
Editorial

Natural Sciences and Technology in Manuscript Analysis

The Centre for the Studies of Manuscript Cultures in Hamburg strives to enhance the field of manuscript studies by providing a forum for dialogue between the humanities and the natural sciences. This dialogue leads to well-defined new tasks for the natural and applied sciences and very often provides answers to questions that could not be solved by historical and philological methods alone.

In recent years, multi- and hyperspectral imaging to recover erased text in palimpsests has made considerable progress. Various institutions have acquired dozens of the imaging systems. However, image processing still requires serious development and the establishment of standard procedures. In addition to non-destructive material analysis of pigments and dyes, which has become standard in the studies of illuminated manuscripts, the interdisciplinary teams of the CSMC are currently working on establishing guidelines for studies of writing inks. Finally, digital image processing and analysis techniques are also gaining recognition in the fields of palaeography and codicology.

The second International Conference on Natural Sciences and Technology in Manuscript Analysis was held on the premises of the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures in Hamburg from 29 February to 2 March 2016. Like the first conference, it brought together scientists and scholars engaged in this field of research and provided a forum for discussion and for presenting new methods and results.

This special issue of *manuscript cultures* once again contains a selection of extended papers presented at that conference in Hamburg 2016 and some additional contributions presenting unique case studies. The articles were solicited for original research work illuminating the role of the natural sciences and technology in manuscript analysis.

All in all, this special issue represents the state of the art, illustrating how different techniques and varying methodologies can be successfully applied to analytical investigations in the field of manuscript analysis. We hope that it will help to integrate the natural and applied sciences into the field of manuscript studies.

The research at the University of Hamburg for this volume was sponsored by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) at SFB 950 'Manuscript Cultures in Asia, Africa and Europe' and undertaken within the scope of the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC). We would like to express our gratitude to all the authors for submitting persuasive, up-to-date papers, to all the anonymous reviewers for their valuable and constructive comments and finally to the editorial office for their own fruitful contribution to this issue.

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