

Textual Criticism and Oriental Manuscripts Workshop, Leuven, 25-26 October 2010

1. Summary

The COMSt Team 2 workshop *Textual Criticism and Oriental Manuscripts* was held at the "Faculty Club" in Leuven, Belgium, on 25 and 26 October, 2010. The workshop convenors were Caroline Macé, professor of Greek at the KU Leuven, member of COMSt teams 2 and 3, and 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 in close co-operation between both convenors, whereas the logistics and budget management were taken care of by Caroline Macé.

The workshop was sponsored mainly by the European Science Foundation, with significant additional funding from the KU Leuven through Caroline Macé's research project CREA/10/004, embedded within LECTIO, the Leuven Centre for the Study of Texts and Ideas in Antiquity, Middle Ages, and Renaissance, whose chair, Gerd Van Riel, addressed a word of welcome in the opening session.

The workshop was attended by 50 registered participants (see the list on-line). It should be noted with special satisfaction that there was a large proportion of junior scholars: Ph.D. candidates and young post-doctoral researchers, many of whom actively contributed to the proceedings.

The workshop was organized according to a format of seven 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 one-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. A special session was scheduled for brief presentations of current research projects by junior scholars, which also generated much feedback from other participants.

The main practical purpose of the workshop being the collective preparation, by COMSt team 2, of the "Philology" chapter for the COMSt handbook, the convenors expected some difficulties in making progress for team 2 within the setting of a workshop with such an overwhelming majority of non-team members. Due to the remarkably professional and constructive attitude of all participants, however, the high number of participants turned out to be a tremendous asset, since the team members received extremely useful feedback from a variety of backgrounds, which can and will be of immediate value for the expected product. After a promising start at the first cross-team meeting (Hamburg, 2009), team 2 has been able to keep 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

Alessandro MENGOZZI made a comparison between (European) Medieval and Oriental studies, with a case study on ecdotic methods in the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum*

Orientalium - Series Syriaca. He notably discussed the ‘basic ms.’ method, now generally abandoned for texts of the type in question but which was imposed for several decades on editors who contributed to this prestigious and influential series, not only for Syriac but also for other languages.

Philipp ROELLI dealt mostly with stemmatology and the degree to which stemmas can be generated automatically. His examples were mainly from Greek and Latin texts.

Marie CRONIER showed how codicology is inseparable from research on the history of a text as such, in that data on book production can elucidate matters of text transmission.

Zuzana GAZAKOVA called for a more philological approach to the Arabic *sira* (popular epic) genre, which is often studied by anthropologists and literary historians after their low-cost printed versions, which utterly obscure their linguistic features and the earmarks of their transmission as texts that fluctuate between orality and writing.

Wido VAN PEURSEN problematized the very concept of “sacred text” and suggested to refine the criteria for attributing a certain degree of authority to a given text prior to deciding how to deal with them from an editorial perspective. His observations were mainly based on the work of the Peshitta Institute, as well as on Hebrew and Syriac Biblical research in general.

Ugo ZANETTI issued a pervasive *caveat*, concerning Greek, Coptic and Arabic lectionaries but clearly applicable to other domains, against critically editing texts without being truly and intimately immersed in the subject matter, if need be – as is the case with the present category of texts that despite their age are still being used today –, by engaging in participatory observation.

Hugo LUNDHAUG drew attention to the prevailing tendency to consider Coptic texts to be translations from Greek originals, which is usually stated without much in the way of argument. He suggests to establish a set of criteria in order to deal more stringently with this question and its possible implications.

Joshua A. SABIH unfortunately had to cancel his participation.

He was replaced by Michael MARX (holding a travel grant from the ESF), who presented the project "Corpus Coranicum", which aims at providing a databank with images of the oldest manuscripts of the Quran, as well as a database with "variae lectiones", taking also into account the oral tradition which is very important for the text of the Quran.

Sébastien MOUREAU dealt with the methodological pitfalls of editing a text that only survives in translation, *i.e.*, the risk of correcting translation mistakes by failing to effectively distinguish those from scribal errors. His case study was on a treatise on alchemy, wrongly attributed to Ibn Sina (Avicenna) but certainly written in Arabic, which is only extant in a Latin version today.

