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Introduction

When one looks into manuscripts, seeking information on the practices of teaching and learning, one aspect one must come to terms with is the amazing variability of sources. This may sound trivial at first, given that the first credo of manuscript studies is that every manuscript, copy or not, is a unicum, a unique and individual instantiation of contents that may be new or inherited, in contradistinction to a printed and consequently automatically copied and multiplied book. But when enquiry is made into the reasons for such variability it becomes clear this is not a matter to be taken lightly. While the erstwhile Hamburg Research group sought external reasons for variability in the material preconditions provided by different media, as well as in the conventions that develop with them, (and indeed other parts of the present book examine general strategies of (re)shaping material to be apprehended and comprehended, such as forming syllabi or developing exegetical tools that help comprehension, such as glosses, thus painting tendencies with a broad brush) the current section looks into individual agency and questions, at the micro-level of an individual manuscript or act of production (that may include more than one manuscript), to discover what the motivations and strategies of an individual author, scribe or compiler could have been.

The term chosen here to describe what is done to the material to be transmitted is adaptation. What is meant by adaptation is conscious and intentional modifications in content, order, selection, presentation, or layout made by an individual agent who may or may not state his reasons for doing so explicitly. The term appears at the same time to be broad enough to cover a partly motley range of potential individual choices and narrow enough to distinguish such personal contributions from other forms of agency that result in change, some of which, as mentioned above, are also taken up in the current volume. Regarding adaptation the focus is not on the process of the secondary use of a given manuscript e.g., in the form of marginal and interlinear annotation (as applied in the work on layered manuscripts in one of the Current Cluster of Excellence's research fields *Understanding Written Artefacts*), but an individual project of manuscript production.

As explicit explanation of reasons for adaptation is the exception rather than the rule (although in some traditions prefaces provide a natural locus for

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such matters to be discussed), the focus of the five case studies here is on the material instantiation of change in the individual manuscripts. Obviously, such an approach presupposes the existence of predecessors, both at a textual and manuscript level, in other words, a tradition, against which the changes observed may be outlined. In terms of tradition, a vital aspect of such changes found and described in an individual manuscript is whether or not it had the power (or the good fortune or chance) to influence (some of) the manuscripts that followed it, that dealt with the same materials. Thus, instances of adaptation can be 'snapshots' of an individual undertaking that garnered no followers or consequences, as in Eva Wilden's case study, which in terms of a tradition appear to be mere aberrations. Or they may signify a shift in perception, an advance in knowledge, something a tradition would call progress, as in the case Martin Delhey takes up. However, they may also herald general historical changes, changes in teaching and learning practices, or of a transmission line of knowledge that crosses boundaries of any kind (physical, social, cultural etc.), as exemplified by the work of Janina Karolewski.

Although the focus rests on individual instantiations or snapshots, it is quite possible to observe trends, either by comparison with parallel material or, in some cases, consulting normative texts that are supposed to regulate usages, as Elisabeth Hufnagel examines in her contribution. Both the momentary image and the potential trend may also be observed against the grand axis of bi-polar movements, which represent the extremes of either side of an open continuum, as in:

– individualisation – standardisation/systematisation
– inclusion – exclusion
– expansion – condensation

A scholar or teacher may adapt a given set of materials for his own personal use and purpose (which may even include a novel concept of teaching) and according to his own level of knowledge. Or he may streamline unadjusted data (which might have been adjusted to another purpose) along a set of conventions or even norms dictated by a tradition. In so doing, he may include other similar material or exclude material perceived as redundant, unnecessary, or even obsolete, as described by Philippe Depreux in his study. Finally, he may tailor what he found by expanding on the existing content (thus tricking a tradition into saying more than was accepted which is frequently observed in Indian commentary traditions), or he may curtail and condense it, making it more hermetic or elegant in the process.

The reasons or motives for doing so can vary extremely. The human factor cannot be discounted i.e., the mental capacities and degree of mastery attained in a field by a teacher, student, or scholar engaged in the production of a manuscript – which may represent anything from a student's class notes to the mature project of a fully trained scholar. Another aspect of the human factor is what may be termed fashion, that causes changes of didactical strategies, and with them the contents to be taught. Adaptation may go back to regional or local differences, when knowledge travelled, and at times knowledge travelled far. This may also have been the consequence of changes occurring within the social groups involved, implying shifts in dialect or sociolect. The processes become ever more complex when considering the interlingual transmission of knowledge which demands acts of translation, often coupled with intercultural transmission of knowledge that may require a more or less complete re-contextualisation of contents and/or form.

