

Scientific report

on the work shop intitled « Specific Issues in Oriental Philology »

(Athens, 8-9 December 2011 at the National Hellenic Research Foundation)

1. Purpose of the visit

The holding of a workshop on “Specific Issues in Oriental Philology” was a very interesting occasion to think about the methodological way which the editors could follow to realise an oriental text edition. Indeed, if the editor has, as in occidental fields, to interrogate himself on “what text should be edited?” and “what kind of apparatus criticus must appear?”, the treatment of an oriental text requires a specific method because of the complexity of the tradition, especially when the text is translated or supposed to be translated. For example, how an editor could reveal the proximity of an oriental tradition with another, knowing that both of them come from the Greek?

By preparing the critical edition of a Syriac text (*The History of Philip the apostle and evangelist* in collaboration with A. Desreumaux and F. Ruani) I am dealing with those questions. This edition take seven Syriac manuscripts (from XIII^e to XVIII^e c.) in consideration. But the oldest testimony of the tradition is not Syriac but Arabic (IX^e c.) ! Moreover a lot of elements let us think that maybe the Syriac branch should be issued from a translation of a lost Greek text (which would have been very different from the existent Greek *Actes de Philippe* edited and translated by F. Amsler). So, after having collated all the manuscripts, we had to make an editorial choice : how should we present this text ? From which manuscript ? Should we do an eclectic or a diplomatic edition ? What should we do with the Arabic testimony ? How to make clear the Greek lost version which (we suppose) appears sometimes throw any Syriac testimonies ? As there is no manual reference dealing with the critical edition in Syriac, it seems that we have to do our own choices. So our purpose, by coming at the Athens workshop, was to have a look on the editorial propositions made in other fields of the oriental literature.

2. Description of the work carried out during the visit

The work shop on “Specific Issues in Oriental Philology” was organized in fifth sessions of about two hours dealing with the oriental text edition :

- 1) Dealing with Translated Texts

The first session, presided by Alessandro Bausi, was dedicated to the translated Texts. We heard Lara Sels speaking about the edition of Byzantine Texts translated in Old Slavonic; then Marie Cronier wanted to supply framework to consider a translated Text by editing an original text; Andrea Schmidt handled with how to edit an Armenian Text translated from the Syriac, and finally Perrine Pillette and Johannes den Heijer, who are interested in Coptic-arabic historiography, spoke on Translated Texts in two or multiple recensions.

- 2) Large and fluid traditions

The notion of fluidity is very important to characterize a manuscript tradition and to distinguish between two kind of attitude edition toward an oriental text. But it appears, by the questions of the public, that this notion was not clear at all, and needed to be accurately defined. It was what Alessandro Bausi, Hugo Lunhaug and Ilse de Vos intended to do. So we heard Alessandro Bausi speaking on Purported fluid traditions for the Ethiopic field (for a further definition of the fluidity, we were advised to refer to J. Bryant, *The Fluid Text. A theory of revision and editing Book and Screen*, 2002). So it appeared that a “fluid text” was any literary work that is transmitted in multiple form. And as every form has its signification and is like a reflect of an historical Text treatment, it wouldn’t be convenient to use a reconstructive methods for the edition of such a textual tradition. Alessandro Bausi regretted the lack of investigation by the precedent oriental literature editors on the transmission of the texts. Then Hugo Lundhaug considered the “Fluid versions authorial and Mechanical Textual Traditions”: it appeared that very few texts could testimony a so called “fluid tradition”. Anyway such a tradition should not be considered as a single text: the form is far too instable. Every text must be considered in a codicological approach in order to edit a

text which story can be scientifically reconstructed. He took for example the case of Michel Tardieu who made evident the fact that one copy of his text was bearing theological elements characteristic for the Valentinian time and not the other copy. This kind of element is very subtle, so that it would be very easy, by using a reconstructive methods, to mix them and so to pass them out. Finally Ilse de Vos dealt with the large Greek manuscript tradition of Ps. Athanasius' Erotapokriseis (which belongs to the theological tradition of the 6^e-8^e centuries).

At the end of this session it seems that the English terminology in the edition field could be confused, since it appeared that the words "recension" and "redaction" was synonymous.

- 3) Texts with a special religious status or function

On that subject we heard two papers : one from Michael Marx exploring the textual history of the Qur'an (Arabic) and one other from Ugo Zanetti on the Greek and Coptic liturgical texts. Michael Marx notably presented how from the oldest manuscripts of the Qur'an he could reconstruct the writing context of this text. His purpose is to give more importance to the cultural context of the addressees of this text in order to define with more accuracy if the Qur'an was really a book and what was its original function. On his part Hugo Zanetto wanted the editor of oriental religious text to pay more attention to the diversity of the textual form. Every variant could have an importance giving an information on a Church. He was justly pointed the fact that there was something incoherent to force the diversity of the texts (which is representative of the diversity of the Christian traditions) to be one. It is, on his mind, quite artificial and anti-scientific.

