

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)

cordially invites you to a workshop on

Traces of Oral Practices in Manuscripts

21 June 2019 at the CSMC in Hamburg

'I had thought each book spoke of the things, human or divine, that lie outside books. Now I realized that not infrequently books speak of books' (Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*). This revelation of Adso of Melk draws attention to the degree of detachment from human reality that the manuscripts may exhibit. Some types of manuscripts will be in direct contact with what humans say and do: 'Read it out loud three times to prevent premature birth!', as a charm would prescribe. But the manuscripts containing narratives will be more detached: 'When God created Adam and breathed into him a spirit, Adam sneezed and said, "Praise be to God!"' Whatever degree of detachment manuscripts might have, they are products of literacy and 'literacy is embedded in the oral language' (Barton 1994). We can thus assume that manuscripts should somehow signal the domain of orality from which they originate.

What kind of signals might we expect to find in manuscripts that could help us reconstruct at least some part of their oral background? It will largely depend on what type of oral practices we are looking for. To that end, it may be useful to distinguish between *systematic* and *sporadic* practices. Systematic oral practices are generally salient, recurrent, recognized by social groups and transmittable. Among these are included rote learning, public performance of epics, charms and oaths, exegetical sessions, sermons, etc. Systematic oral practices typically generate manuscripts and often share the same space. In contrast, sporadic oral practices are discreet, unique, individual and non-transmittable. They can occasionally find their way to manuscripts (e.g. marks of intonation), but otherwise they constitute an infinite world of human speech outside of the manuscript domain.

Some types of manuscripts may be more cooperative than others in revealing their oral domains.

Thus, manuscripts may bear witness to events when writing follows a speech event, for example, in letter dictation or in taking notes at class. Or manuscripts may provide instructions as to how the oral event should be performed, i.e. when a speech event follows writing (as in charms or vocal music). Writing can explicitly refer to reading sessions whereby oral practice is strictly conditioned by the presence of a written text (as in reading certificates). In some manuscript cultures, a distinction between written and oral input/output may be formalized in the visual organization and layout of certain types of manuscripts. There, the paraccontent elements responsible for the interface between the written and the oral are made salient. Such paraccontent may explicitly be placed between the lines or added at the beginning or at the end of the manuscript. Yet, there might be manuscripts with no signals towards orality.

Operating with the continuum “involvement in orality $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ detachment from orality” we will address a wide range of questions, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Can the types of manuscripts in a given culture be classified along such a continuum?
- Are there manuscript types which essentially originate from oral practices?
- Are there manuscript types for which no oral domain can be reconstructed?
- Do the manuscripts reflect oral practices or do they simulate oral practices? (e.g. grammatical dialogues, or formulae such as “from the mouth of my teacher”)
- Do paracontent/paratextual elements have higher potential for reconstruction of orality than the main content?

In short, the workshop welcomes a diversity of perspectives on the traces of oral practices in manuscripts.

Preliminary programme:

Friday morning 9.30 a.m. - 1.p.m.

9.00-9.30 Coffee and Welcome

9.30-10.15 Jochen Vennebusch, Hamburg

Sollemniter Legere. Traces of the Oral Proclamation of the Passion in Medieval Gospel Books

10.15-11.00 Victor D'Avella, Hamburg

The Contributions and Pitfalls of the Indian Oral Tradition

11-11.30 Coffee break

11.30-12.15 Silsupa Jaengsawang, Hamburg

A Patimokkha Manuscript from Laos: Traces of Regular Chanting Rules in the Sangha Disciplinary Revision

12.15-1.00 p.m. Luigi Orlandi, Berlin

Traces of Oral Practices in Greek Quattrocento Mss.: The Case of Andronikos Kallistos' Books

1.00-2.30 p.m. Lunch break

Friday afternoon 2.30-5.30 p.m.

