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4. *The relation of manuscript and printed book* (E.Koceva, Sofia)
5. *The relation of manuscript illumination and other arts* (L.Mavrodinova, Sofia).

*The papers read both at this conference and the preceding seminar have been very briefly reviewed by K.Stančev in Palaeobulgarica/Starobălgaristika 8 (1984)1:118-120. They are to be published together in Paléographie et diplomatique slaves, Vol. 2 (Sofia 1984).*

6-14 SEPTEMBER 1983: KIEV

## THE NINTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF SLAVISTS

*As far as your editors are concerned, this Congress did not take place: one was withheld from attending by the prohibitively high cost of transportation and stay, the other was not granted a visa to attend.*

*It was obviously a congress of "representatives of science", rather than a scientific congress. Its organisers, the Soviet Committee of Slavists, had not taken care to ensure the free exchange of experience and opinion by as many slavists as possible - both the overcharged prices (as compared to In tourist rates) for lodging and the difficulties incurred by Western participants in trying to obtain a visa bear testimony to this fact. Your editors cannot even rule out the suspicion that the organisers used the instrument of confirmation of participation to the USSR consular service (a prerequisite for issuing a visa) quite selectively: they know of at least four other instances of visa not being granted to slavists who had dutifully paid their registration fee - in none of these cases was any explanation offered, and no remonstration was ever answered by the Soviet Committee of Slavists. That the organisers had, indeed, other objectives in mind for the Congress than its participants, is neatly demonstrated for at least the field of medieval studies in the Literaturnaja Gazeta № 38 of 21 Sep 1983.*

*Luckier than those who were left to the mercy of the Soviet Committee of Slavists, were those who made their travel and lodging arrangements through Intourist - as tourists, they paid less and were certain of their visa. But wisest were most probably those who saved their energy, money and time for a worthier cause.*

30-31 MARCH 1984: NIJMEGEN

## MAKING MANUSCRIPTS ACCESSIBLE TO RESEARCH

*Making medieval manuscripts accessible to research is first and foremost a systematisation problem. Research on any one manuscript is possible only by comparison to other manuscripts, preferably all that contain comparable features. The systematisation of these features is a prerequisite to the scientifically relevant cataloguing of manuscripts, which, in turn, presents a number of systematisation problems of its own. These problems are common to all medieval manuscripts, irrespective of their origin, and must be solved on the highest possible level of synthesis, if the solution is to be significant at the level of the concrete feature in a concrete manu-*

script. Such high level of synthesis can, however, only be attained after careful analysis of details in concrete manuscripts of comparable origin and tradition.

It is in this latter sense that the two-day symposium at Nijmegen University, devoted to medieval Latin and vernacular manuscripts in the Netherlands, is relevant to the study of Slavic manuscripts as well. A more detailed discussion of five of the twelve papers presented here, may serve to illustrate this point.

### 1. Features of texts

G.ACHTEN (Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Postfach 1407, 1 BERLIN 30): *Vernacular Prayer Books*

Although dependent at their outset upon identifiable Latin models, the vernacular prayer books present, as early as the XIVth century several different layers of text: (1) translations from Latin, some traditional, others made anew, (2) original prayers, (3) compilations from various sources in the form of edificational exercises. Since both the identifications and the structures of the contents are so highly variable, great detail is required in their description, in order to furnish a base for the detection of common structural features. In principle, the entire microstructure should be represented in the description, save where reference can be made to existing text descriptions. The initia of all texts must be listed alphabetically in order to facilitate identification.

Obviously, the vernacular prayer books, just as other edificational books, come within close range of the Slavic *sborniki*, where the microstructural approach has already proven its usefulness as a base for the detection not only of common structural features, but also for the detection of a global filiation. The call for alphabetic listing of initia should be heeded by all researchers of Slavic *sborniki*: if more incipitaria like that of the *Opisanie sbornikov Efrosina in 'Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoj literatury'* 35: 266-286 were available, research of Slavic compilations would be much less difficult.

