading".

St. Gregory of Nazianzus and the Paupers, illumination from ms. Mt. Athos, Agiou Panteleimonos, cod. 6, 11th-12th century.

akin to each other, while the ones which bear the primary reading are not necessarily (at least there is no proof that they are). The implications of this question for the history of Gregory's text are obvious: the answer will either imply that all Greek manuscripts, as numerous as they may be, are ultimately descending from one and the same sub-archetype, or that the Armenian and Latin translations were made on the basis of the same Greek manuscript or on Greek manuscripts closely related to each other. We do not know where the Armenian translation was made, and we only know that Rufinus made his translation in Rome, just before his settlement in Aquileia, but probably on the basis of a Greek manuscript he took from or he at least consulted in the "East" (Egypt / Palestine)[18]. In the article on sermon 2, I was inclined to believe that the readings in the Latin and Armenian translations were primary, but I also assessed the lack of any decisive proof for this assertion. At any event, when it can be shown that the entire Greek tradition differs from the Latin and Armenian translations, the Greek readings are always understandable (if not, they would not have been preserved, presumably), they even sometimes sound slightly "better" than the ones given by the agreement of the two oldest translations. Although not frequent, those "dissident" readings are present in all sermons (among those translated into Latin) which I have examined so far. I would like to give here two examples, in

order to illustrate my point, one from sermon 38 (on Christmas) and the other from sermon 27 (on theology)[19].

(1) Sermon 38, § 14

Greek: Ὅτι διὰ τὴν συγκύπτουσαν χαμαὶ ψυχὴν ταπεινοῦται

Latin: quia propter incuruatam animam, quae Chananaea dicitur, ipse se humiliat

Armenian: Զի յաղագս ի վայր կորացեալ քանանացւոյ հոգւոյն խոնարհի

Was the primary reading XANANAIAN (like in Latin and Armenian) or XAMAI (like all Greek manuscripts)? The reading of the Latin and Armenian translations seems at first sight absurd, since it is a weird combination of two different quotations from the New Testament: the episode of the Cananean woman (Matthew 15,22), and the story of the healing of a crippled woman (Luke 13,11). Yet, the same combination of those two passages occurs two other times in Gregory's work: Sermon 39, § 17: συγκύπτει κατὰ τὴν Χαναναίαν, and Sermon 40, § 33: χθὲς ἦσθα Χαναναία ψυχὴ, καὶ διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας συγκύπτουσα. In this case, since the reading is not absurd, it seems to me that χαμαὶ (in my view the secondary reading) can be explained, on palaeographical grounds, as a kind of haplography from Χαναναίαν, and also as a simplification of the meaning according to the context.

---

[18] Hammond-Bammel 1977: 372-429.

[19] The Armenian translation of those two sermons has not been published yet, but I could have access to a provisory edition made by B. Coulie (27) and I. Baise (38).

(2) Sermon 27, § 3
Greek: τῶν χαμαὶ ἐρχομένων
Latin: per terram repentibus homunculis
Armenian: ընդ երկիր քարշեալք

The underlying Greek model of the two translations may be ΣΥΡΟΜΕΝΩΝ (the Latin and Armenian translators used the same verb as here to translate χαμαὶ συρομένῳ in Sermon 2, § 46). Both readings are sound, of course, and there are many parallel texts (too numerous to cite them all, from Homer to Basil of Caesarea, and later on in Byzantine literature) to support them both. In this case, it is impossible, I think, to decide which one is the secondary reading; the fact remains, however, that the agreement of the two translations cannot be considered fortuitous, and that this reading, found in the two oldest translations, has disappeared without trace in all extant Greek manuscripts.

To conclude, I would like to stress once again the importance of the indirect tradition, and especially of ancient translations, for exploring the history and prehistory of a text. Since not so many people can master all necessary languages for such researches, interdisciplinary collaboration should be favoured, and, speaking from my own experience, such collaboration is always very rewarding.

Quoted bibliography.

Amand de Mendieta, Emmanuel, "Un problème d'ecdotique. Comment manier la tradition manuscrite surabondante d'un ouvrage patristique", in: *Texte und Textkritik. Eine Aufsatzsammlung*, ed. Jürgen Dummer, Johannes Irmscher, Berlin: Akademie Verl., 1987 (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, 133), pp. 29-42.

