

**RESEARCH NETWORKING PROGRAMME  
STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THE HUMANITIES**

**COMPARATIVE ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPT STUDIES**

**Textual Criticism and Oriental Manuscripts**

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**Scientific Report**

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The purpose of my visit in Leuven was to attend the international workshop "Textual Criticism and Oriental Manuscripts", organised in the ambit of the COMSt project at the "Faculty Club" in Leuven (Belgium), on 25 and 26 October, 2010. The workshop was led by Caroline Macé, professor of Greek language at the KU Leuven, member of COMSt teams 2 and 3, and by 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 workshop was organized into seven sections:

**1) *Critical Editions: General Principles and Methodological Considerations (25 October)***

The first paper, "Philological Traditions: Different Approaches to Editorial Methods", was presented by Alessandro Mengozzi (Turin University), who discussed general issues concerning the textual criticism and presented, as case study, the series "Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Scriptorum Syri". He spoke about: (a) the aims of the textual criticism (to reconstruct the original or the archetype; to restore and reproduce «as faithfully as possible» the manuscript); (b) its models and methods based on the types of textual transmission (how text and copy belong to the same culture in the Medieval philology or to different cultures in the Classical and Biblical philology; how "high" classical literature is transmitted in classical language while the "low" popular literature by mixed vernacular varieties; the number of witnesses; the types of text: collections, single works, fragments, quotations; the linguistic typology of the transmission: monolingual or multilingual); (c) the various types of edition (photo-reproduction or fac-simile; diplomatic edition; critical edition; cladistics textual criticism; electronic edition); (d) the differences between the manuscript culture (MC) and the book culture (BC) (scribes and copyists in MC *versus* professional readers in BC; fluid transmission in MC *versus* relatively stable transmission in BC; creative transmission in MC *versus* copyright in BC; oral/aural transmission in MC *versus* silent reading in BC; memory in MC *versus* document storage in BC; low level of standardization in MC *versus* higher level of standardization in BC; scarce availability in MC *versus* relatively high availability in BC). Concerning the case study, the series CSCO, scriptores Syri, he showed the different phases in the historical approach of the series: (a) the Latin Period

(1906-1949); (b) Draguet's CSCO (1950-1995), during which the scholar Draguet proposed to edit the Syriac texts using a "base manuscript" (possibly the more ancient witness or the witness considered "the best manuscript" of the tradition) selected and edited with defects included. This method can be considered a diplomatic edition. In the same years Vööbus argued that a text cannot be edited without correcting slips and errors; (c) New Directions (from 1995 onwards) where the Syriac text edition is going towards a modern methods of textual criticism.

The second paper, "To What Extent can the Lachmannian Method be Formalized?", proposed by Philipp Roelli (Zürich University) analyzed different topics: (a) history of textual criticism (its aim and its prehistory, starting with the elaboration of the Homer's writings in Alessandria around the year 280 BC, until the edition of the Fathers of the Church, based on several witnesses, made by the Congregazione Benedettina di San Mauro in the 1621); (b) Lachmannian method (*collatio, recensio, iudicium, emendatio*; stemmatic by Paul Mass); (c) types of textual criticism (Lachmannian, which presuppose no contamination; Bottleneck in which all extant witness can be traced to a bottle neck long after the composition of the text); (d) attempts to automate the methods (how to use phylogeny software from modern molecular biology to generate stemmata of manuscript traditions). The method proposed by Roelli allows to obtain reasonable results for medieval text. Its main problem is to handle manuscript traditions with a large amount of manuscripts and it cannot be applied to traditions contaminated.

## **2) History of Manuscripts and Textual Criticism (25 October)**

The third paper, "Text History as a Tool for Philology", proposed by Marie Cronier (Paris University) aimed to demonstrate how the text history is a fundamental element in philological analysis. She showed how, to establish a good edition, one must (in theory): (a) make a census of all manuscripts; (b) collate them; (c) classify them (*stemma codicum*). The philological method of manuscript classification depends on what we consider "a wrong" variant. To classify the manuscripts one can find a help, as a complement to philology, by studying the manuscript as material objects. The text history is a prerequisite for any edition. It is important also to locate the manuscripts, establishing the place where the text was copied. To produce a correct edition philology and textual history (codicology) must always interact.

The fourth paper, "Fluid Tradition in Popular Literature", proposed by Zuzana Gazakowa (University of Bratislava), introduced the tradition of the Arabic *sira*, a popular epic-work, whose transmission is characterized by the alternation between orality and writing and, as a consequence, the text is not always understandable. Gazakowa suggests the need of a more technical philological approach.

