

## MÉNESTREL AU JAPON : DES MÉDIÉVISTES EN RÉSEAU

### *MÉNESTREL IN JAPAN, MEDIEVALISTS AND THEIR NETWORKS*

17 NOVEMBER 2017

**Afternoon: *Research Networks and Tools in Medieval Studies***

**Après-midi d'étude : *Réseaux et outils de recherche médiévistes***

**13h30: Presentation of the Ménestrel Network and Website**

**Christine DUCOURTIEUX**

(Ingénieur de recherche, Laboratoire de médiévistique occidentale, Paris)

**Isabelle DRAELANTS**

(Directrice de recherche au CNRS,  
Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes (IRHT), Paris)

Ménestrel held its first meeting on 5 June 1997. It was initiated by the Paris URFIST (Unité régionale de formation à l'information scientifique et technique) in order to develop a documentation network for medieval studies on the Internet. The workgroup was built around the editorial board of the journal *Le Médiéviste et l'Ordinateur* ("The Medievalist and the Computer"), together with scholars and documentation specialists from various organisations. The purpose of Ménestrel has evolved over the years. Promoting the use of the Internet in the research activities of medievalists, assessing available resources and contributing to the recognition of medieval scholarship on the worldwide web have remained our principal goals, but in 2007 we started to realise the importance of combining "traditional" and new tools and approaches. In the field of heuristics, the methodological gap between generations is indeed becoming a major challenge.

**13h50: Presentation of the "Medievalists on the Map" Section ("Lieux et acteurs de la recherche") of the Ménestrel Website**

**Hanno WIJSMAN**

(Ingénieur d'études au CNRS,  
Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes, Paris (IRHT), Paris)

The "Medievalists on the Map" section of the Ménestrel website provides an overview of medieval studies world-wide: <http://www.menestrel.fr/spip.php?rubrique369&lang=en>. To this end one page per country describes the various institutions, foundations, libraries, archives,

museums, projects, web tools, journals and other features relevant for medievalists in that specific country. In order to allow the users to find their way around easily, a more or less standardised scheme has been adopted. However, within that framework – and as always on the Ménéstrel website – authors have a great deal of liberty in what they want to emphasise. Indeed, countries are very different from one another. On the pages of some small countries, authors have gone so far as to list the various researchers and/or professors per institution. For bigger countries, this would be far too elaborate, since the list of institutions alone can be very fastidious to establish and maintain.

Not every country in the world has its page yet. The existing pages – 48 at the moment – give an extremely varied picture of medieval studies on the globe: Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, Central Asia, East Asia, North and South America, Oceania. Students or researchers who are planning a (short or lengthy) visit, or would like to, can easily find their way around all the useful webpages and resources. Every country has its own traditions for the study of the Middle Ages (even as regards the very definition of the Middle Ages) and its own resources, whether they are material (libraries, archives, museums) or immaterial (digitisations, projects, digital tools).

A good example is the page about Japan, maintained by Megumi Tanabe: <http://www.menestrel.fr/spip.php?rubrique1204&lang=fr>

#### **14h00: Presentation of the “Thematic Repertory” Section (“Thèmes et disciplines”) of the Ménéstrel Website: the Example of the “Food” Page (“Alimentation”)**

**Aude MAIREY**

(Directrice de recherche au CNRS,  
Laboratoire de médiévistique occidentale (LAMOP), Paris)

**Alban GAUTIER**

(Professeur, Université de Caen Normandie – Institut universitaire de France)

One of the goals of Ménéstrel is to provide a critical and selected access to a wide range of resources (mainly electronic, but also printed) on medieval studies. The section known as “Thèmes et disciplines” thus provides a thematic repertory of past and current work on the Middle Ages. Each theme is managed by a scholar or a team of scholars, who enjoy a great freedom in the way they choose to organize their subject. As an example we will present the “Food” (“Alimentation”) Page, which consists of two main sub-sections: a critical repertory of existing resources on medieval food history available on the Internet; and a selected bibliography with commentaries and book reviews.

## **14h15: Presentation of the Ménéstrel Collection “On the use of ... in Medieval History” (“De l’usage de ... en Histoire médiévale”).**

**Benoît GRÉVIN**

(Directeur de recherche au CNRS, LAMOP, Paris)

The online series of articles “On the use of ... in Medieval History” (French title : “De l’usage de ... en histoire médiévale”) is a crucial part of the section “Editions Ménéstrel”, as well as a showcase of the intellectual activity at work on the Francophone website dedicated to the field of research in Medieval History.