Bernardi, Jean, *La prédication des Pères cappadociens. Le prédicateur et son auditoire*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1968 (Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences humaines de l'Université de Montpellier, 30).

Bertolini, Marco, "L'edizione aldina del 1516 e il Testo delle Orazioni di Gregorio Nazianzeno", *Studi Classici e Orientali*, 38, 1988, pp. 383-390.

Cavallo, Guglielmo, "Qualche riflessione sulla continuità della cultura greca in Oriente tra i secoli VII e VIII", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift,* 88, 1995, 12-22.

Detienne, Claude, "Grégoire de Nazianze dans la tradition syriaque", in: *Studia Nazianzenica* I, ed. Bernard Coulie, Turnhout - Leuven: Brepols, 2000 (Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca, 41. Corpus Nazianzenum, 8), pp. 175-183

Dubuisson, Marc, Macé, Caroline, "La place des versions anciennes dans l'histoire du texte de Grégoire de Nazianze: le cas du Discours 2", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 69, 2003, pp. 287-340.

Ehrhard, Albert, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*, I-III, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1937-1952 (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, 50-52).

Engelbrecht, Augustus (ed.), *Tyrannii Rufini Orationum Gregorii Nazianzeni novem interpretatio*, Iohannis Wrobelii copiis usus edidit et prolegomena indicesque adiecit A. Engelbrecht, Vindobonae: F. Tempsky, Lipsiae: G. Freytag, 1910 (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, 46).

Haelewyck, Jean-Claude (ed.), *Sancti Gregorii Nazianzeni Opera. Versio syriaca*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2000ff. (Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca. Corpus Nazianzenum).

Hammond Bammel, Caroline P., "The Last Ten Years of Rufinus's Life and the Date of his Move South from Aquileia", *The Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 28, 1977, pp. 372-429.

Hutter, Irmgard, "Patmos 33 im Kontext", *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici*, 46, 2009, pp. 73-126.

Lafontaine, Guy, Coulie, Bernard, *La version arménienne des discours de Grégoire de Nazianze. Tradition manuscrite et histoire du texte*, Lovanii: in aedibus Peeters, 1983 (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 446. Subsidia, 67).

Macé, Caroline, "À propos d'une édition récente de Grégoire de Nazianze", *L'Antiquité Classique*, 77, 2008, pp. 243-256.

McGuckin, John Anthony, *St Gregory of Nazianzus: an Intellectual Biography*, Crestwood, (N.Y.): St Vladimir's seminary press, 2001.

McLynn, Neil Brendan, "A Self-Made Holy Man: The Case of Gregory Nazianzen", *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 6, 1998, pp. 463-483.

Morani, Moreno, "Problemi riguardanti le antiche versioni armene di testi greci", in: *Autori classici in lingue del Vicino e Medio Oriente: atti del III, IV e V Seminario sul tema: "Recupero di testi classici attraverso recezioni in lingue del Vicino e Medio Oriente" (Brescia, 21 novembre 1984; Roma, 22-27 marzo 1985; Padova-Venezia, 15-16 aprile 1986)*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, Roma: Istituto poligrafico e zecca dello stato, 1990, pp. 189-98.

Mossay, Justinus (ed.), with a prephace by Bernard Coulie, *Sancti Gregorii Nazianzeni Opera. Versio Graeca I. Orationes X et XII*, Turnhout – Leuven: Brepols, 2006 (Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca, 64. Corpus Nazianzenum, 22).

Mossay, Justinus, et al. (eds.), *Repertorium Nazianzenum. Orationes. Textus Graecus*, I-VI, Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1981-1998 (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums, Neue Folge, 2.Reihe: Forschungen zu Gregor von Nazianz, 1, 5, 10, 11, 12, 14).

Somers, Véronique, *Histoire des collections complètes des Orationes de Grégoire de Nazianze*, Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut Orientaliste, 1997 (Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain, 48).

Tuilier, André, Bady, Guillaume (eds.), Bernardi, Jean (tr., annot.), *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze, Œuvres poétiques, t. I, 1ère partie: Poèmes personnels II, 1, 1-11*, Paris: Belles Lettres, 2004 (Collection des universités de France. Série grecque).

Caroline Macé
Catholic University Leuven

The Manuscript Collection of Däbrä Maʿṣo Qǝddus Yoḥannǝs (Tǝgray, Ethiopia): a First Assessment[1]

Däbrä Maʿṣo[2] is an ancient church in northern Ethiopia, known to scholars, until recently, exclusively from references in old sources.

