

Specific Issues in Oriental Philology Workshop, Athens, 8-9 December 2011.

1. Summary

The COMSt Team 2 workshop *Specific Issues in Oriental Philology* was held at the National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens (Greece), on 8 and 9 December, 2011. The workshop convenors were Zisis Melissakis, research fellow the Institute for Byzantine Research (part of the NHRF) and member of the COMSt Steering Committee, and Johannes den Heijer, professor of Arabic language and literature at the Université catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, and team leader of COMSt team 2. The scientific programme was established by the latter, whereas the logistics and budget management were taken care of by Dr. Melissakis. The workshop was sponsored mainly by the European Science Foundation, with local input in kind by the Institute for Byzantine Research, whose chair, Kriton Chrysochoidis, not only addressed a word of welcome in the opening session but also actively participated in various sessions. Indirectly, participation was also co-financed by third parties to the extent that a number of participants used other funding to attend the workshop.

The workshop was attended by 51 registered participants (one of whom, in the end, two were unable to attend), affiliated to institutions in Belgium (9), Cyprus (1), Denmark (2), France (6), Germany (5), Greece (12), Israel (1), Italy (5), Norway (1), Slovakia (1), Spain (2), Sweden (4) and the United Kingdom (1). The number of speakers was sixteen, four of whom also chaired a session. Two sessions were chaired by other participants.

Out of this number, thirteen participants were members of COMSt team 2. Two were invited external (junior) speakers, six were members of COMSt team 3 and one of team 4, five were members of the Steering Committee (two of whom are also members of team 1 and one of team 4), and three more Athens-based colleagues joined the team of convenors. All others were external colleagues with a variety of backgrounds.

The workshop was organized according to a format of five sessions that dealt with distinct albeit closely interrelated thematic issues. Presentations were given without interruptions and were followed, in each case, by discussions on the entire session. Ample time for exchange was reserved by adding two half-hour slots for general discussion. This format clearly worked, in so far as specific issues, trends, desiderata and remaining problems were not only identified during the discussions at the end of each session, but could be further highlighted, reviewed and reconsidered at the intermediate stage (end of the first day) and in the final general discussion. The respective sessions were devoted to the following themes:

- Dealing with Translated Texts
- Large and fluid traditions
- Texts with a special religious status or function
- Formal aspects of critical editions
- Various Aspects of Philology and Textual Criticism

The main practical purpose of the workshop being, once again, the collective preparation, by COMSt team 2, of the “Philology” chapter for the COMSt handbook, it can be noted that the same success was achieved as in previous workshops: due to the remarkably professional and constructive attitude of all participants, the high number of participants turned out to be an asset, in that the team members received useful feedback from a variety of backgrounds, which can and

will be of immediate value for the expected product. After the first cross-team meeting (Hamburg, 2009) and the first team 2 workshop properly speaking (Leuven, October 2010), team 2 has been able to keep up the momentum and to further inventorize, process, develop and refine a plethora of ideas, data and points of view. Thus, the impact of this workshop on further developments, within COMSt and externally, is certain to be considerable.

2. Description of the Scientific Content

In line with the general objectives of COMSt as an ESF RNP, and as a follow up of the Leuven workshop, the workshop again aimed at the following goals:

1. to establish and consolidate immediate personal contacts, and hence to provide first hand access to information and insights between international scholars working on texts in various language traditions, with different disciplinary backgrounds, and with an aim of allowing these scholars to benefit from such contacts in their respective research projects;
2. to bridge the gap between the Orientalist philological tradition, which is still lagging behind in many ways, and scholarship in Classical, Romance and Germanic philology, mostly to the benefit of the former, this time mostly by consulting the work done by colleagues working in the latter fields of research;
3. to generate and elaborate materials for the “Philology” chapter of the COMSt handbook, as well as for other COMSt-related publication activities.

In order to achieve maximum thematic and interdisciplinary coherence, the same concept was applied as in Leuven: the themes for the respective sessions, were defined in non-language specific terms, whereas the phenomena in question were discussed in case studies based on research based on a specific text or text corpus in one or more specific languages, in order to allow for a comparative exercise to be carried out collectively in the discussions and conclusions. By adhering, in an admirably disciplined fashion, to the suggested workshop format, the participants were indeed able to collectively identify common denominators, while simultaneously pointing out specific characteristics of individual language traditions or specific types of texts requiring specific approaches.

In the following account, then, the major trends and themes of the successive sessions will be explained and commented upon.

Session 1 - *Dealing with Translated Texts* (chair: Alessandro Bausi, Hamburg , member of team 3 and Chair of the COMSt Steering Committee).