2.30-3.15 p.m. Barend ter Haar, Hamburg

Textual Communities With and Without Text: The Example of the Sutra of the Five Lords

3.15-4.00 p.m. Dmitry Bondarev/Darya Ogorodnikowa, Hamburg

From Spoken to Written Exegesis in Islamic Manuscripts of West Africa: In Search of Missing Links

4.00-4.30 p.m. Coffee / tea break

4.30-5.15 p.m. Final Discussion

Abstracts:

Sollemniter legere. Traces of the Oral Proclamation of the Passion in Medieval Gospel Books

Jochen Vennebusch (CSMC)

A lot of Carolingian and Ottonian Gospel Books were modified in the scriptorium by highlighting particular pericopes within the corpus of texts. In most cases, these features of the visual organization sign out passages, which had to be read on the highest feast days and therefore have a prominent importance for the liturgical preaching. Additionally some codices show adaptations, helping the reader, usually the deacon, with the proper proclamation of the pericope. Regularly, these recitation marks or neumes were written (sometimes amateurishly) into the manuscripts at their place of use, after they have been commissioned and produced in the monastic scriptorium. Thus the codices provide information on their actual and particular use and prove that they were used for the oral proclamation of pericopes.

Besides these amendments, the narratives of the Passion of Jesus Christ in the Four Gospels are supplemented with small characters in some medieval codices. Since they are very often the only traces of use of the manuscripts and written very diligently, it is obvious, that they were already marked in the scriptorium. The paper will examine the different ways of signing out the pericopes of the Passion in Early and High Medieval Gospel Books. We will investigate, whether these supplements are identical in a diachronic perspective and whether they correspond with other adaptations and modifications within the codices.

The Contributions and Pitfalls of the Indian Oral Tradition

Victor D'Avelle (Uni Hamburg)

Most texts from the classical traditions of India, that is, before the introduction of modern literary genres and reading practices, thrived in an oral environment: poetry was recited or sung aloud to critical reception of *sahridayas* "like-hearted men" at court; philosophical texts were debated at length with objections from all sides raised and refuted; sacred canons were transmitted from father to son by careful recitation and repetition. The impact of this pervasive orality is woven into works of all kinds and often imitated in imagined dialogues. Nevertheless, Indian literary cultures also strove to record their achievements in writing all the while continuing to emphasize and glorify rote learning as an integral part of "knowing" a text. Perhaps somewhat contradictory, it is in this written transmission that we can often detect traces of the oral tradition that breathed life into the silent records. Most of these take the form of paratexts that surround the main body, in particular auspicious verses placed at the beginning of a work and marginalia added during the course of copying. These can reflect a scribe's knowledge that he acquired while studying the text in question with a teacher or how he chose to frame a work in terms of his own sectarian affiliation. Yet despite the wealth of unique insight into this otherwise lost world through these paratextual tidbits, such traces of orality must be recognized for what they are and used to achieve appropriate research goals. In the course of my presentation I will give examples of how paratextual elements can do as much of a disservice to scholars as they can aid in our understanding of a bygone oral context. My material will be culled from both the Sanskrit as well as the Tamil traditions of grammar and the manuscripts in which they have been transmitted. They will demonstrate how grammatical texts can wander from one religious affiliation to another and the way abbreviated written elements can be properly filled out in speech.

**A Patimokkha manuscript from Laos:
Traces of regular chanting rules in the *Sangha* disciplinary revision.**
Silsupa Jaengsawang (CSMC)

The *Bhikkhu Patimokkha* is a text which has been transmitted in Laos in a palm-leaf manuscript-fascicle found in the abode of the Venerable Phra Khamchan Virachitto (1920–2007) the late abbot of Vat Saen Sukharam in Luang Prabang. The manuscript, coded BAD-13-1-0280, is one of eight manuscripts which bear texts pertaining to the same *Patimokkha* theme. The manuscript itself comprises two texts; the first describes the process of ordination, the second of which is on the Buddhist monastic conduct. The two texts were written in different years, CE 1947 and CE 1956 respectively, thus the manuscript was not originally devised as a “multiple-text manuscript”. Compared to the first text, the second one shows a well-organized and neat handwriting and was intended to be dedicated to the sponsor’s beloved teacher. The first text was most likely written for personal use, whereas the second text was written for being recited by Sangha during the *uposot* assemblies held every two weeks in which monks living in different monasteries, usually close to one another in location, are acquired to gather in an ordination hall of a particular monastery to hold an *uposot* service.