- 4) Formal aspects of critical editions

The day after began with a new session on the form that could take a critical edition. Sebastien Moureau spoke about the options and formats for the apparatus criticus (for the Greek, Latin and Arabic languages). He compared the German philology to the

Classic one in order to find the more adapted elements for the oriental literature. He proposed to use not necessary the Latin language in the apparatus criticus, but also a vernacular one and to require the services of a data-program to avoid the use of footnotes. According to him every additional information from the editor should be distinguished by the reader. Then Antonia Giannouli showed to the assistance the Apparatus Fontium for the Greek Byzantine field. She suggested to read J. Bidez and A.B. Drachman, *Emploi des signes critiques, disposition de l'apparat dans les éditions savantes de textes grecs et latins*, 1938 and for the rule of the text publication in the framework of the *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantia* to have a look at the *Bulletin d'information et de coordination* 4 (Athènes-Paris, 1968). She explained how we could organize the various apparatus criticus by distinguish the Testimonia from the variants etc... And finally Suzanna Gazakova dealt with the traditional editorial approaches in the slavonic field : her contribution was like a revelation for me as she presented the original kind of presentation usually practiced by the editors of old Slavonic texts. They find an interesting solution to present the same text in two different languages, by presenting the apparatus criticus in two parts : the first one contains the manuscript variants, whereafter the second one contains the most significant variants of the same text but in another language (in which the text was translated).

- 5) Various Aspects of Philology and Textual Criticism

In this last session Tara Andrews presented her work on the edition of the *Chronicle* of Matthew of Edessa in Armenian. She said she had begun her critical edition after having integrated the results of a previous collation in a data-program. Indeed through that program she could get a stemmatic tree, which enabled her to choose the right testimony for her edition. According to her this method can made an editor save if he has a lot of testimonies. Then Zuzana Gazakova gave her point of view about the orally transmitted popular narration preserved in Arabic manuscripts. And finally Matthew Driscoll made a clear presentation on what is the so-called “New Philology”. This last paper associated the reconstructive edition methods (incarnated by K. Lachmann from the German

school) with the Old Philology, and the diplomatic method (represented by J. Bidez, of the Classic school) with the new movement. For him it seems clear that “there is no original text” and that the purpose of the “reconstructing” editors like K. Lachmann could not follow a right way. In fact Matthew Driscoll, following in that J. Bidez, considers that the study of the text transmission is fundamental and in a certain way, a more legitimate and scientific purpose than the wanting of reconstruction of an earlier “fictive” text. According to him every editor should examine the purpose of the book transmitted before to choose how to edit this text.

After this last paper there was a large reaction from the public, so that we could understand how this subject was polemical : the partisans of the reconstructive method improve the necessity to defend themselves and their editing choice. It was a very important time in which could rise the debate between the supporters of the old and of the new philology. I was particularly interested by hearing the arguments of the old philology supporters as they were quite absent of the papers which occurred during the two days.

3. Description of the main results obtained

Turned on the special subject of how to edit an old oriental text, this workshop was particularly stimulating in that it opened my mind on arguments of the old philology and in that it gives me a solution for a problem our team encountered by doing the edition of the *The History of Philip the apostle and evangelist*.

I am great to the organizers to have made possible the birth of a large debate on the old and new philology. Before coming at the workshop I was convinced that the new philology was the only one scientific method for editing an ancient oriental text. But now, as I heard the opposite arguments, I feel less intransigent on that matter : our editing choice depends in reality of the number of testimonies, of the fluidity of the text transmission and of our real purpose for the edition. In the case of a stable tradition, like the text of Philipp in Syriac, we could accept an eclectic edition and this choice would be scientifically acceptable as long as the apparatus criticus can be considered as an historical edition of the text. And this point of view could enable us to present the text we want to make read (as it was done in the far past !). Indeed we have to formulate the question that is so important for the supporter of the new philology : what is the purpose of the book we want to edit ? Who are the addressees of our edition ? Are they people interested in the making of the oriental manuscripts and in their transmission ? Are they classical linguist looking after the influence of Greek culture on oriental texts ? How could we legitimately consider that in the far past every book had its single finality if we forget to give a such purpose to our own edition ?

However in the case of the edition of the Syriac text of *The History of Philip the apostle and evangelist* we will in fact use the diplomatic method, recommended by the new philology. But now, after all this considerations, it seems that we would have to justify this choice and to explain why we prefer it instead of the reconstructive method and for whom we intend to make this edition.

Before to participate to that workshop at Athens, I was quite undecided on the place to give to the Arabic translation in our Syriac edition of *The History of Philip the apostle and evangelist*. Indeed the Arabic text was too far from our text to be included in the apparatus criticus with the variants of the other Syriac testimonies, but enough close to provide interesting informations in the transmission of the text. The clear presentation of Susana Torres Prieto on the old Slavonic texts edition gave me the solution : as the editors of old Slavonic texts, we could separate our

apparatus criticus in two parts and consecrate the second one to the selection of significant variants of the Arabic text. It is a technical detail, but which would have its significant role for the reading possibilities of our future edition.

I own all these opportunities of meeting and gathering informations to the European Science Foundation which intended to according me short travel grants, so that I was financially able to take part in the work shop hold at Athens during the 8 and 9 December 2011.