Lara Sels (Ghent, member of team 2), “Editing Medieval Slavonic translations of Byzantine Texts”, showed how translators and, subsequently, scribes in the Slavonic tradition tended to remain faithful to their Greek sources, aschewing scribal intervention, seen as nothing less than blasphemy. The resulting texts are often not easy to understand without knowledge of the Greek original. In methodological terms, the old habits of facsimile or diplomatic editions, with the Greek parallel, should now give way to new approaches, combining a certain amount of reconstruction while allowing for some standardisation.

Marie Cronier (Paris, member of team 2), “The use of translations for the edition of an original text (Greek and Arabic)”, suggested some rules and criteria, to be presented in the “Philology” chapter, for the edition of texts in a given language (in this case study, Greek) with the help of one or more translations (in this case, in Arabic) of the same text. She stressed the importance of extensive preliminary work on the textual history the translation itself and on the translation

technique that was used, and made some practical recommendations for presenting the text and the variant readings, including the Arabic ones, in the critical apparatus.

Andrea Schmidt (Louvain-la-Neuve, member of team 4), “Editing an Armenian text translated from Syriac (the *History* of Michael the Syrian)” demonstrated how a translation can be so culturally and editorially adapted that one can actually consider it to be a text in its own right, with due consequences for its edition. In line with the principles of artifactual philology, she underscored the importance of page layout in Syriac and Armenian manuscripts with historiographical content. An additional problem is that the two different versions available stem from one and the same environment and period, but that it is not clear which one is older than the other.

Johannes den Heijer & Perrine Pilette (Louvain-la-Neuve, team leader of team 2 and invited speaker, respectively), “Translated texts in two or multiple recensions (Coptic-Arabic historiography)” discussed the methodological pitfalls of dealing with various recensions of a translated text: while the older version manifestly remains close to the original (which itself exists in a poorly documented textual transmission), its few manuscript witnesses have a highly corrupt text, and, on the other hand, a later stylistically reworked version is transmitted in a much larger number of manuscripts, some of which contain readings that are likely to be closer to the lost translation.

Session 2 - *Large and fluid traditions* (chair: Stylianos Lampakis, Athens).

Alessandro Bausi (Hamburg, member of team 3 and Chair of the COMSt Steering Committee), “Purported fluid traditions (Ethiopic)”, pointed at the overall lack of methodological sophistication in Oriental studies today when it comes to philology and text criticism, not only with regard to Ethiopic but also to Arabic and Syriac studies, but with a notable exception in Indology. He also called for awareness of specific features of individual traditions, such as the “quiescent”, as opposed to “active” character of Ethiopian textual transmission, and, in a more general sense, for more explicit discussions on methodological issues in text criticism.

Hugo Lundhaug (Oslo, member of team 2): “Fluid vs. authorial/mechanical textual traditions; fluid traditions attested to by very few witnesses (Coptic)”, dealt with a problem that is often underrated in Coptic studies, which is that of texts (with the Shenutian corpus as a case in point) that are known to have been transmitted in a larger number of manuscripts with a high degree of scribal intervention but out of which only few witnesses have come down to us. He reminded us of the applicability of Cerquiglini’s motto that variants are to be seen as the norm, not as deviations.

Ilse de Vos (Oxford, invited guest speaker), Dealing with a large manuscript tradition (Greek: Pseudo-Athanasius’ *Erotapokriseis*), discussed, among other issues, the option of concentrating on one manuscript and taking its lay-out as into consideration as well, as an indicator of how the text was actually meant to be read. The insights thus obtained can be further combined with stemmatological research pertaining to the, in this case large, manuscript tradition (in various languages in this case: Greek, Arabic and Armenian).

Session 3 - *Texts with a special religious status or function* (chair: Antonia Giannouli, Nicosia, member of team 2 and of the SC).

Michael Marx (Berlin, member of team 2), “Exploring the textual history of the Qur’an”: starting with the question whether the Qur’an, with its canonical and extra-canonical variant readings, could possibly be seen as transmitted in a fluid tradition, the speaker presented the *Corpus Coranicum* project. He suggested to consider the Qur’an as an expression of embedded communication between a charismatic speaker and his audience, with a highly referential style and characterized by an intricate kind of tension between written and oral transmission.

Ugo Zanetti (Chèvetogne, member of team 2, formerly of team 1), “Editing liturgical texts (Greek, Coptic)”, reiterated his *caveat* of the Leuven workshop, against editing texts without being truly and intimately immersed in the subject matter. He furthermore stated that any variant is important for the liturgical purpose of such texts, provided the manuscript in question is known to have been used, and that this type of normally has no archetype but rather, a movement that goes from diversity to unity. He paid special attention to Coptic lectionaries which are the result of a singularly complex tradition in Greek, (Bohairic) Coptic and Arabic, with conflated influences from various geographically defined environments.