Willy CLARYSSE proved to be a welcome extension of the workshop focus, in that it reminded us of the basic fact that documentary texts require a downright diplomatic approach; Clarysse also confirmed that papyrologists have actually shown their ability, for many decades now, to observe a uniform method of editing and presenting their material.

Paolo LA SPISA pointed out that Arabic studies remain largely unaware of the recognition that substandard or “vulgar” language features are to be taken into account within ecdotic methods, as has been known, *e.g.*, in Romance studies for an exceedingly long time now. Only very recently Middle Arabic studies have started to gain serious attention, and unmotivated normalisation to Modern Standard Arabic spelling conventions is still practiced on a large scale.

Antonia GIANNOULI showed the complexity of dealing with such formal aspects in the case of Byzantine manuscripts, where modern Greek signs have to be introduced for the sake of

intelligibility, but in such a way as to respect the use of corresponding original signs as much as is reasonably possible.

Round table - Presentation of research projects by junior scholars: Eight PhD students had the opportunity of presenting very briefly their doctoral research (5 minutes) and they received feedback from the audience: Shari BOODTS (Leuven - edition of St. Augustine's sermons), Eric CULLHED (Uppsala - study of the mss of Eusthatus of Thessalonica's Commentary on the *Odyssey*), Berend Jan DIKKEN (Leiden - edition of an Arabic translation of the Pentateuch), Elise FRANSSSEN (Liège - studying and editing a specific group of mss of the *1001 Nights*), Aurélie GRIBOMONT (Leuven - edition of Byzantine magical treatises), Hadiya GURTMANN and Tolou KHADEMALSHARIEH (Potsdam - the Corpus Coranicum project), Perrine PILETTE (Louvain-la-Neuve - edition of the Lives of the Patriarchs of Alexandria).

Tara ANDREWS showed the possibilities and limits of digital tools that can or cannot yet be used for textual criticism. Her remarks are based mainly on her own research on Armenian manuscripts. Running us, step by step, through the whole familiar process of traditional preparation of text editions, she assessed a whole range of new, in some cases still experimental, tools for philological work, from scanning, via automatic collation (Juxta, only partly useful; CollateX, still in development), to data analysis (the Leuven stemmatic analysis project, which should yield its results in about two years).

Joris VAN ZUNDERT presented "The Interedition Project" is a COST Action (IS0704: An Interoperable Supranational Infrastructure for Digital Editions) (see <http://www.interedition.eu/>), which aims at developing "a shared technical infrastructure for the preparation, editing, publishing, analysis and visualization of literary material. This Action aims to form an international Management Committee of researchers that have a thorough experience in electronic editing and digital text analysis for scholarly purposes in a national context". As such, a representative of this Action was especially welcome in a meeting like this one.

Ilse DE VOS (Leuven, young post-doctoral student), explained the functionalities of her own adapted software for the automatic identification of Greek quotations, and Sébastien MOUREAU shared his experiences with Classical Text Editor, for editing Arabic and Latin texts.

Denis SEARBY underscored the understanding, which has gained much popularity since the introduction of "new philology" some twenty years ago, that certain texts or groups of texts are in fact "growing texts", characterized by a fluid tradition, and that the main purpose of studying such texts can now be "to showcase revision", thanks to the availability of digital means. The case study concerned Greek Gnomologia (arranged anecdotes belonging to wisdom literature), some of which are also extant in Arabic translation.

Looking back at several decades of experience with critical editions of Aristotelian zoology in its Latin version (Michael Scot) based on an Arabic translation from the Greek, Aafke VAN OPPENRAAY was remarkably convincing in voicing the philologist's wishes for the future, such as high quality pictures accompanying the editions, efficient ways of integrating URL links, new way of presenting variants and text layers, and notes to texts as well as external contributions.

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

Reiterating the goals mentioned above (at the beginning of section 2), we can state with great satisfaction that the workshop has met its purpose in a number of ways.

Immediate personal contacts were consolidated as far as the core members of team 2 and several members (including two team leaders) of other teams are concerned. The cross-team and

therefore interdisciplinary approach that COMSt stands for was very much prominent, much to the benefit of all team members, who can make use of fresh insights for their own research activities.

Perhaps even more stimulating was the establishment of new contacts between external experts and particularly with and between young scholars (see below). The high turnout necessarily means that, for the philological field covered by team 2, more than 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.

