

TEAM 1 - CODICOLOGY AND PALAEOGRAPHY
&
TEAM 5 - CONSERVATION WORKSHOPS

THE ORIENTAL BOOK

THE SHAPING OF THE PAGE, THE SCRIBE AND THE ILLUMINATOR AT WORK
THE MAKING OF ORIENTAL BOOKBINDINGS AND THEIR CONSERVATION

DATE: 9-13 October 2012
VENUE: Centre de Conservation du Livre – Arles, FRANCE
CONVENORS: Stéphane Ipert - Centre de Conservation du Livre -
 Marilena Maniaci - Università degli studi di Cassino e del Lazio meridionale -
in cooperation with
 Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet -CNRS - UMR 8167, Orient & Méditerranée - Mondes
 sémitiques -
 Laura Parodi - Independent scholar –

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SUMMARY

The workshop “*The Oriental Book.: The Shaping of the Page, the Scribe and the Illuminator at Work - The Making of Oriental Book bindings and their Conservation*”, jointly organized by COMSt Team 1 and Team 5, was hosted by the Centre de Conservation du Livre in Arles (France) on 9th-13th October 2012, under the scientific coordination of Stéphane Ipert (CCL; leader of Team 5) and Marilena Maniaci (University of Cassino; leader of Team 1), in cooperation with Françoise Briquel Chatonnet (CNRS – UMR 8167) and Laura Parodi (independent scholar).

The workshop addressed the final steps in the making of the Oriental book: the shaping of the page; the work done by scribes and illuminators in order to fill it with words and images; the manufacture of Oriental bookbindings; the issues raised by their conservation.

Team 1 and Team 5 were respectively responsible for the first two and the last two days, while the session on October 11th was devoted to the history of bookbinding materials and techniques, with contributions from members of both teams and invited speakers.

The workshop’s general objectives were:

- to evaluate the (still very uneven) knowledge about book layout, bookbinding, and the various professionals involved in writing and decorating the handwritten book;
- to compare and highlight similarities and differences between the various book cultures, in relation to geographical areas, ages, book typologies, and cultural contexts;
- to identify underdeveloped aspects and promising research paths, within each individual culture and in a comparative perspective.

The workshop was conceived in roundtable form in order to encourage the exchange of information and ideas and to facilitate comparison among experts of the various manuscript cultures. Both the team members and invited speakers provided general overviews for their specific area of expertise and shared their own research experience on particular topics. As with previous workshops, selected bibliographies and

outlines of the contributions were circulated via e-mail to all the participants in the weeks ahead of the event.

DESCRIPTION OF SCIENTIFIC CONTENT AND OF DISCUSSION

As mentioned, the workshop was devoted to the final steps in the making of Oriental books and to their makers, as well as issues of conservation.

The first two days (9th-10th October), organised by Team 1, carried the title *The shaping of the page, the scribe and the illuminator at work*. After the first two workshops organized by Team 1, devoted to *Book Materials in Oriental Cultures* and *The Making of the Oriental Book*, this third annual meeting addressed page layout and the status of the Oriental scribe, focusing on the way the page was shaped, structured and organized and on the actual makers (scribes, decorators and illuminators). Individual sessions focused on page layout (size and proportion of the page and of the written area; layout canons and recipes; layout formats and text types); the structuring of contents (initial letters, titles and rubrics; indexes and tables of contents; running titles and other elements; decoration and illumination as ‘codicological features’); the scribe and the illuminator at work (agencies; places; methods of work; colophons).

The 11th October session, organized jointly by Teams 1 and 5, was devoted to issues of common interests concerning the history, archaeology and conservation of Oriental bookbindings, approached in a comparative perspective. Panels within this session addressed the study of materials and of manufacturing techniques, as well as their correct description (including terminological issues).

In the following days (12th-13th October), the meeting of Team 5, titled *The making of Oriental bookbindings and their conservation*, addressed issues more specifically related to the preservation of bookbindings and writing supports. Some challenges of digitization were taken into account, and an opportunity was taken to introduce participants to recently-acquired, cutting-edge digitizing and preservation equipment at the CCL. On the last day (13 October), Team 5 members worked together on the chapter devoted to the conservation aspects of Oriental books for the COMSt “Introduction to Oriental Manuscript Studies”. The day was co-organized in cooperation with the European project STUDITE, which deals with Byzantine bindings and other Oriental artefacts.

