

COMSt - Team 4: II workshop  
Frankfurt , June 14<sup>th</sup> 2011  
“Towards an ideal chapter on Oriental MSS cataloguing”

Local organizer: Jost Gippert  
Scientific organizers: Witold Witakowski and Paola Buzi

## **Scientific and Financial Report**

### **a) Scientific summary**

On 14 June 2011, Frankfurt University hosted the second workshop of the Cataloguing Team of the COMSt network which was entitled: “Towards an ideal chapter on Oriental manuscripts cataloguing”.

The goals of the workshop were twofold: to complete the overview of different Oriental manuscript traditions as reflected in cataloguing history begun during the first workshop in Uppsala, and to approach special challenges of cataloguing, in particular those connected with a proper description of manuscripts consisting of several production units. Both goals were auxiliary to the general scope of the meeting: getting a clearer idea of the structure and the content of the chapter on manuscript cataloguing in the future COMSt handbook. In the first part of the workshop the history and the state-of-the-art in the cataloguing of manuscripts from such hand-written book cultures as Georgian (J. Gippert and B. Outtier), Turkish (D.V. Proverbio) and Persian (I. Perho) were exemplified. The presentation of the Armenian cataloguing tradition (A. Schmidt) argued Armenian cataloguers played a major role in the development of cataloguing and one cannot and should not automatically define the cataloguing as a “Western” invention, neither ascribe the progress in manuscript cataloguing to the advance of the European scholarship, as the standards in Armenian indigenous cataloguing have been higher than average since its very early inception. The presentation concerning the Hebrew manuscript tradition discussed cataloguing both Hebrew manuscripts and those in other languages written in Hebrew script (D. Sklare), bringing to the surface the complicated definition issue of an “Oriental” tradition, which was then extensively discussed, with the input concerning the similar approach needed for manuscripts in Arabic script (M. Nobili).

The second part of the workshop was introduced by the problem statement made by M. Maniaci and P. Canart: how to perceive and adequately describe manuscripts that acquired their present shape and composition in the course of time, being a combination of several distinct codicological units (multi-structured descriptions). Already in his presentation of the Georgian manuscript cataloguing, J. Gippert particularly highlighted the difficulties presented by the complex nature of manuscripts (including, in this case, also palimpsests and manuscripts that had been dispersed in the course of time).

In the opening presentation, experiences from cataloguing of Latin and Greek manuscripts as well as different terminological approaches were presented. The options of how a cataloguer can and should deal with composite manuscripts were presented by P.

Andrist, whereas P. Gumbert sketched a historical overview of the study of the composite manuscript, confronting the Western and the Oriental studies.

During the discussion, many of the fundamental definitions concerning the multi-layer manuscript nature were discussed, also as to the nature of the re-used manuscript materials.

## **b) Description of scientific content**

As already mentioned in the “Scientific summary”, the second workshop of Team 4 was divided into two sessions: the first one aimed to conclude a survey of the different Oriental languages cataloguing traditions, in particular the Persian, Turkish, Georgian, Armenian, Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic ones (the Greek, Arabic, Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic and Old Church Slavonic traditions were already dealt with at the Uppsala workshop in September 2010), while the second session focused on the modern trends of cataloguing, and in particular on the case of complex catalogues and “multi-structured descriptions” (for details, see below the final program of the workshop).

The main purpose of both sessions was contributing to the development of the chapter of COMSt handbook which Team Four will be responsible for. In order to stimulate an exchange of opinions among the team members and the external collaborators with special competence in the topics dealt with, more time was devoted to the discussions than was the case at the previous workshop. They were, in fact, regarded as being as important as the presentations themselves.

More details can be found below, in the section on the main results of the workshop:

### *Session I*

The first session of the workshop was a continuation of the review of the “state of the art” of the cataloguing of manuscripts in all the linguistic traditions that are within the scope of the COMSt project. The reviewing began already at the first workshop of Team 4, in September 2010 in Uppsala, and at the Frankfurt workshop it was continued and completed.

Following cataloguing traditions were presented:

(1) Turkish (by Delio Vania Proverbio, Vatican Library), (2) Persian (by Irmeli Perho, Danish Royal Library, Copenhagen), (3) Armenian manuscripts (by Andrea Barbara Schmidt, Univ. Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium), (4) Georgian (by Jost Gippert, Frankfurt and Bernard Outtier, Paris), and (5) Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic (David Sklare, Hebrew Univ., Jerusalem).

The presentations, that were all prepared by renowned specialists in the respective fields, concentrated mostly on the recent cataloguing efforts. For many of them extensive bibliographical handouts were provided. The systematic presentation included sometimes basic information about the manuscripts of a given tradition, even reaching as far back as to the origin of the writing systems in which they have been written. For the traditions, such as the Caucasian, that are less known outside the expert circle, this procedure seems to be justified, particularly in view of paleographical information that the cataloguers are expected to provide.