The original idea which led to the creation of this collection in 2009 was to provide a vast array of short papers (circa 1000 words) on various themes (concepts, significant works, disciplinary subfields...) related to the methodology of medieval studies, in order to give students or advanced researchers interested but not specialized in the field, a clearer idea of the historiographical debates on the matter, and to give them advice on how to use the discussed concept more efficiently. Articles “On the use of ... in Medieval History” are not intended to give a mere historiographical synthesis. They aim to envision the various ways in which a notion, a concept or a subfield have been used, both in the past and in present research, and to discuss methodological issues. For example, broad and controversial terms such as “family”, “genre”, “images”, often used by medievalists, are discussed, without eschewing debate. The field encompasses the definition of several textual subfields of medieval history (e.g. “hagiography”, “*quaestio universitaria*”), as well as material and linguistic media (“epigraphy”, “medieval Latin”), modern media (“cinema”, “comics”), central anthropological concepts (“gift”, “death”, “honour”) and even some major authors (“Michelet”, “Bakhtin”). Any significant topic may be addressed, as long as it is liable to work as an anthropological, a sociological or a historical tool in medieval research — past, present and future.

In 2017, the series boasts more than seventy online papers, all including a short bibliography. Although the series has been originally devised for a Francophone readership, many articles have already been translated into German and English. The ultimate goal is to display a sort of living methodological encyclopaedia, available in at least three major European languages (French, German, English).

## **14h30: Presentation of the “Primary Sources and Resources” Section of the Ménéstrel Website**

**Anne-Sophie TRINEAU-DUROZOY**

(Conservatrice, Bibliothèque universitaire de Poitiers)

The existing “Primary Sources and Resources” section of the Ménéstrel website is a result of the joint efforts of three librarians (University Library of the Sorbonne, National Library of France,

University Library of Poitiers) and an archivist (National Archives of France).

It aims to cast a critical eye onto the most significant general tools for medievalists, whether available for free or not. It is intended to give advice for a better use of library databases, showing both the advantages and the limits of each of them.

Its 8 sections deal with:

- archives (archives websites, in France and in other countries),
- manuscript catalogues (kept in France and in other countries, with or without images),
- digital and virtual libraries of manuscripts,
- text corpora in Latin and vernacular languages (for example the online Library of Latin Texts by Brepols, or the *Patrologia Latina* by ProQuest),
- bibliographies (by country, by topic, or strictly limited to the Middle Ages),
- reference works (dictionaries, encyclopaedias, biographical tools),
- specific journals (with advice on how to find and read them online)
- doctoral dissertations (catalogues of PhDs from various countries, and online access to full texts).

Every description is regularly updated. The next step will be to complete some sections and to translate everything into English.

#### **14h45: Discussion**

Interpreter: Chiyoko INOSAKI (Part-time Lecturer, Osaka Sangyo University)

#### **14h55: Pause**

### **15h10: Current Developments in Palaeography: From the History of Scripts to a Global History of Writing Systems?**

**Marc SMITH**

(Professeur, École nationale des chartes,  
Directeur d'études, École pratique des hautes études, Paris)

Palaeography, the historical study of the forms of writing, has traditionally been divided into separate fields dealing with different writing systems, even different languages. In many of those fields scholarship is still, to a large extent, descriptive and focused on visual analysis and classification, as a tool for dating and placing manuscripts. The universal questions of how and why writing changes over time, how form adapts to technical change, to function or to the more general social and cultural context, have on the whole attracted less attention, and the available

body of research is unequal both in quantity and in methodology for different writing systems. New efforts have been made recently to bring scholars closer: there have been pioneering interdisciplinary discussions (particularly within the *École pratique des hautes études*, Paris) on common problems such as methods of dating, the regional diversity of scripts, or the impact of individual and collective variation on the general evolution of commonly accepted scripts over time. New editorial and pedagogical initiatives are also bringing together manuscripts and scholars from diverse cultures. Finally, advances in cognitive research concerning reading and writing, which has revealed the basic unity of the neural mechanisms involved across time and cultures, make it possible to take these into account as important elements of a historical perspective on all forms of writing.

### **15h30: Digital Palaeography: From Technical to Epistemological Challenges (New Tools and New Research Questions)**

**Dominique STUTZMANN**

(Chargé de recherche au CNRS,  
Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes, Paris (IRHT), Paris)

In palaeography, scholars study the history of handwriting, a crucial aspect of book history and manuscript studies. Palaeography has traditionally been dominated by expert-based approaches, driven by the opinions of a small group of highly trained individuals. These have acquired a set of expert skills through year-long training, e.g. the ability to read a text, to date a handwriting or attribute it to specific individuals or to a certain “class”. This knowledge remains very hard to render explicit, in order to share it with others. Classifying and naming scripts, for example, is a recurring, much debated issue in medieval Latin palaeography. Nomenclature, terminology, and ontologies are a way to represent a “state of the world”, and is always only a “state of science”, because the ability of defining derives from the scientific-historic knowledge [1][2].

