Thursday 29th August – Friday 30th August 2019

Room 025, Arts and Humanities Library, Haakon Sheteligs plass 7

Thursday 29th August 2019

08.30   The room opens

09.00   Opening address by Jørgen Sejersted, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities

Introduction by Odd Einar Haugen on behalf of the organising committee
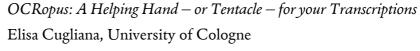
1. Transcription Procedures

09.20−10.10

*Trans**K**ribing Medieval Handwritten Texts*

Marina Buzzoni, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

The transcription of primary sources, in particular of texts transmitted in manuscripts, is one of the most crucial issues with which a philologist has to deal. Not only are transcriptions at the basis of any further editorial endeavour and text-critical analysis (e.g. stemmatic analysis), they are also themselves an interpretative act. Transcription can be carried out manually, but also with the help of some automated tools such as Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR) and Layout Analysis. In this talk, "Transkribus" − namely a comprehensive platform for the automated recognition, transcription and searching of handwritten texts developed by a team of scholars at the University of Innsbruck, <https://transkribus.eu/Transkribus/> − will be presented, and its tools for the automated processing of documents will be illustrated with the help of simple but indicative examples mostly taken from medieval textual traditions.

10.10−11.00

OCRopus: A Helping Hand − or Tentacle − for your Transcriptions

Elisa Cugliana, University of Cologne

This talk will focus on OCRopus, a free HTR/ICR tool developed by Thomas Breuel at the German Research Centre for Artificial Intelligence in Kaiserslautern. After a short theoretical introduction, which will give an insight into the role of neural networks, the actual functioning of the program will be presented. Step by step, the whole recognition process will be illustrated, from the manuscript page to the digital text. Finally, some promising results of the application of OCRopus on a medieval manuscript will be shown, proving the effectiveness of the tool in question.

11.00—11.30	Coffee break

11.30—12.20	*From Paper to TEI — An Experiment with the OCR in the Digitisation of Gustav Indrebø's edition of Sverris saga*

Rune Kyrkjebø, University Library, Bergen

Gustav Indrebø's edition of *Sverris Saga* based on the codex AM 327 4° (Kristiania 1920) is a highly accurate rendering of the manuscript. The level of text representation is diplomatic, as defined in the *Menota Handbook* as a "letter-by-letter transcription with a small selection of palaeographic features and the expansion and identification of abbreviations" (ch. 4.1). The pages of Indrebø's edition are available as TIFF files from the image server of the National Library, Oslo (nb.no). At the University of Bergen Library, we decided to try and produce an electronic, diplomatic text for Menota from the images. The experiment is based on the OCR-reading software *ABBYY FineReader 12*, which is able to separate italic types from non-italics.

12.20—13.30	Lunch break

13.30—14.20	*Don't do more than you have to do! Streamlining the Transcription of Old Norse Manuscripts with MenotaBlitz*

Robert K. Paulsen, University of Bergen

In the digital transcription of Old Norse (or any medieval) manuscript material, one faces challenges that have nothing to do with the correct reading of the text: How do you input your reading into some sort of digital format? The Menota XML standard is the most familiar norm for digital editions of Old Norse. However, it is quite a verbose and repetitive, and thus time-consuming endeavour to transcribe directly into this standard. I will introduce you to the MenotaBlitz XML standard that allows you to transcribe as you read from the manuscript and transform this into full-blown Menota XML afterwards.

14.20—14.40	Coffee break

2. Preparations for Stemmatic Analysis

14.40—15.30	*Making Yourself Understandable to the Universal Machine: From Transcription to Computer Tractable Data*

Joris van Zundert, University of Amsterdam

As the saying goes "The computer is incredibly fast, accurate, and stupid. Man is incredibly slow, inaccurate, and brilliant. The marriage of the two is a force beyond calculation." In this lecture we will peak down the computational rabbit hole to see what these famous ones and zeroes of the computer actually are. From this insight we will work our way up again, along a little history of how digital text and scholarship interacted, to finally arrive at the formalizations and abstractions that allow us to store textual information reliably and make it processable by the computer. For instance, to run stemmatic analyses on such digital information.

15.30—16.20	*Applications of Computer-Assisted Stemmatology to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Tradition*

Marina Buzzoni, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

The annalistic Old English text known as *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* has come down to us in seven manuscripts, usually labelled with the letters A to G. The very complex relationships between the extant witnesses, as well as with coeval Latin texts that have a version of the Chronicle among their sources – in particular Asser's *Life of Alfred*, Æthelweard's *Chronicon*, and the *Annals of St Neots* – have been variously interpreted and represented by scholars. In this paper, different stemmatic hypotheses which acknowledge the recent debate on these matters will be discussed, and the workflow of the major stemmatic methods briefly illustrated. In particular, it will be shown that the application of computer-assisted methods such as RHM, NeighborJoining, NeighborNet not only confirms the grouping obtained through manual stemmatic analysis, but also enables us to detect some further – and so far mostly disregarded – features of the tradition, especially in relation to contamination. In this respect, NeighborNet proves particularly effective.

16.20—17.00	Discussion and demonstration of tools

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08.30	The room opens

3. Stemmatic Analysis in Practice

09.00—09.50	*Some Limitations of Quantitative Methods and Sampling in Light of Old and Recent Work on Snorra-Edda and Brennu-Njáls saga*

Bjarni Gunnar Ásgeirsson, University of Iceland

The textual history of *Brennu-Njáls saga* and *Snorra-Edda* has been studied extensively and multiple stemmata have been produced for each text. The methods used have varied with some scholars chiefly relying on quantitative methods while others have opted for a more qualitative approach. Most have reached their conclusions based on limited samples. While the use of samples is understandable given the large amount of text, there are some potential pitfalls one must be wary of. In this paper, I will review earlier stemmatic work where quantitative methods and/or sampling has been used on these two texts and show how these methods have led to inaccurate results.

| 09.50–10.40 | *Five Stemmas of Sigurgarðs saga frœkna, Sampling, and the Transmission of riddarasögur* |
| | Alaric Hall, University of Leeds |

Sigurgarðs saga frœkna is one of the most widely attested medieval Icelandic romance-sagas (*riddarasögur*). Through a novel analysis of its stemma, this talk will make contributions on three points:

1. The question of how we should sample texts when gathering data for stemmatic analysis.
2. How the transmission of *Sigurgarðs saga frœkna* can be used as a case study for analysing the scribal culture behind the Icelandic *riddarasögur*.
3. What the comparison of the new stemma of this saga with stemmas of other *riddarasögur* can tell us about how Icelandic scribes gathered and anthologised texts.

| 10.40–11.10 | Coffee break |

| 11.10–12.00 | *Humanities Scholars and Computerized Tools: Comparing Recent Approaches of Computer-Assisted Stemmatology* |
| | Tuomas Heikkilä, University of Helsinki |

This talk will ponder the pros and cons of various approaches to analysing hand-written textual traditions. The emphasis is on constructing stemmata and thus hypothesizing the development and dissemination of medieval texts. The presentation will cover methods from both traditional textual criticism and computer-assisted approaches, but the viewpoint is that of a historian rather than that of a computer scientist.

| 12.00–13.00 | Lunch |

Organising committee

Odd Einar Haugen · Zuzana Stankovitsová · Nina Stensaker