In the first two days, the debate was organized in three thematic sessions. The following topics were addressed:

- Page layout and spatial organization (size and proportion; the page and the written area; layout canons and recipes; layout formats and text types: sacred texts - Qur’an, Bibles and Gospels, liturgical books; other text types; ‘special’ layouts: texts+commentaries; other instances)
- The structuring of contents (initial letters, titles and rubrics; indexes and tables of contents; other elements; decoration and illumination)
- Colophons in Oriental manuscripts.

The major cultural and geographic areas of “Oriental codicology” were all represented, by the following speakers: L. Parodi, V. Sagaria Rossi, A. Vernay-Nouri (Arabic/Persian); D. Kouymjian (Armenian); P. Buzi (Coptic); S. Ancel, E. Balicka Witakowska, A. Bausi, C. Bosc-Tiessé M. Krzyzanowska, D. Nosnitsin (Ethiopic); Jost Gippert (Georgian); P. Andrist, P. Canart, M. Maniaci (Greek); M. Beit-Arié (Hebrew); P. Borbone, F. Briquel-Chatonnet (Syriac); A. Desreumaux (Palestinian Aramaic); R. Cleminson (Slavonic).

Each of the team members and invited speakers was asked to deliver a short introductory presentation on one or more of the three suggested topics, in order to define the ‘state of the art’ for the various Oriental manuscript traditions. Both the chronological evolution and the diachronic variety of the documented practices were taken into consideration, according to book typologies, contents and functions. As in the first

two workshops (devoted to “Book materials” and “The Making of the Oriental Book”), special attention was given to highlighting similarities and differences; an overview of open issues and directions for further research was also offered by most of the speakers.

Patterns emerged during the discussion, with similarities or differences in the solutions given by book artisans to similar problems. For instance: how to shape the page and how to visualize the organization of written and unwritten spaces onto its surface; how to employ structuring and navigating devices to enhance the legibility of the text; how to distribute decoration and illumination in close relationship to the text; how the author of the transcription stated himself and the conditions of his work. Participants argued that, while some of the similarities between traditions may at least tentatively be explained by geographical proximity and/or cultural contacts, in other instances the reasons remain to be explored in greater depth. The clearest example provided was that of Hebrew codices, which can usually be easily distinguished according to the geographical area – and thus the sphere of cultural influence – in which they were manufactured.

As is well known, the state of research on the manuscript traditions considered by COMSt is very uneven. Whereas Greek, Hebrew and to a lesser extent Arabic codicology are well advanced, both in the development of proper methodologies and in the achievement of research results, the codicological study of many other traditions is still in its infancy, and the physical aspects in which texts were produced and transmitted is extremely limited. Although the facts and assumptions presented by the speakers suggested many inspiring observations and comparisons, the need for more detailed and systematic knowledge, based on the collection of larger amount of data (ideally concerning dated and/or datable manuscripts) and on their statistical evaluation, was repeatedly emphasized. Geographical and chronological typologies may someday emerge from such classifications based on a representative (ideally, complete) corpus of dated manuscripts; but they are for the time being scholarly *desiderata*.

Both the need to develop a common methodology and the lack of adequate terminology were highlighted: the technical vocabulary used in different languages and scholarly traditions displays considerable variations, which hinder effective communication among scholars and a proper understanding of the phenomena addressed.

The relationship between layout techniques and strategies and the transmission of contents was in special focus.

Additionally, a presentation of the newly issued handbook by F. Déroche – V. Sagaria Rossi, *I manoscritti in caratteri arabi*, Roma, Viella, 2012, was included in the workshop programme. Two relevant databases were also presented: *e-corpus* (<http://www.e-corpus.org/>) which contains 1 250 000 digitized pages of books and manuscripts and *e-ktobe* (www.mss-syriaques.org), a database gathering descriptions of Syriac manuscripts (detailing contents, history, codicology).

The final two days were devoted to conservation and preservation aspects. Condition, description surveys and conservation works were presented by the various speakers, who provided many inspiring observations and comparisons between the diverse type of bookbindings. In a comparative perspective, the most useful discussions concerned the construction of bindings and the sewing methods of Byzantine, Syriac and Slavonic manuscripts. The construction of Islamic bindings, it was agreed, poses special problems – some of its features, such as the double leather back, stand out as unrelated to other traditions and remain unexplained from a functional point of view. A lively discussion concerned the techniques and motifs for stamping and decorating leather in the Byzantine and Armenian traditions. It became clear that in some traditions (notably, the Islamic) the study of ornamentation has received greater attention, while in others (notably, the Byzantine) a lot remains to be explored. Finally, examples of conservation treatments from different manuscripts collections, such as the Aga Khan collection and the French National Library, as well

as new techniques developed within the framework of document digitization were explored in depth and provided directions for further research.