Unlike other palm-leaf manuscripts in which texts are read line by line, the second text of manuscript BAD-13-1-0280 is supposed to be read column by column. Scribal paratexts indicate the oral tradition of Patimokkha group-chanting featured by characteristics, such as age hierarchy, chanting duty and number of monks. Paratexts indicating interactions among the group chanting were also clearly written in the manuscript. Besides, the specific time at different occasions as well as the specific way the chanting has to be properly performed is clearly indicated in the manuscript. According to a preliminary investigation, users of the manuscript were required to read the manuscript carefully in order to become well acquainted with the structure of Patimokkha ceremonies; that is another reason why the textual content in the manuscript was written with well-organized handwriting. Paratextual evidence of oral tradition was deliberately written with the insertion of special symbols or the use of small-sized letters in order to be distinguished from the main text. This study seeks to answer the question to what extent the manuscript’s paratexts determine or shape the religious ritual. Furthermore, it tries to identify the particular features of the Patimokkha regular chanting that are indicated in the manuscript. My preliminary survey shall encourage further investigations into the evidence of oral tradition in Lao and Thai manuscript.

**Traces of oral practices in Greek Quattrocento mss.: the case of Andronikos Kallistos’
books**

Luigi Orlandi (Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften)

Manuscripts of special interest for the study of teaching and learning contexts are the so-called *recollectae* (from the Latin verb *re+colligo*, i.e. "recover, re-unite, put back together"). These are mostly rare cases in the field of Greek studies. The *recollectae* generally consist of handwritten notes applied by individual (and mostly anonymous) students attending classes at the school of Byzantine masters in Renaissance Italy. In this regard, the aim of the talk is to shed light on some Italian Quattrocento *recollectae*, with special focus on the hints which lead us to recognise them as such. Manuscripts which can be traced back to the teaching activity

of Andronikos Kallistos, a leading figure amongst the Byzantine *émigrés* who were active in the frame of Italian Humanism, will be presented as case study.

Textual communities with and without text: The example of the Sutra of the Five Lords
Barend ter Haar (UHH)

Texts always function in a larger oral environment. In my own research, I am interested in this larger living context in the present as well as the past. What is left for us to study is usually only the textual object (with markings and other paratexts if we are lucky), but also commentaries (written and oral), miracles, rituals (or at least ritual manuals), and a variety of visual and material interpretations (apart from the obvious illustrations in these texts and wall paintings, also buildings and the like). In my talk I will discuss one example and the way in which the life and impact of this text, a messianic scripture that was composed in some form in the tenth century CE and was still being used in the 1980s at least, can be traced in a broad variety of evidence.

**From spoken to written exegesis in Islamic manuscripts of West Africa:
In search of missing links**

Dmitry Bondarev and Darya Ogorodnikova (CSMC)

The observable oral exegesis in Islamic West Africa has a recognisable pattern: the Arabic text is broken into short phrases and sentences which are translated one by one into the scholarly registers of the local languages. The purpose of this practice is to study basic Islamic texts, acquire Arabic and also a scholarly register. Almost the same set of texts and similar grammatical and lexical patterns are represented in the early manuscripts predating the observable oral practices. These similarities in subject matter and linguistic features suggest that the annotated manuscripts derived from the oral practices similar to those we observe now. Since the annotations in these manuscripts are predominantly written in careful hands (rather than in hasty shot-hand writing) we will ask the following question: If the manuscripts and their commentaries are associated with spoken medium and supposedly reflect the oral exegeses, how were the glosses effectuated? Since dictation should be ruled out in most of the cases, there must be a missing link between the assumed oral settings and the resultant manuscripts. We will suggest various configurations of spoken and written media by introducing wooden slate into the hypothetical picture of the exegetical techniques.