### 2. Features of manuscripts

J.HERMANS (Vakgroep Mediaevistiek RUG, Nieuwe Kijk in't Jatstraat 56, 9712 SJ GRONINGEN): *Bindings*

A.DEROLEZ (Centrale Bibliotheek, Rozier 9, 9000 GENT): *Layout and Quire Structure*

M.SMEYERS (Faculteit Letteren KUL, Blijde Inkomststraat 21, 3000 LEUVEN): *Decoration and Illumination*

All three authors were confronted with the task to describe large corpora of data, which led them to reexamine the basic elements of their descriptions. HERMANS analyzed some 20 elements with which to describe all types of bindings that occur in Northern provinces of the Netherlands in the period 1475-1575. DEROLEZ stressed the priority of page layout over quire structure as a distinctive feature for manuscripts of common provenance and analyzed some 15 types of layout occurring in Italian humanistic manuscripts of the XVth century. SMEYERS presented the first insight into Louvain University's long-term project to systematise the terminology used to describe manuscript decoration and illumination: the number of elements is still too large to produce effectively comparable descriptions, but the research of original medieval nomenclature provides a promising base for the reduc-

tion of descriptive elements.

*Case studies like the first two are of great importance to the elaboration of a common apparatus for the description of manuscript books in various languages and of different cultural origins. Not only do they show that not all elements of description are of equal importance, but they provide a sound basis for comparison that may eventually lead to a true harmonisation of descriptions. In the latter study, the inclusion of the available data on original nomenclature is highly important: it may help us to avoid atomising descriptive elements.*

### 3. Features of catalogues

A. GEURTS (Vakgroep Hulpwetenschappen der Geschiedenis KUN) & C. KOSTER (Sectie Informatica KUN, Postbus 9103, 6500 HD NIJMEGEN): *Computerized Description of Manuscripts*

GEURTS presented the PCC (= *Producing Codicological Catalogues*)-Project, developed at Nijmegen University. It consists of two parts: (1) a SDDR (= *Syntax Driven Data Recorder*), software available now for a variety of micro- and personal computers (cf. 'Polata knigopisnaja' 8(1983):65), and (2) layout and indexing software, available now for the VAX 1-11 mainframe computer. The SDDR in no way prejudices the outcome of discussions on the relevance and the number of elements of descriptions (cf. above): since it is a program in 'context-free grammar', it accepts all data in natural language, the only compulsory element being their ordering. He also presented the comprehensive publication on the project and its implications: A. GEURTS et al. *Codicografie en computer*. 'Nijmeegse codicologische cahiers' 1. Nijmegen 1983. KOSTER opened a vast perspective on new developments in computer technology, which will soon come within reach of philologists and archivists, notably the addition of the video disc to the arsenal of data carriers, which will eventually permit to digitalise facsimiles of manuscripts along with their description.

*The project described presents significant advantages over other projects of computerized description of manuscripts: the separation of data recording (i.e. the SDDR) from data processing (i.e. the layout and indexing software) makes it possible, together with the progressive miniaturisation of computer equipment, to take the computer into the library and to record all data de visu; the possibility to use natural language for description does away with the necessity to encode all information (the distinction of discrete codes being, in many areas as debatable as the analysis of elements of description); the same possibility also enables teams of describers to work together irrespective of language barriers (we were assured that a translation program could and would be added to the layout and indexing software in order to be able to integrate, for publication purposes, descriptions from various sources).*

*Computerized description projects for distinct corpora were also discussed by other speakers. They all agreed to one common advantage of the computer in archaeography: the practical accessibility of data even prior to the publication (or independently from it) of any catalogue. This certainly is a point to be given much consideration in Slavic archaeography with its notorious lack of catalogues (of the nearly 500.000 extant Slavic manuscript books and fragments only just over 10.000 have an accessible description, i.e. less than 3%). The undescribed sources must be made accessible to research if that research wishes to be comprehensive and reliable. Why then not make use of the most recent experience in related fields?*