In the documents collected in the *Liber Axumae*, Däbrä Maʿṣo is mentioned as a tributary of St. Mary Cathedral of Aksum[3]. An official bearing the title "*śǝyyum* of Däbrä Maʿṣo" appears in the *Additiones* of the "Golden Gospel" of Däbrä Libanos of Ham: nos. 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 20, 22[4]. From documents 9 and 10, one may assume that the *śǝyyum* (governor) of Däbrä Maʿṣo was among those local rulers who competed with the famous 13th-century Yǝkunno ʾAmlak or opposed him in the struggle for power. Probably because of that, under the Solomonic kings the church of Däbrä Maʿṣo and the local *śǝyyum* lost importance, and disappeared from the historical sources. However, according to the Vita of the famous 15th-century monastic leader ʾabunä ʾƎsṭifanos, he was

Fig. 1. The mountain of Däbrä Mäʿṣo as seen from the road.

Fig. 2. Landscape at the top of the *ʾamba* Däbrä Mäʿṣo.

brought to a "town called Däbrä Maʿeẓo" together with ʾabunä Bärtälomewos, where both were punished by flogging[5]. Däbrä Maʿṣo was also used as a

place of exile or detention by King Bäʾǝdä Maryam (1468-78)[6]. Besides, it is occasionally mentioned in the registers of regions and titles of the so-called *Śǝrʿatä mängǝśt*[7].

Until recently, no information was available on the precise location of the monastery; neither was it known whether it still exists.

As it was discovered during the preparation of the April-May 2010 field mission of the Ethio-SPARE research team[8], the church of Däbrä Maʿṣo (Däbrä Maʿṣo Yoḥannǝs) still stands, located in a hardly accessible corner of the *wäräda* of Gulo Mäḵäda (ṭabiya Taḥtay Qǝlʿat). It had apparently never been previously visited by any European tourist or scholar.

The site is located on the top of a mountain of the same name. It is, in fact, possible to catch a glimpse of the huge rock of Däbrä Maʿṣo from some places along the main road ʾAddigrat – Zäla ʾAmbäsa.

The mission was planned for 10 May 2010. The foot of the mountain could be reached by car, but it was a long and steep climb to the village of Däbrä Maʿṣo (figs. 1, 2). The flat-top mountain – ʾamba or ʾǝmba – is very windy, and during the rainy season the climate must be particularly harsh. The site lies within the zone of military activity during the recent Ethio-Eritrean conflict; luckily,

---

[2] In Gǝʿǝz and modern Tǝgrǝñña, *maʿṣo* (graph. var. *maʿḍo*) means "gate, door"; s. Leslau 1987:75b; Kane 2000, vol. 2, 1945a.

[3] Conti Rossini 1909-10:11, l. 8; 20, l. 20 (text); 11, l. 22; 23, l. 11 (tr.).

[4] Conti Rossini 1901.

[5] The Vita reports of the event twice, adding in the second account (included in one manuscript only), that they were brought to the place called "cell of Afḥarom" (Getatchew Haile 2006:60 tr.).

[6] Perruchon 1893:129.

[7] Varenbergh 1915-16:13; possibly also as Däbrä Maḥǝṣo, in Huntingford 1989:247, 249-51.

[8] The field team was formed by project members from Hamburg University (Denis Nosnitsin, Stéphane Ancel, Vitagrazia Pisani). The work also involved representatives of the Tǝgray Culture and Tourism Agency (Bǝrḥanu Ḥešo, Tedros ʾAbohay, field assistants; Mäsärät Haylä Sǝllase, field coordinator and head of the Agency Käbbädä ʾAmarä Bälay, project coordinator, both in Mäḵälä) and members of the church administration: the representative of the Eastern Tǝgray Diocese, ʾAbbäbä Gäbrä Ǝgziʾabǝḥer, and *mälakä ḥǝywät* Bǝrhanä ʾArägawi from the church office of Gulo Mäḵäda. For full reports of the project's field work, visit http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/ethiostudies/ETHIOSPARE.

it escaped destruction, and the manuscript collection, preserved in the village, remained safe and could be examined and recorded by the Ethio-SPARE team[9].