This paper will address how machines can help reading texts, naming scripts and dating manuscripts, as well as the domain of applicability of Computer Vision in historical and palaeographical research. It will discuss results of, on the one hand, automated text indexing in the European project HIMANIS and READ [3][4], and how they relate to scholarly digital editing, and, on the other hand, of automated script classification, re-reading those of various research projects [5][6], at the light of the latest results of a competition organized for the International Conference on Frontiers of Handwriting Recognition [7][8], addressing the epistemological challenges of artificial intelligence and supervised training.

As for “reading”, computers are now able to “read” if properly trained, but should typically be used with a “deep index” (several readings for a single word on the image) and on large scale corpus so that the Humanist end users have to define new strategies to use the transcribed text whose exact quality is unknown. As for classification, if computers cannot be used to establish an autonomous system of “objective” script categories, because any such system depends on and

reflects the conceptual and technical underpinnings of Computer Science researchers, they are able to name the scripts, or even a mixture of scripts on a page, and, as such, they can be used in large scale digital libraries to generate palaeographical metadata. As for nomenclature, the newer results demonstrate that, within a given palaeographical system, they provide concrete evidence to analyse and interpret the shortcomings of current taxonomies, not only through exploring the confusion matrices and the recurring mislabelling of scripts, but also by opening the dialog with the researchers in Computer Vision, in order to understand why some classes are mixed and how it can enrich our historical understanding.

- [1] E. Casamassima, "La catalogazione dei manoscritti nelle biblioteche d'Italia dal Mazzatinti ad oggi: vecchi e nuovi problemi," in *Giuseppe Mazzatinti (1855-1906) tra storia e filologia. Atti del convegno (Gubbio, 9-10 dicembre 1987)*, P. Castelli, E. Menestò, and G. Pellegrini, Spoleto, 1991, pp. 212–20.
- [2] A. Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books from the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- [3] G. Mühlberger, M. Kallio, T. Hodel, and L. Seaward, "READ Project – Recognition and Enrichment of Archival Documents," *READ Project – Recognition and Enrichment of Archival Documents*, 2017. [Online. Available: <https://read.transkribus.eu/>. Accessed: 30-Mar-2017].
- [4] T. Bluche, A. H. Toselli, E. Vidal, C. Kermorvant, S. Hamel, and D. Stutzmann, "Preparatory KWS Experiments for Large-Scale Indexing of a Vast Medieval Manuscript Collection in the HIMANIS Project," presented at the 14th International Conference on Document Analysis and Recognition (ICDAR'17), Kyoto, 2017.
- [5] D. Muzerelle, "À la recherche d'algorithmes experts en écritures médiévales," *Gazette du livre médiéval*, vol. 56–57, 2011, pp. 5–20.
- [6] D. Stutzmann, "Clustering of medieval scripts through computer image analysis: towards an evaluation protocol," *Digital Medievalist*, vol. 10, 2015.
- [7] F. Cloppet, V. Eglin, V. C. Kieu, D. Stutzmann, and N. Vincent, "ICFHR2016 Competition on the Classification of Medieval Handwritings in Latin Script," *Proceedings of International Conference on Frontiers in Handwriting Recognition*, 2016, pp. 590–5.
- [8] D. Stutzmann, *Competition on the Classification of Medieval Handwritings in Latin Script*. Paris: Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes, 2016.

## **15h50: Web Tools and Databases in the Field of the History of Medieval Manuscripts and Texts: Some Existing Instruments and New Perspectives**

**Hanno WIJSMAN**

The purpose of this presentation is to introduce some of the digital tools available in the field of manuscript studies, and show some ongoing projects and perspectives. Inevitably it can claim no completeness in any way and it focusses on tools and projects in which my institution is involved.

