

Scientific Report

(ESF Short Visit Grant)

Maxim Romanov

PhD Student

U of Michigan

April 16, 2012

[Purpose of the visit] I used the COMSt grant provided by the European Scientific Foundation to attend the “Methods and means for digital analysis of ancient and medieval texts and manuscripts,” a two-day workshop that took place at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven and at the Royal Flemish Academy of Sciences and Arts on April 2–3, 2012 (Leuven & Brussels, Belgium). The main purpose of my visit was to present a paper, which I did during the second day of the workshop, April 3, at the Royal Flemish Academy of Sciences and Arts in Brussels.

[Description of the work carried out during the visit] In addition to a great opportunity to present my work, this was also a so-needed chance to discuss my work with other scholars who participated in the workshop, learn about the work of my colleagues from all over Europe and the U. S. A. Altogether, this gave me a better understanding of where our growing field is methodologically and what issues interest other scholars.

[Description of the main results obtained] As to my own paper, I have discussed methodological issues of creating the digital history of pre-modern Muslim world. I presented the method that I have been developing

within the framework of my dissertation research, in which I analyze a wide spectre of Arabic medieval historical and biographical sources, using text-mining techniques. I shared with the participants my current and expected progress. Even in its relatively early stage of development, the method is very promising for such an endeavor.

[Future collaboration with host institution (if applicable)] While there is no further collaboration planned, I hope that newly established contacts will lead to interesting projects in future.

[Projected publications/articles resulting or to result from your grant] All presenters are required to submit their papers for publication.

[Other comments (if any)] For me personally, the workshop was extremely helpful: I learned about different methods, which I can employ in my research, as well as discovered new angles from which I can approach my own historical material. I also must commend the organizers of the workshop – Caroline Macé and Tara Andrews: the workshop was put together and scheduled perfectly. The length of sections (two to three papers) allowed everyone to remain sharp and critical during the entire day and timely coffee breaks kept us sharp and gave us plenty of opportunities to discuss each other’s work in great details. I will be honored to be a part of a workshop like this any time in future.

[A comment on the itinerary] As my air plane tickets reservations indicate, I travelled from New York City to Amsterdam to St. Petersburg; then back to Amsterdam to Detroit. The methodological part of my dissertation research is a collaborative project. My collaborator, a professional programmer, Anastasia Shchupak who assists me with a number of programming issues, currently lives in Amsterdam. I used this opportunity to work more with her. We both attended the workshop in Belgium. After the workshop I had to travel to St. Petersburg for two main reasons. First, my other paper was accepted

for a conference at the St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, the Russian Academy of Science (presented on April, 11). Second, as a Russian citizen, I had to renew my US visa in order to re-enter the United States and continue my studies at the University of Michigan.

Sincerely,

Maxim Romanov