The actual church of Däbrä Maʿṣo was not visited: standing on a separate rock, it is not directly accessible from the ʾamba and the village. In order to reach it, one would have to start walking from the foot of the mountain, following another path. As one could judge from afar, the contemporary church of Däbrä Maʿṣo is probably a relatively recent, rectangular building in the traditional Təgrayan style (fig. 3).

Fig. 3. The church of Däbrä Mäʿṣo Qəddus Yoḥannəs.

The main *tabot* of the church of Däbrä Maʿṣo is dedicated to St. John the Baptist (Yoḥannəs Mäṭməq),

Fig. 4. The Homily on the Finding of the Head of John the Baptist (incipit).

which seems to be an ancient, possibly original dedication, not so common today. Several manuscripts preserve hagiographic works devoted to John the Baptist; the oldest, dating probably into the 16th century, contains thirty miracles of Mary and three homilies on John the Baptist (fig. 4)[10].

Another interesting manuscript contains a small collection of miracles of John the Baptist, Libanos, St. Michael and Jesus Christ[11]. An exam-

ple of the "average"[12] manuscript production meant for daily use, it shows an interesting constellation of several locally used script styles (fig. 5ab).

Besides, the church possesses some manuscripts which are commonly included in many Ethiopian church libraries (some of them in multiple copies): the Miracles of Mary, the Book of the Funeral Ritual, the Book of the Matrimony Ritual, the Missal and the collection of Incense Prayers, the Homily of St. Michael, the Story of the Trinity, and the Vitae of Zä-Mikaʾel ʾArägawi and Gäbrä Krəstos (St. Alexis). A few fine books were donated to Däbrä Maʿṣo by *ras* Səbḥat ʾArägawi (ca. 1844-1914)[13], a governor of ʾAgamä, and bear his seal.

Fig. 5ab. A collection of miracles of John the Baptist: fol. 9r (hand a) and fol. 20r (hand b).

The historical core of the collection is represented by four particularly ancient, valuable manuscripts, which hint to the greater former significance of Dä-

---

9   The present note briefly highlights some of the collection samples; an in-depth analysis is being currently conducted and the results will be published as a series of articles.

10   In two colophons of this manuscript, a certain "Gäbrä Krəstos, a son of priest Səmʿon" from Däbrä Maʿṣo is mentioned as the commissioner, while a certain Fəqrä Iyäsus, priest from Dəngʷälo, is mentioned as scribe, and Täklä ʾEwosṭatewos Wäldä Gʷäbis as *śəyyum* of Däbrä Maʿṣo. A supplication formula mentioning a certain Zäbänä Krəstos (col. va) is a secondary addition.

11   To be cautiously dated into the first half of the 19th century, as an ʾabunä Sälama (III?, 1841-68) is mentioned in a donation note.

12   Probably composite.

13   S. EAE IV, 587b-89a; he endowed also other churches of the region.

brä Maʿṣo. Two of them are copies of the *Gädlä Ḥawaryat* (the apocryphal "Contendings of the Apostles") representing, however, different versions of the collection, and written by different hands: one clearly superior and well-trained, and the other poor and, perhaps, of somewhat later period (figs. 6, 7: both images show the incipit of the same text, "the Martyrdom of St. Matthew"). The third one is the "Golden Gospel" of Däbrä Maʿṣo. The manuscript is not illuminated, nor the canon tables are decorated; it is nevertheless an example of skilful scribal work and great accuracy in executing punctuation signs (fig. 8). It contains some ten *Additiones* of different dates, from liturgical to historiographic notes, some of them difficult to understand or referring to unknown historical events (fig. 9)[14]. It is written by the same hand as the finer copy of the *Gädlä Ḥawaryat*. The same scribe seems to have been the copyist of the fourth manuscript, a collection of homilies. According to a donation note in the manuscript, it was given to the church in the time of King Däwit II (ca. 1379-1413)[15], suggesting a plausible dating both for this book as well as for the other two works of the same copyist. A flyleaf attached to the manuscript originates from a much older Gospel manuscript. The handwriting of the text, a fragment of the Gospel of Luke, shows features of the ancient, so-called "monumental" script (fig. 10; cp. Lk 6:32$_2$-33; cp. the same verses from the "Golden Gospel", fig. 11). It would be tempting to surmise that the flyleaf

Fig. 6. *Gädlä Ḥawaryat*, Martyrdom of St. Matthew, written in fine handwriting.