The presentation of the cataloguing traditions has shown that there are differences in both the age of the traditions (Jewish and Armenian – the older ones, Persian – the youngest) and the standards applied. Some of them (such as Armenian and Turkish) are

well equipped with publications that contain repertories of the collections and bibliographical lists of the catalogues. Such publications are excellent *instrumenta studiorum*, very helpful for any further cataloguing work. The future COMSt handbook may include a recommendation that such tools be provided for those traditions that do not have them yet.

The main result of Session I as a whole was that it visualised considerable differences between the various cataloguing traditions that were presented as to both the age of the traditions and the standards applied. As the presentations themselves varied as to the topics covered, a need to uniform them for the sake of the future chapter turned urgent. Criteria for this purpose will be suggested and discussed among the Team members during the period before the next workshop.

Although the task of reviewing the cataloguing traditions of Oriental manuscripts seems to be completed, and – most probably – will not be discussed at the next workshop, it will certainly reappear later when the editorial discussions on the theme will have begun.

## *Session II*

The new trends of cataloguing which have been experimented with in the last years in Greek and Latin codicological studies were the *fil rouge* of the second part of the workshop. Thanks to the participation of some of the most eminent specialists in this field – Patrick Andrist, Paul Canart, Peter Gumbert, Marilena Maniaci – the approach to manuscript cataloguing by means of “multi-structured descriptions” was analyzed and presented as a sort of “deconstruction” of the codex in order to identify its different “layers”.

For most of the Orientalists who took part in the workshop the codicological analysis of a manuscript probably appeared for the first time in a new light, as was demonstrated by the lively and fruitful discussion which followed the presentations.

During the session a great prominence was given to the fact that by far most books which are today perceived as “ancient manuscript” are not the result of only one productive process. A manuscript should be therefore always considered as an “evolving entity” and should be studied taking advantage of a methodology which is borrowed from archaeology: the “stratigraphic analysis”.

In this respect the expression “stratigraphic unit” used to describe the complexity of a codex is sometimes probably more appropriate than “codicological unit” (Gumbert). “Circulation units” and “production units” are also new expressions to be used to explain and describe specific phenomena (Andrist, Canart, Maniaci).

Moreover a cataloguer should be very aware of the possible existence of imperfect “stratigraphic units”, especially at the end of a quire.

In the description of a complex codex any useful element should be taken into consideration, such as the writing materials, watermarks, colophons, etc.

The following pattern was suggested as successful for the description of the “production units” of a codex (Andrist):

Heading

Production unit A

Production unit B

Production unit C

...

Supplementary elements:

Notes

Binding

History

Bibliography

In brief, a good catalogue should sketch a sort of “genetic history” of the codex (Andrist, Gumbert), although this inevitably depends also on the objectivity of the cataloguer (Binggeli).

In this respect some descriptions in Paul Canart’s catalogue of the *Vaticani graeci 1743-1962* preserved in the Apostolic Vatican Library, Peter Gumbert’s illustrated inventory of medieval manuscripts in Latin script in the Netherlands and the catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in the Vaticana by Benjamin Richler and Malachi Beit-Arié were cited as examples of good descriptions.

It was also stressed that, with appropriate adaptations, the “multi-structure description” described above is applicable also to fragments (Gumbert).

A more and more conscientious and aware preparation of the cataloguers will ensure, hopefully in the near future, that catalogues of Oriental manuscripts are characterized not only by “multi-structured textual descriptions” but also, and more and more often, by “multi-structured codicological descriptions”.

### **c) Assessment of the results and impact on the future direction**

It can be asserted that the workshop was successful both because the scheduled programme was totally respected and because the role of participants was active and productive.

The main result of the workshop, however, was definitely represented by the long and animated exchange of opinions that let compare different *praxeis* and habits in the cataloguing activities. Such a discussion will be an extremely useful basis for the realization of the forthcoming COMSt handbook.

And in fact the *modus operandi* for the realization of the projected chapter of Team 4 was also discussed during the workshop: a technical presentation of the work with the COMSt handbook wiki page (E. Sokolinskaia) provided the team members with the knowhow of how to convert the discussion results into a growing joint chapter text.

The next goal of the Team before the next workshop – and hopefully also before the next Editorial Meeting (which will take place in Athens in December 2011) – is intended to put the members in the condition to start elaborating, at least in part – paragraph II (“Summary history of cataloguing”), paragraph III (“Types and kinds of catalogues”) and to start dealing with paragraph IV (“The codicological revolution?: ‘multi-structured descriptions’ vs. ‘simple-structured descriptions’”).