Session 4 - *Formal aspects of critical editions* (chair: Caroline Macé, Leuven, member of team 3 and of the SC)

Sébastien Moureau (Louvain-la-Neuve, member of team 2), “Options and formats for the apparatus criticus (Greek, Latin, Arabic)”: in a highly practical presentation, the speaker assessed the advantages and disadvantages of a number of formats for the apparatus criticus, such as direction, references (line references, numbered footnotes or endnotes), sigla, positive or negative lemmata, and special apparatuses for specific types of information.

Antonia Giannouli (Nicosia, member of team 2 and of the SC), “Apparatus fontium, similium etc. (Byzantine Greek)”. Such special apparatuses were the main topic of Giannouli’s contribution. Starting with the guidelines suggested by J. Bidez in 1932, she critically summarized later discussions by J. Irigoien (1972), and others, on whether to present readings from sources, parallel texts or from secondary traditions in special apparatuses or elsewhere. She concluded by recommending D.R. Reinsch’s observations and by insisting on, at any rate, an explicit presentation of the methodology, an adequate definition of terminology, and on a distinct presentation of the material.

Susana Torres Prieto (Madrid, member and henceforth co-teamleader of team 2), “Dealing with traditional editorial approaches (Slavic)”, demonstrated for a specific tradition what must be valid for others, i.e., the tension that may exist between editorial methods that are deployed traditionally on the one hand, and insights derived from new trends in philology on the other. In this regard, she recalled the importance of studying the convoy, i.e., the issue of intertextuality involving the text under study and those that preceded and follow it, respectively, within the larger context of mutually interrelated texts of similar content.

Session 5 - *Various Aspects of Philology and Textual Criticism* (chair: Ugo Zanetti, Chevetogne, member of team 2, formerly of team 1).

Tara Andrews (Leuven, member of team 3), “The edition of the *Chronicle* of Matthew of Edessa (Armenian)”, pervasively confronted us with a number of methodological but most of all practical problems one may face when preparing an electronic edition.

Zuzana Gazakova (Bratislava), “Orally transmitted popular narration preserved in manuscripts (Arabic: *Sirat Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan*)”, also discussed the intricate relationship between oral and written transmission, by highlighting “recital manuscripts” as the missing link between the two media, and by stressing the need to meticulously account for their linguistic and orthographic features, which are typically flattened out in current popular printed versions.

Matthew Driscoll (Copenhagen, member of team 3), “On Old and New Philology”: a critical history of various trends in (Western) philology, intended to help us to refine the conceptual framework for our chapter. Reviewing Lachmann’s reconstructive method, Bédier’s “best text” approach, and “New philology”, or preferably, “artefactual philology”, as a movement away from the intentionalist, author-centric view, and towards emphasis on the convoy and the inseparable link between texts as such and the manifold material aspects of the manuscripts that contain them, he

concluded by explaining the advantages of electronic editions as a means to account for all these different issues.

Discussions

As in the Leuven workshop, ample time for discussion allowed the participants to review, to reconsider and to refine the data and views presented, in such a way that over the two days a certain consensus was reached about many problematic issues.

Since a great collective effort was made to document these discussions and to avoid the risk of important statements and insights “evaporating” after the event, their outcome, combined with the presentations as such, can be very much considered to be concrete results of the workshop, which can and will be used for the “Philology” chapter under construction. Accordingly, it seems appropriate, as in the 2010 workshop report, to focus on this aspect of the workshop in the final section (3) of this report.

3. Assessment of the results and impact on the future direction of the field

Referring back to the 2010 workshop report, which will not be reiterated here, we can state that the workshop has once again met its purpose in a number of ways.

Immediate personal contacts were further consolidated as far as the core members of team 2 and several members of other teams are concerned. The cross-team and therefore interdisciplinary approach that COMSt stands for was very much prominent again.

New contacts were also established with external and local experts. The high turnout means that, for the philological field covered by team 2, another group of over 50 scholars are now somehow in touch with the COMSt approach and have been enabled to look beyond the boundaries of their own language-defined research. The potential impact on the research of all these people, and indirectly, on others (students, colleagues) is evident.

The workshop has again helped team 2 to achieve further progress in the process of catching up with the methodologically and technologically more advanced fields of philological research outside Oriental studies.

As for the immediate output of the COMSt project, the workshop has certainly allowed us to achieve remarkable progress in generating, reviewing and elaborating materials for the “Philology” chapter of the COMSt handbook. All presentations were prepared for the workshop in such a way that they only need minor editorial adaptation to be included in the handbook.