Very much in the same way as is done by all other COMSt teams, the workshop has helped team 2 to achieve remarkable progress in the process of catching up with the methodologically and technologically more advanced fields of philological research outside Oriental studies. Whereas it is by no means an exaggeration to state that many Orientalists have so far only been dreaming about such things as electronic editions, the COMSt platform has given us a completely new kind of exposure to research that is actually being carried out. And even irrespective of new available tools and methods, the general lack of awareness, among Orientalists, of methodological achievements elsewhere, has been addressed to a considerable degree.

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 and for other, online publications.

After the workshop, a number of team members gathered in a meeting with an aim of starting the process of redefining and adapting the chapter outline that had circulated before.

In the presentations and discussions, a substantial amount of issues were raised that will be further developed in the “Philology” chapter. According to this target-oriented approach, the identification of these issues can be seen as preliminary results.

With regard to the methodology of textual criticism in the sense of preparing critical editions, a certain variety of practices has been reviewed, with a sufficient amount of coherence to allow for an analytical overview in the chapter as well as for certain recommendations. We must hasten to point out, however, that team 2 does not consider it feasible or useful to prescribe or even to recommend one single method.

For the section on textual history and transmission, a good number of valuable observations have resulted from the workshop. One such observation is that studies on source criticism, internal transmission, identification of multiple recensions and their – sometimes problematic – distinction from separate texts in the case of fluid traditions, as well as secondary traditions and parallel texts, can and must be carried out as necessary steps towards a critical edition, but also deserve a status of their own, independently of such editions.

For a section on specific categories of text requiring specific approaches, the workshop has opened our eyes to the problem of “sacredness”, or rather, (a specific type of) authority in a general religious setting, or, more pointedly, in a specifically liturgical one, where texts continue to perform particular functions until the present day, in living traditions.

Furthermore, besides the obvious merit of having obtained first-hand knowledge of new tools and methods, as well as of their limitations, for electronic text research, the workshop has yielded highly valuable insights into the function of such research in the future.

Last but not least, the involvement of a good number of young scholars can be seen as a solid investment in the future and hence as a guarantee for a significant impact on the future of Oriental philology.

4. Final Programme

Monday, 25 October

09:30 Session 1: Critical editions : general principles and methodological considerations - chair: Caroline Macé

1. Alessandro Mengozzi, Philological traditions - different approaches to editorial methods
2. Ph. Roelli, To what extent can the Lachmannian method be formalized?

11:00 Session 2: History of Manuscripts and Textual Criticism - chair: Alessandro Bausi

1. Marie Cronier, Text History as a tool for philology
2. Zuzana Gazakova, Fluid traditions in popular literature
3. Wido van Peursen (Leiden), Dealing with sacred texts and their linguistic features
4. Ugo Zanetti, Cataloguing and editing liturgical manuscripts

14:00 Session 3: Specificities of textual transmission and editorial responses - chair: Antonia Giannouli

1. Hugo Lundhaug, Dating and interpreting texts from a bilingual setting
2. Michael Marx, Which type of textual variations can be observed in the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an?
3. Sébastien Moureau, Editing a translation of a lost treatise
4. Willy Clarysse, Editing documentary papyri

16:30 Session 4: Lay out and presentation - chair: Alessandro Mengozzi

1. Paolo La Spisa, Orthographe, particularités linguistiques et normalisation dans les éditions critiques
2. Antonia Giannouli, Punctuation and other aspects of the original's form

17:30 Session 5: Round table - Presentation of research projects by junior scholars

18:30 General discussion - chair: Johannes den Heijer

Tuesday, 26 October

09:00 Session 6: From traditional to electronic editions, I: Tools - chair: Jost Gippert

1. Tara Andrews, Digital Tools for Scholarly Editions
2. Joris van Zundert, The Interedition Project
3. Various participants: Short additional presentations on specific tools and methods: Ilse De Vos, Sébastien Moureau

11:00 Session 7: From traditional to electronic editions, II: Project presentations -chair: Witold Witakowski

1. Denis Searby, Digital solutions for the fluid textual tradition of Greek *gnomologia*
2. Aafke van Oppenraay, Editing an Arabic-Latin text, present-day practice and wishes for the future

12:00 General conclusions

13:00 Lunch

Closing of the workshop

14:30-16:30 Work session for Team 2 members