Neither the place nor the time of the next workshop was discussed in Frankfurt, but from the subsequent exchange of ideas it seems that the Team will reconvene in Copenhagen. In collaboration with Team 3 – coordinated by Jost Gippert – that workshop will be devoted to challenges, benefits and standards in computer-assisted (XML / database) cataloguing and to the delicate matter of the relationship between “traditional catalogues” and “electronic catalogues”.

#### **d) Programme and participants**

Team 4: II workshop

Frankfurt , June 14<sup>th</sup> 2011

“Towards an ideal chapter on Oriental MSS cataloguing”

9.15-9.30

Witold Witakowski, Paola Buzi, opening address

Paola Buzi, “Towards an ideal chapter on Oriental MSS cataloguing”: purpose of the meeting

Session I

The cataloguing traditions of Oriental manuscripts: historical overview and recent results

Chair: Witold Witakowski

9.30-10.00

Delio Vania Proverbio, Cataloguing of the Turkish manuscripts

10.00-10.30

Irmeli Perho, Cataloguing of the Persian manuscripts

10.30-11.00

Coffe break

11.00-11.30

Andrea Barbara Schmidt, Cataloguing of the Armenian manuscripts

11.30-12.00

Jost Gippert - Bernard Outtier, Cataloguing of the Georgian manuscripts

12.00-12.30

David Sklare, Cataloguing of the Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic manuscripts

12.30-13.00

Discussion

13.00-14.30

Conference lunch

Session II

The codicological revolution?

“Multi-structured descriptions” vs. “simple-structured descriptions”: examples and problems

Chair: Paola Buzi

14.30-15.00

Introduction to the table ronde. The new trends of cataloguing: the case of complex manuscripts and multi-structured descriptions. Experiences in comparison (introduction: Marilena Maniaci and Paul Canart)

15.00-15.30

Patrick Andrist, Catalogues and multi-structured descriptions

15.30-16.00

Peter Gumbert, The composite manuscript outside the West

16.00-16.30

Coffee break

16.30-17.30

Discussion

17.30-18.15

Towards the chapter of Team 4: “Oriental manuscripts cataloguing”: practical information and modus operandi

18.15-19.00

Next steps and conclusion

20.00

Conference dinner

#### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

##### Convenors

- |                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Paola Buzi       | Ostia Lido (Roma), (IT) |
| 2. Jost Gippert     | Frankfurt, (DE)         |
| 3. Witold Witkowski | Uppsala, (SE)           |

##### Speakers

- |                     |                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. Patrick Andrist  | Berne, (CH)              |
| 5. Paul Canart      | Città del Vaticano, (IT) |
| 6. J. Peter Gumbert | MV Lopik, (NL)           |

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|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 7. Marilena Maniaci       | Cassino, (IT)                 |
| 8. Bertrand Outtier       | Saint Martin de la Mer , (FR) |
| 9. Irmeli Perho           | Copenhagen, (DK)              |
| 10. Delio Vania Proverbio | Città del Vaticano, (IT)      |
| 11. Andrea Schmidt        | Louvain-la-Neuve, (BE)        |
| 12. David Sklare          | Jerusalem, (IL)               |

#### Participants

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|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 13. Alessandro Bausi         | Hamburg, (DE)          |
| 14. André Binggeli           | Paris, (FR)            |
| 15. Antonella Brita          | Naples, (IT)           |
| 16. Javier Del Barco         | Madrid , (ES)          |
| 17. Johannes Den Heijer      | Louvain-la-Neuve, (BE) |
| 18. Natia Dundua             | Frankfurt, (DE)        |
| 19. Jean-Louis Estève        | Thiais, (FR)           |
| 20. Sara Fani                | Naples, (IT)           |
| 21. Thomas Juegel            | Frankfurt, (DE)        |
| 22. Grigory Kessel           | Marburg, (DE)          |
| 23. Thomas Kollatz           | Essen, (DE)            |
| 24. Caroline Macé            | Leuven, (BE)           |
| 25. Mauro Nobili             | Naples, (IT)           |
| 26. Denis Nosnitsin          | Hamburg, (DE)          |
| 27. Teresa Ortega-Monasterio | Madrid , (ES)          |
| 28. Vitagrazia Pisani        | Hamburg, (DE)          |
| 29. Christoph Rauch          | Berlin, (DE)           |
| 30. Evgenia Sokolinskaia     | Hamburg, (DE)          |
| 31. Daniel Stender           | Hamburg, (DE)          |
| 32. Pablo Ubierna            | Buenos Aires, (AR)     |