The fifth paper, "Dealing with Sacred Texts and their Linguistic Features", proposed by Wido van Peursen dealt with «the question as to what consequences it may have for language use, transmission, script and others, if the text has the status of a sacred text (texts accepted as authoritative by a religious community and regarded as formative for its identity)». In the critical editions of sacred texts, philology and authority of the text often clashes. Van Peursen attempted to refine the definition of "sacred text" by taking into account different degrees of

authority that may exist in a religious community. Also translations of sacred texts could receive an authoritative status derived from the sacred status of their source text. Furthermore, the sacred status can be applied also to all material, formal and functional aspects of text, as: (a) materials carriers of the text (how they are produced; how they are treated); (b) the script; (c) the textual aspects (elements of the text itself, such as linguistic or stylistic phenomena, and additional textual elements, such as rubrics, indications of sections used in liturgy...); (d) the liturgical use; (e) linguistic aspects.

The sixth paper, “Cataloguing and Editing Liturgical Manuscripts”, proposed by Ugo Zanetti (Chèvetogne) concerned the description and the edition of the liturgical documents. Zanetti underlined that to edit liturgical texts the editor must be a specialist of liturgy and that description and philology come together. He proposed to distinguish the categories of the liturgical manuscripts: (a) proper liturgical manuscripts; (b) manuscripts containing liturgical requirements; (c) manuscripts containing literary texts used also in the liturgy (homiletics and hagiography); (d) “ideal texts” (texts which do not belong to the category of liturgical texts but that are of great importance for the liturgiologist), commentaries of the lectionary, liturgical explanations... The liturgical documents (a) and (b) show a proper value and all variants must be considered. It should be important to determine when and where they were used (but also the place and the time of copy). The categories (c) and (d) must be treated more or less as the literary texts but with special attention to the nature of their subject. The *codices unici* must be published as they appear, in a diplomatic or semi-diplomatic edition, while the other forms of traditions must be treated in a different way. First of all it is necessary to determine a typology («taxonomie») total or partial of the manuscripts. To constitute a *stemma codicum* is almost always impossible; a solution could be the edition of some «*bona manuscrita*». Often it is not very easy to edit liturgical texts because their manuscript traditions consists of hundreds and hundreds of copies.

### **3) Specificities of Textual Transmission and Editorial Responses (25 October)**

The seventh paper, “Dating and Interpreting Texts from a Bilingual Setting”, was proposed by Hugo Lundhaug (Oslo University), and dealt with the tendency to consider Coptic texts translations of the original Greek texts, without having important evidences. He suggested to find a more complex criteria to determine the relationship between the Coptic texts and their original.

The eighth paper was presented by Michael Marx, in substitution of that of Joshua Sabih. He introduced the “Corpus Coranicum” (<http://koran.bbaw.de>), a research project of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. The project will document the Koran in its handwritten form and oral tradition, and will include an extensive commentary interpreting the text in the context of its historical development. Much of the Corpus Coranicum source material consists of photographs of ancient Koran manuscripts collected before World War II by Gotthelf Bergsträsser and Otto Pretzl in Europe and Orient. The archive is composed by more than 12000 images, all digitized. Marx presented also: (a) the database “Manuscripta Coranica” which aims to document the textual history of the Koran and to provide information about conditions, dating, paleographic characteristics of the manuscripts, with

pictures of single pages and transliteration of the text; (b) the database “*Variae Lectiones Coranicae*” which will help to present synoptically both the oral and written tradition of the text.

The ninth paper, “Editing a Translation of a Lost Treatise”, proposed by Sébastien Moureau (Nancy University) dealt with the difficulty to produce a critical edition of a lost Arabic treatise that today only survives in a Latin translation. The treatise is “*De anima in arte alchemiae*” wrongly attributed to Avicenna. It is a mediaeval alchemic work, consisting of three different Arabic treatise, composed in Spain allegedly between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> cent. Moureau presented the method that he used for editing the text: after having determined a *stemma codicum*, he chose the family considered by him the less contaminated (*textus receptus*). He edited a translation, including translation errors (just corrected as little as possible), and the major difficulty he found was to establish if errors were determined by the translator or by later scribes. Another problem he found concerned the Arabic transcription in Latin, that is generally different in each manuscripts.

The tenth paper, “Editing Documentary Papyri”, proposed by Willy Clarysse (Leuven University), proposed a diplomatic approach to the edition of papyri. Clarysse showed a papyri manuscript damaged whose text is transmitted in single copy. Greek papyri manuscripts whose text is reconstructed on the basis of a conjectural reading... Furthermore Clarysse presented some database for the study of papyri: The Duke Database of Documentary Papyri (<http://papyri.info/>); Leuven Database of Ancient Books (<http://www.trismegistos.org/ldab/>); Banque des données des textes coptes documentaires (<http://dev.ulb.ac.be/philo/bad/cop te/base.php?page=accueil.php>).

#### **4) Lay-out and Presentation (25 October)**

The eleventh paper, “Orthography, Linguistic Particularities vs. Normalization”, presented by Paolo La Spisa (Louvain-la-Neuve University) dealt with the edition of Christian Arabic text written in Middle Arabic. He stated that the critical editions produced in this field are still based on old and obsolete methodological technics. The most popular method still in use is that of the *«bon manuscrit»*. Only recently, thanks also to the contribution of the scholar Father Samir Khalil Samir to the study of Middle Arabic, the use of modern editorial technics is spreading. According to Samir, the aim of textual criticism is to edit a text legible and correct, clear and structured, in line with the purpose of the author. Concerning the critic of the linguistic form, a standardization on the basis of the modern Arabic is still attested. He proposed not to formalize the writing of the text, but to formalize the punctuation, introducing a syntactic punctuation, in order to facilitate the reading of the text.