ASSESSMENT OF THE RESULTS AND IMPACT ON THE FUTURE DIRECTION IN THE FIELD

Team 1 and Team 5 members and invited speakers provided an up-to-date ‘state of the art’ on the workshop’s topics, mostly based on personal research in the field, and enriched by the sharing of bibliographies and presentation outlines among the workshop participants a few weeks ahead of the workshop.

Although the knowledge concerning bookmaking remains very uneven between the different Oriental traditions, a common methodological perspective is gradually emerging from the meetings, based on systematic surveys that need to be conducted on each of the COMSt-related book cultures.

The fact that several cataloguing or (re)cataloguing projects of wide MSS collections are currently in progress yields hope for the achievement of significant results in the near future. Although the very dense program did not allow thorough discussion, a variety of new and challenging perspectives emerged for comparative research in the domains of layout, scribal and decorative practices, and bookbinding. Data resulting from the presentations will feed into the drafting of the handbook subchapters entrusted to COMSt’s Teams 1 and 5.

It is worth mentioning that the PhD students and young researchers who attended the workshop as scholarship owners actively participated in the discussions, and were highly satisfied with the experience made and very grateful for the opportunity for sharing experiences and information and meeting with one another and with more experienced scholars.

The workshop sessions has been video-recorded and will be made available online through the CCL-managed database called *e-corpus*, to ensure a better dissemination of results and the sharing of experiences with the concerned experts who were unable to attend the event.

FINAL PROGRAMME OF THE WORKSHOP

The Shaping of the Page, the Scribe and the Illuminator at Work - Team 1 / 3rd workshop

Tuesday, 9 October

14.15-14.30

Opening address

14.30-16.15

Session I, part 1: Page layout and spatial organization

- Size and proportion; the page and the written area; layout canons and recipes
- Layout formats and text types: sacred texts (Qur'an, Bibles and Gospels, liturgical books)

S. Ancel (Ethio-SPaRe), P. Andrist, M. Beit-Arié, P. G. Borbone, F. Briquel-Chatonnet, R. Cleminson, A. Desreumaux, J. Gippert, D. Kouymjian, M. Maniaci, V. Sagaria Rossi

16.15 - 16.45

Coffee break

16.45-18.30

Session I, part 2: Page layout and spatial organization

- other text types
- 'special' layouts (texts & commentaries; other instances)

M. Beit-Arié, P. G. Borbone, F. Briquel-Chatonnet, D. Kouymjian, M. Maniaci, D. Nosnitsin.

18.30-19.30

Presentation of F. Déroche - V. Sagaria Rossi, *I manoscritti in caratteri arabi*, Roma, Viella, 2012

M. Palma, M. Beit-Arié, F. Briquel-Chatonnet, M. Maniaci, L. Parodi

Wednesday, 10 October

9.00-10.45

Session II.1: The structuring of contents

- Initial letters, titles and rubrics
- Indexes and tables of contents
- Other elements

P. G. Borbone, F. Briquel-Chatonnet, P. Buzi, P. Canart, R. Cleminson, A. Desreumaux, J. Gippert, D. Kouymjian, D. Nosnitsin

11.15-13.00

Session II.2: The structuring of contents

- Decoration and Illumination

P. G. Borbone, C. Bosc-Tiessé, M. Beit-Arié, P. Canart, A. Desreumaux, J. Gippert, D. Kouymjian, A. Vernay-Nouri, E. Balicka Witakowska

13.00 - 14.30

Lunch

14.30-16.15

Session III.1: The scribe and the illuminator at work

- Agencies

- Places
- Methods of work

M. Beit-Arié, P. G. Borbone, C. Bosc-Tiessé, F. Briquel-Chatonnet, J. Gippert, D. Kouymjian, A. Vernay-Nouri, V. Sagaria Rossi, M. Krzyżanowska (Ethio-SPaRe)

16.15 - 16.45

Coffee break

16.45-18.30

Session III.2: Colophons in Oriental Manuscripts

M. Beit-Arié, P. G. Borbone, F. Briquel-Chatonnet, P. Buzi, R. Cleminson, D. Kouymjian, P. Canart, J. Gippert, M. Maniaci, A. Bausi, V. Sagaria Rossi

The History & Archaeology of Oriental Bookbindings -Teams 1 & 5 common day

Thursday, 11 October

9.00-9.15

Opening address by the President of the Region , the Mayor of Arles and the president of the board of CCL

Session I: Methodology and cross-cooperation between Team 1 and Team 5

9.15-9.30

Common steps of bookbinding in all areas covered by COMSt and different objectives to study and describe bookbinding

S.Ipert

9.30-9.45

Pourquoi décrire des reliures ?