Fig. 7. *Gädlä Ḥawaryat*, Martyrdom of St. Matthew, written in inferior handwriting.

---

[14] Here, the historiographic note stands under the list of "Tituli" for the Gospel of Matthew. It can be transcribed in the following way: በ፷፯፻፲ወ፮ዓመተ፡ ምሕረት፡ በ፫፻፲ወ፮ዓመተ፡ መጻኢ፡ ርኀብ፡ ላዕለ፡ ኵሉ፡ ምር, meaning "In the year of mercy 6716, in the year of mercy 316, hunger came upon the entire land". ምር must be deficient writing for ምድር. The year 6716 (from the creation of the world?) probably corresponds to 1224 A.D.; 316 may mean a year according to the 532-year cycle, resulting in 1208 A.D. In the note, there is some difficulty in distinguishing between Ethiopic "6" and "7". In terms of paleographic features, the note does not look as old as its content claims.

[15] The donation note mentions persons from the period of King Dawit II who at a first glance have not been so far known from other sources: the donor ʾaqabe säʿat Täsäbkä Mädḫən (of Däbrä Libanos of Ham or of Däbrä Ḥayq ʾƎsṭifanos?), śǝyyum (śǝyyumä Maʿṣo?) Hallo ʾƎgziʾabǝher, maʾkälä baḥr Zä-ʾAmmanuʾel, mäkʷännən (Tǝgray mäkʷännən?) ʾAron. Supplication formulas of the first copy of the *Gädlä Ḥawaryat* mention the names of Hallo ʾAmlak and Hallo Krǝstos; it is not clear whether those are two different persons or one and the same, possibly even identical with śǝyyum Hallo ʾƎgziʾabǝher.

Fig. 8. "Golden Gospel" of Däbrä Mäʿṣo Yoḥannǝs.

is the ultimate rest of the "old library" of Däbrä Maʿṣo, which had its origins in the pre-Solomonic time and was substituted (if not destroyed) sometime after the radical change of the political situation, when the authority of the Solomonic dynasty prevailed.

Despite the extremely rough conditions of the site and the poverty of the local people – who however were extremely friendly and hospitable towards the research team – the ancient books have survived the centuries in a relatively good condition, though none seems to have preserved the original binding. Some preservation measures are currently underway to secure the ancient part of the collection.
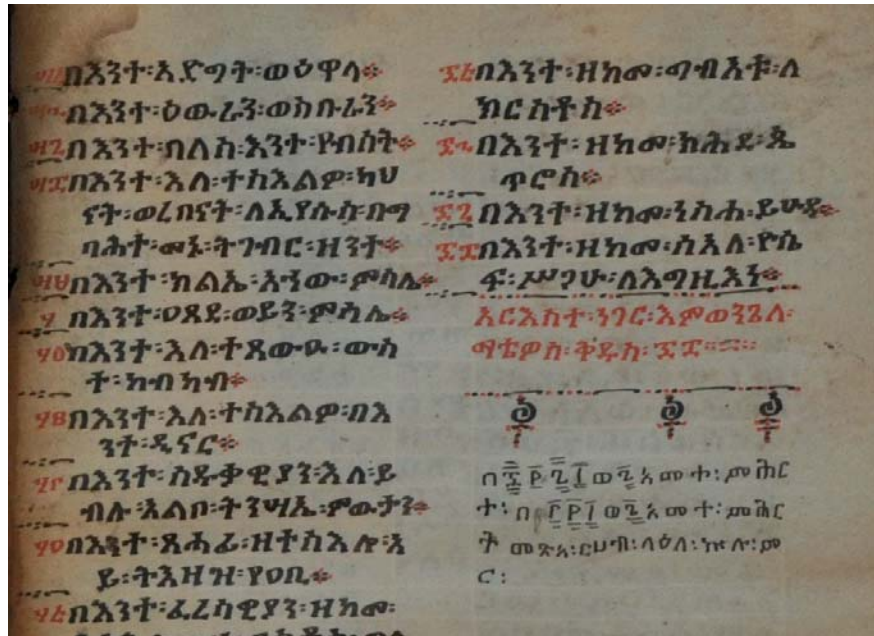
Fig. 9. "Golden Gospel" of Däbrä Mäʿṣo Yoḥannəs: "Tituli" and a historiographic note.

