



Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH)
Research Networking Programme (RNP)
Comparative Oriental Manuscripts Studies (COMSt)

Office:

Research Unit Ethiopian Studies
Universität Hamburg
Rothenbaumchaussee 19
20148 Hamburg
Tel./Fax +49-40-42838-7777/-3330

Hamburg, 24 August 2009

Dear colleagues,

herewith I wanted to inform you of the creation of the new Research Networking Programme, funded by the European Science Foundation, in **Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies (COMSt)**, <http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST>). The programme, which will run for five years, brings together scholars from different disciplines across Europe to compare experiences and research results in the history of written civilization, manuscript description/cataloguing, textual and material analysis, and manuscript preservation, conservation and restoration. In the process of networking it will be possible to compare the methods used and, eventually, elaborate unified approaches to manuscript studies for Oriental cultures, using the achievements of non-Oriental disciplines. The aim of the COMSt programme is to enable academic dialogue between scholars working in the same sub-discipline of manuscript studies applied to another language or region, as well as interdisciplinary communication. It is expected to consolidate European research traditions and stimulate further scholarly exchange in the field of Oriental Manuscript Studies, with the focus on the Mediterranean and North African cultural areas, thereby building up a long-lasting and efficient network that will continue to bear fruit beyond the end date of the current Research Networking Programme.

For some more preliminary information please check the website <http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST>. On our website we also try to collect information on other projects and related conference worldwide, hoping to offer a useful service to everyone, whether involved with COMSt or not.

On **1-3 December 2009**, the COMSt launching conference (<http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/conf09.html>) will take place in Hamburg, Germany. During this event, current projects will be presented and discussed, coordination possibilities will be explored and urgent desiderata will be established, so that the COMSt five research teams (1: codicology and palaeography, 2: philology/text criticism, 3: digital philology, 4: cataloguing, 5: manuscript preservation) can start their active work.

The participation itself is **free of charge** and we would be happy if you could find a way to attend the meeting to inform and be informed about the respective project activities.

The main "core" of the RNP is formed by a very limited number of team members who have been selected and approved by the Steering Committee. Due to our very limited budget this "inner circle" cannot at the moment be expanded, but we would be happy to welcome you to the somewhat larger "outer circle" of participants and close colleagues.

Should you be unable to come but are still interested to share information we would be happy to include your name in our regular mailing list so that you are always informed about the COMSt activities, and can always inform us about yours.



**Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH)
Research Networking Programme (RNP)
Comparative Oriental Manuscripts Studies (COMSt)**

For those who have no access to any institutional travel funding (we particularly address younger scholars) but are very interested to attend we have reserved five short visit grants (<http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/bandi.html>) to enable attending the COMSt launching conference. Since there are very few grants available it is advisable that those interested apply as early as possible, by 15 September at the latest.

Please do let me know if you are thinking of attending - especially if you need any help in hotel booking or/and if you are willing to have a couple of minutes of presentation time to present your ongoing project/research.

You are also welcome to send us any information material that we can then distribute during the conference.

Do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions and please do feel free to forward this information to whoever you think may be interested to get involved.

Yours sincerely,

Evgenia Sokolinskaia (Coordinator COMST)
Research Unit Ethiopian Studies
Universität Hamburg
Rothenbaumchaussee 19
20148 Hamburg
Tel./Fax +49-40-42838-7777/-3330

<http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/>
<http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/ethiostudies/>