The IRHT (Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes, <https://www.irht.cnrs.fr/>), is a French government institute, part of the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS). The IRHT specializes in the study of ancient and medieval texts from Europe and the Mediterranean and their transmission in manuscript form. Since 1937, the IRHT has gathered a great mass of documentation: a research library, paper files, card indexes, etc. Since the late twentieth century, the focus has gradually shifted to digital tools, among which the primary manuscripts database Medium (<http://medium.irht.cnrs.fr>), and the BVMM (Bibliothèque virtuelle des manuscrits médiévaux, <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr>), a central image repository of digitised manuscripts from French public collections. Other databases are attached to it in order to dive into detail on certain aspects: manuscripts in specific languages such as French (Jonas, <http://jonas.irht.cnrs.fr/>), Greek (Pinakes, <http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr>) or Latin (Fama, <http://fama.irht.cnrs.fr>), provenance (Bibale, <http://bibale.irht.cnrs.fr>), illumination (Initiale, <http://initiale.irht.cnrs.fr>), etc.

Biblissima (*Bibliotheca bibliothecarum novissima*; <http://www.biblissima-condorcet.fr>) defines itself as an “observatory for the written cultural heritage of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.” This eight-year (2012-2019) project has been developed through the French government program *Équipements d'excellence* as a means to develop tools in the field of digital humanities. Biblissima unites nine French partners. The purpose of Biblissima is to create a digital meta-library with the primary aim of boosting work on the digitization of manuscripts, digital editions of historical texts, and metadata (databases, manuscript descriptions, etc.). Interoperability of data and images is essential. The idea is to develop ways to combine previously available data and images that are now scattered all over the Internet, and therefore difficult to use.

There are, to be sure, many other tools and projects in the world working in similar directions. Many libraries develop digital libraries with images of manuscripts as well as metadata and bibliography about their collection. Thus the Bibliothèque nationale de France publishes impressive quantities of images in Gallica (<http://gallica.bnf.fr>) and metadata on manuscripts in Archives et Manuscrits (<http://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/>). The SDBM (Schoenberg DataBase of Manuscripts; <https://sdbm.library.upenn.edu/>) is a fine example of web publishing of data about all kinds of medieval manuscripts. It assembles provenance data, especially drawn from sales catalogues. An example of a project which aims to link up data in order to be able to do searches on a much larger scope has only just started: MMM (Mapping Manuscript Migrations: Digging into Data for the History and Provenance of Pre-Modern European Manuscripts). It is a two year project which unites people from Oxford, Philadelphia, Aalto (Finland) and Paris (IRHT). For the moment, see <https://diggingintodata.org/awards/2016/project/mapping-manuscript-migrations-digging-data-history-and-provenance-pre-modern>.

In order to arrive at more unity and facility to find one's way around in the multiplicity of web tools, an initiative has been launched to create an ISMSN (International Standard Manuscript Number). The idea is to create an open tool to centralise identifiers for manuscripts world-wide. Thus any image or information on a manuscript can be linked to the universal ID of this manuscript so that aggregating all available data on a specific object will be possible. For the

moment, see <https://www.irht.cnrs.fr/?q=en/agenda/manuscript-ids-identifiants-des-manuscrits>.

**16h10: Presentation of the *Society of Medieval Historians in French Public Higher Education* (Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public, SHMESP)**

**Aude MAIREY**

The *Society of Medieval Historians in French Public Higher Education*, created in 1969, brings together historians, archaeologists and art historians working on the Middle Ages in French universities and research institutions. It aims at promoting and supporting medieval studies and their teaching, as well as their dissemination to a broader audience, by enhancing the necessary links between academic world, educational system and society. Its annual congresses bring together specialists of different periods of the Middle Ages, European but also on a global scale. It carries out the dissemination and circulation of scientific and professional information, in the first place through its monthly newsletter.

**16h30: Medieval Studies in France and the *Society for Medieval Language and Literature in Langue d'Oc and Langue d'Oïl* (Société de Langue et de Littérature Médiévales d'Oc et d'Oïl, SLLMOO)**

**Joëlle DUCOS**

(Professeur, Université de Paris IV Sorbonne)

The *Society for Medieval Language and Literature in Langue d'Oc* (Occitan) and *Langue d'Oïl* (SLLMOO) was founded in 1970 through the initiative of three scholars, specialists in medieval literature (Jean-Charles Payen, Joël Grisward and Jean Dufournet), as a network of professors, teachers and researchers from French and foreign universities. It aims at disseminating and promoting research in the main fields of medieval literature and languages developed over the last fifty years: linguistics, literary analysis, philology and textual approaches, including interdisciplinary studies (history of art, history, history of science). It publishes an online journal (*Perspectives médiévales*), compiles a database of doctoral dissertations and organizes an international conference every two years, as well as other regular meetings. The paper will address the main current trends of French medieval studies and current debates and projects.

**16h50: Discussion**

Interprète: Chiyoko INOSAKI