Quoted bibliography

Conti Rossini, Carlo, "L'Evangelo d'oro di Dabra Libanos", *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* ser. 5ª, 10, 1901, pp. 177–219.

Conti Rossini, Carlo, (ed., tr.), *Documenta ad illustrandam*

Huntingford, George W.B., *The Historical Geography of Ethiopia. From the First Century AD to 1704*, ed. by Richard Pankhurst, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989 (Union Académique Internationale. Fontes historiae Africanae, ser. varia, 4).

Kane, Thomas Leiper, *Tigrinya–English Dictionary*, 2 vols., Springfield, VA: Dunwoody Press, 2000.
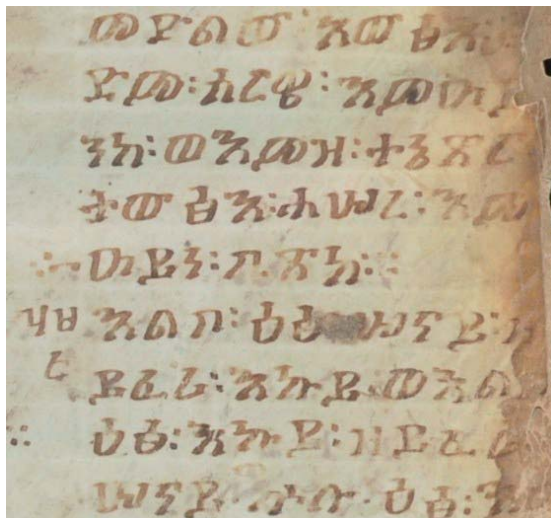
Fig. 10. fly-leaf in the Homiliary, fragment with Lk 6:32-33. Fig. 11. "Golden Gospel", fragment with Lk 6:32-33.
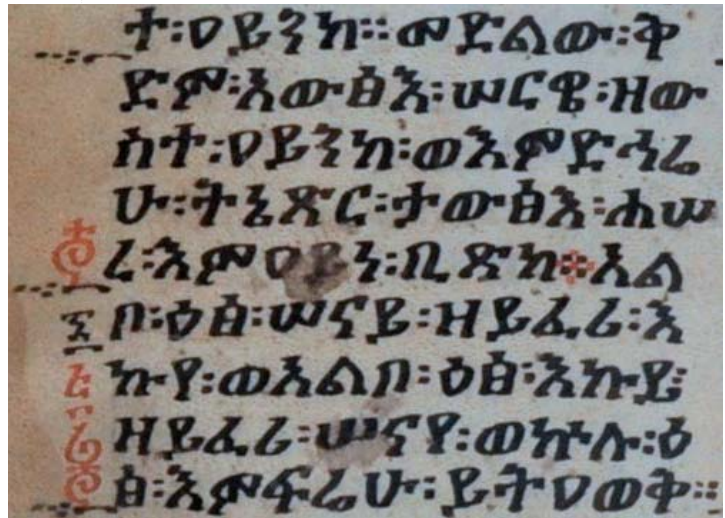
historiam, I: *Liber Axumae*, Parisiis – Lipsiae 1909, 1910 (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, ser. 2, Scriptores Aethiopici 8), repr. Leuven: Peeters, 1962 (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 54, 58, Scriptores Aethiopici, 24, 27).

EAE I-IV : S.Uhlig et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*. Vol. I: A-C, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003; Vol. II: D-Ha, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005; Vol. III: He-N, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007; Vol. IV: O-W, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010.

Getatchew Haile (ed., tr.), *The Gəʿəz Acts of Abba Ǝsṭifanos of Gʷəndagʷənde*, Leuven: Peeters, 2006 (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 619, 620, Scriptores Aethiopici, 110, 111).

Leslau, Wolf, *Comparative Dictionary of Geʿez (Classical Ethiopic): Geʿez – English / English – Geʿez with an Index of the Semitic Roots*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1987.

Perruchon, Jules (ed., tr.), *Les chroniques de Zarʾa Yâʿeqôb et de Baʾeda Mâryâm, rois d'Éthiopie de 1434 à 1478*, Paris: É. Bouillon 1893 (Bibliothèque de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études: Sciences philologiques et historiques, 93).

Varenbergh, Joseph, "Studien zur abessinischen Reichsordnung (Šerʿata Mangešt)", *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete,* 30, 1915–16, pp. 1–45.

Denis Nosnitsin
Hamburg University

Impressum