After the workshop, most team members gathered in a team meeting with an aim of further refining chapter outline and, most importantly, of assigning specific sections to one or more members.

The main results of the discussion sessions, in terms of issues that will be dealt with in the chapter, may be summarized as follows:

- Ample attention will be given to matters of terminology and definitions of concepts, specially with regard to those that are often taken for granted, such as “redaction” vs. “recension”, “fluid” vs. “stable” etc.
- There appears to be a consensus in the team on the too simplistic and vague character of the term “New Philology”. The term “artefactual philology” seems more appropriate.
- The team members also seem to agree that reconstructive text criticism and emphasis on the variants as valuable indicators of the later evolution of a text are not necessarily incompatible and that both, when relevant, can be combined in one and the same project.
- The co-authors will focus on practical approaches to the various kinds of texts, for instance, to those that come in large numbers of available manuscript witnesses.

- Besides the various available formats for presenting variant readings and other kinds of information in apparatuses, other formal aspects will be discussed, such as segmentation, presentation of information in the margin or on a separate page (in the case of a large number of witnesses), the status of notes added to translations, synoptic critical editing instead of apparatuses, linguistic variants, and the representation of punctuation.
- The existing variety of opinions on edition methods will be accounted for. These may include diplomatic or facsimile reproductions which, according to some participants, fit best in certain specific cases, but which for others may be incorporated in electronic editions.
- The tension between oral and written transmission will be given due attention wherever applicable (mostly in “fluid” traditions and in texts with a specific religious function).
- In principle, the various sections and sub-sections will be structured in such a way as to start with the traditional (paper)

WORKSHOP

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NATIONAL HELLENIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION,
48, Vas. Constantinou, 11635 Athens (Greece)

Scientific organiser: Johannes Den Heijer

Local organiser: Zisis Melissakis



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

www.esf.org/comst
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Thursday 8 December

14.00 - 14.15 Opening address and practical remarks
Kriton Chryssochoidis, Johannes den Heijer

14.15 - 16.15 1st Session: Dealing with Translated Texts
Chair: Alessandro Bausi (Hamburg)

- Lara Sels (Ghent), Editing Medieval Slavonic translations of Byzantine Texts
- Marie Cronier (Paris), The use of translations for the edition of an original text (Greek and Arabic)
- Andrea Schmidt (Louvain-la-Neuve), Editing an Armenian text translated from Syriac (the History of Michael the Syrian)
- Johannes den Heijer & Perrine Pilette (Louvain-la-Neuve): Translated texts in two or multiple recensions (Coptic-Arabic historiography)

16.15 - 16.45 Coffee break

16.45 - 18.15 2nd Session : Large and fluid traditions
Chair: Stylianos Lampakis (Athens)

- Alessandro Bausi (Hamburg), Purported fluid traditions (Ethiopic)
- Hugo Lundhaug (Oslo), Fluid vs. authorial/mechanical textual traditions; fluid traditions attested to by very few witnesses (Coptic)
- Ilse de Vos (Leuven), Dealing with a large manuscript tradition (Greek: Pseudo-Athanasius' Erotapokriseis)

18.15 - 18.45 Coffee break

18.45 - 20.15 3rd Session: Texts with a special religious status or function
Chair: Antonia Giannouli (Nicosia)

- Michael Marx (Berlin), Exploring the textual history of the Qur'an
- Ugo Zanetti (Chevetogne), Editing liturgical texts (Greek, Coptic)

20.15 - 20.45 Discussion on the results of Sessions 1-3

Friday 9 December

9.00-10.30 4th Session: Formal aspects of critical editions

Chair: Caroline Macé (Leuven)

- Sébastien Moureau (Louvain-la-Neuve), Options and formats for the apparatus criticus (Greek, Latin, Arabic)
- Antonia Giannouli (Nicosia), Apparatus fontium, similia etc. (Byzantine Greek)
- Susana Torres Prieto (Madrid), Dealing with traditional editorial approaches (Slavic)

10.30-11.00 Coffee break

11.00-12.30 5th Session:
Various Aspects of Philology and Textual Criticism

Chair: Ugo Zanetti (Chevetogne)

- Tara Andrews (Leuven), The edition of the Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa (Armenian)
- Zuzana Gažáková (Bratislava), Orally transmitted popular narration preserved in manuscripts (Arabic: Sirat Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan)
- Matthew Driscoll (Copenhagen), On Old and New Philology

12.30-13.00 Discussion and General Conclusions

15.00-16.00 Visit to the National Library of Greece (participants only)
(Manuscript presentation: Emmanuel Georgoudakis)