The twelfth paper, “Punctuation and other Aspects of the Original’s Form”, presented by Antonia Giannouli (Nicosia University), investigated on how the punctuation system attested by the Byzantine manuscript can be presented in modern editions. She introduced the grammar of Dionysius Thrax as the oldest document attesting the use of punctuation. Giannouli concluded saying that the punctuation has to respect the sense of the text, avoiding misinterpretations in its content, and it has to facilitate the reading of the text. It would be

better to use the syntactic punctuation in the critical apparatus and preserve the original one in the text.

#### **5) Round Table & Presentation of Research Projects by Junior Scholars (25 October)**

In this session some young PhD student presented their ongoing projects.

#### **6) From Traditional to Electronic Editions I: Tools (26 October)**

The thirteenth paper, “Digital Tools for Scholarly Editions”, presented by Tara Andrews (Leuven University) aimed to present the development of the electronic tools for critical editions. She showed tools for the different stages of critical edition, but some of them need to be improved: (a) tools for critical edition, collation tools (manual collation: Microsoft Excel and Classical Text Editor; automatic collation: Juxta and Collate X), (b) tools for information and data gathering (texts, traditions, manuscripts); (c) tools for textual data creation (ex. OCR tools, transcription tools); (d) tools for textual data analysis (stemmatic analysis: input data, online statistical tools, output visualizer); (e) tools for editorial and digital textual publication (Leiden Lexical Textbase, Miller’s Tale Project by P. Robinson – Birmingham University).

The fourteenth paper, “The Interedition Project”, presented by Joris van Zundert introduced the “Interedition Project” whose aim is to “promote the interoperability of the tools and methodology used in the field of digital scholarly editing and research ([www.interedition.eu](http://www.interedition.eu)). The primary purpose of “Interedition” is to encourage the creators of tools for textual scholarship to make their functionality available to others, and to promote communication between scholars so that they can raise awareness of innovative working methods”.

The fifteenth paper, “Automatic Identification of Quotations”, proposed by Ilse De Vos (Leuven University), was a short presentation of a software (created by her) capable of identifying Greek quotation.

The sixteenth paper, “Classical Text Editor”, presented again by Sébastien Moureau was a short presentation of the wonderful and complex software very useful both for electronic and papery editions.

#### **7) From Traditional to Electronic Editions II: Project Presentations (26 October)**

The seventeenth paper, “Digital Solutions for the Fluid Textual Tradition of Greek Gnomologia”, presented by Denis Searby (Stockholm University), presented as case study the Greek Gnomologia (= apoftegmata), attested also in Arabic tradition. The natural characteristic of this literary genre, “in all languages, is its fluidity with regard to both the extent or size of each individual collection and the text of the sayings contained in each collection” (“fluid texts” according to the definition given by J. Bryant, “Witness and Access. The use of the fluid text”, in *Textual Cultures*, 2, 2007). Searby showed some of the difficulties in editing the text: (a) to choose a lead manuscript, because each collection is, in some way, unique; (b) the fact that the sayings are often compilations of compilations, rather than original compilations; (c) how to select the best text... He finally chose a digital solution through the EU-financed project SAWS (Sharing Ancient WisdomS), whose aim is to use new technologies to present and analyze the tradition of wisdom literatures in Greek and Arabic. To publish his texts and to express the complicated relationships between the witness,

he will use **XML** (eXtensible Markup Language) and **RDF** (Resource Description Framework). The digital edition allows: (a) to view a saying as it appears in its context in a specific collection; (b) to look at a diplomatic layer or a standardized layer; (c) with a special permission, to photograph and display manuscript pages, and include them on a homepage; (d) to view each saying with all the variants...

The last paper, “Editing an Arabic-Latin Text: Present-Day Practice and Wishes for the Future”, proposed by Aafke Van Oppenraay (Den Haag University), starting from a very complicated case study: the critical edition of Aristotelian zoology in its Latin version based on Arabic translation from the Greek, aimed to wish that the future of philology will be linked to electronic editions accompanied by high quality pictures, comfortable way of presenting variants and text layers and notes to the text...

The interesting workshop ended after stimulating discussions and debates among the participants. A list of principal keywords was produced at the end of the two days, summing up the principal arguments discussed and leading to further reflections: 1) Base manuscript (CSCO general editorial policy); 2) Punctuation; 3) Studies on bilingualism/multilingualism (reconstructive method); 4) Normalization; 5) How to classify tradition; 6) Vocalization; 7) Electronic and printed edition; 8) Quotations; 9) Fluid tradition; 10) Stemmatology; 11) To provide a contribution to the chapter dedicated to philology; 12) To provide a personal bibliographical contribution to make uniform the background of each for the future work.