P. Canart

9.45-10.00

Terminology - Survey of existing manual and multilingual dictionaries

P. Hepworth

Session II: The archaeology of Oriental bookbinding in a comparative perspective

10.00-10.45

Session II.1: Boards (materials and construction) - Sewing (with or without boards) - Headbands

R. Cleminson, J. Gippert, D. Nosnitsin, K. Scheper, F. Vinourd

10.45-11.15

Coffee break

11.15-13.00

Session II.1: Boards - Sewing - Headbands (continuation)

R. Cleminson, J. Gippert, D. Nosnitsin, K. Scheper, F. Vinourd

13.00-14.30

Lunch

14.30-16.15

Session II.2: Cover (materials and manufacture); decoration

K. Houllis, D. Kouymjian, L. Parodi, V. Sagaria Rossi, K. Scheper, E. Balicka-Witakowska

16.15-16.45

Coffee break

16.45-17.30

Summary of the results and further perspectives of cooperation between Team 1 and Team 5

S. Ipert, M. Maniaci

17.30-18.30

Presentation of the E-corpus data base

S. Ipert

Presentation of the E-ktobe data base for Syriac manuscripts

E. Villey

The Conservation of Oriental Bookbinding - Team 5 / 5th workshop Friday, 12 October

9.00-9.15

Welcome and presentation of the day

Condition , description survey and conservation

9.15-9.45

Example of condition surveys for conservation treatment decision making

S. Ipert

9.45-10.30

Reliures de techniques byzantines à la Bibliothèque Nationale de Vienne. Problèmes et perspectives de recherche

E. Gamillscheg

10.30-11.00

Greek manuscripts dated to the 15th and 16th kept in Athens and their bindings

M.L. Agati, K. Houlis

11.00-11.30

Coffee break

11.30-12.00

Le fond des manuscrits persans et leurs reliures dans la collection de la Bibliothèque de l'Académie Roumaine

G. Dumitrescu

12.00-12.30

Experiences with conservation and digitization in Charfet monastery

Y. Dergham

12.30-14.00

Lunch

14.00-14.30

The case of Qatar Islamic museum

A. Couvrat Desvergnès

14.30-15.00

Les feuillets de manuscrits coraniques anciens sur parchemin de la Bibliothèque nationale de France : des témoins exceptionnels pas si simples à conserver

P.J. Riamond

15.00-15.30

Example of conservation treatments on text support

P. Hepworth

15.30-16.00

Example of binding conservation from Aga Khan Collection

S. Ipert

16.00 - 16.30

Khartasia : a data base for oriental paper

C. Laroque

16.30 -17.00

Coffee break

Material analysis and studies

17.00-17.30

Photography of watermarks in near-infrared. Demonstration

M. Mayer

Conservation of Oriental Bookbinding
Session organized in cooperation with the STUDITE project

Saturday, 13 October

New projects and perspectives in the study of Byzantine bindings

8.30-9.00

Reliure byzantine des manuscrits slaves de Moldavie dans la collection de la Bibliothèque de l'Académie Roumaine.

L. Kovari

9.00-9.30

Héritage de Byzance : relieurs serbe en Hongrie

F. Lili Eszter

9.30-10.00

Reconstructing Byzantine Bookbinding through Images and Texts

N. Tsironis

10.00-10.30

20 years of Byzantine binding studies and perspective
K. Houlis

11.00-11.30

Coffee break

Digitalization and databases

11.30-12.00

La base de donnée Studite sur les reliures byzantines

F. Vinourd

12.00-12.30

Le catalogage des manuscrits à la bibliothèque de Kaslik

J. Moukarzel

12.30-13.00

Conclusion on the perspectives in Byzantine binding studies

P. Canart

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND SPEAKERS

Title, Name & Surname	Institution	Country	Email address
Team 1 workshop (9-10 October) and Team 1 + Team 5 common day (11 October)			
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