In short, processes of adaptation may reflect general developments in social, political, legal and cultural history. Needless to say at the other end of the spectrum of reasons for change there are simply differences in material culture (e.g., different writing supports etc.), which affect not only the transmission of texts in general but the practices of teaching and learning in particular. It is self-evident these case studies cannot cover the full range of possibilities, mental and material, but they may make this range palpable. The five case studies assembled here cover considerable spatial and temporal ground. Two are from the Indian subcontinent, one from the North, in fourteenth-century Sanskrit, the other, in late eighteenth-century Tamil, from the South. Europe is represented by a ninth-century Latin manuscript and a fifteenth-century musical manuscript. One case from the Middle East deals with the virtually contemporary Alevi tradition. As mentioned above, Delhey's Sanskrit manuscript represents the author's copy of a school founder or at least disseminator, the Buddhist Tantric master Vanaratna. Wilden's Tamil exemplar is an anonymous individual scholar's manuscript that remained inconsequential to the tradition. Depreux deals with a collection of formulae that appear to have been adapted for convenience. Hufnagel demonstrates how an innovation in the musical notation system was employed practically. Last but not least, Karolewski follows the efforts of a recent scholar, Mehmet Yaman Dede, who undertook a pragmatic adaptation for the sake of a community that could no longer read the traditional script.

Martin Delhey, *The 'Vanaratna Codex': A Rare Document of Buddhist Text Transmission (London, Royal Asiatic Society, Hodgson MS 35)*, deals with a manuscript based on the translation of orally received teachings, unique for the

direction of transfer, for it is not as one would normally expect, from Sanskrit to Tibetan, but Tibetan to Sanskrit. Vanaratna was a North-East Indian scholar active at the turn of the fourteenth to fifteenth century who travelled to Tibet extensively and received oral instruction, partly with the aid of an interpreter, a Tibetan master, whose Sanskrit name appears in the manuscript as Ānandamatidhvajaśrībhadra, identified here in Tibetan as Shar kha pa Kun dga' blo gros. During or after his first sojourn in Tibet he started, over a period of several years it seems, to note down what he heard in Tibetan in Sanskrit (his own language of learning). In so doing, he was breaking the taboo of secrecy, and thereby bringing Buddhist doctrine back to India and Nepal at a time when the religion's existence was under threat – in its very own homeland.

Eva Wilden, *Personal Poetics: An Adapted Version of a Well-Known Treatise in Old Tamil*, takes up a personal copy made by an anonymous scholar of a well-known Tamil treatise on poetics. She demonstrates how the treatise deviates in arrangement and length from the standard text and traces the extensions back to material quoted in the standard commentary. This reveals how the scholar, while having the temerity to copy the text on his own and interfere with its hallowed integrity, demonstrates simultaneously the perfect familiarity he has with the tradition he manipulates. One of the quotations he turns into a new aphorism can even be traced back to another even older and more venerable treatise, modifying its wording in a manner that may arguably represent an emendation of the standard text. Motives for the whole project remain unstated but there is some plausibility in regarding the unknown scholar as concerned with the practical application of this work in commenting on poetry. Incidentally, this manuscript is also a fine example of the typical Tamil minimal-layout copy – no visual sign of any interference can be perceived, and only a very close reading of the copied text reveals what is afoot.

Philipp Depreux, *Variations on Some Common Topics in Medieval Latin Letters: The Case of the Salzburg* Formulae *Collection (Late Ninth Century)*, shows how the manuscript referred to as the Salzburg collection of formulae is in fact a patchwork of model letters and charters of different origin – i.e., the material can be traced back to other manuscripts – and how even sentences within these letters and charters have been taken up and re-arranged into new phrases or paragraphs in their new surroundings. As is only to be expected in a language so strongly formulaic, sentences may be found *verbatim* in other collections, but they may also be newly adapted within a range of conventional phrasing deemed appropriate in a particular context e.g., in a letter from one cleric to another. Depreux also points out that the copyist (or the copyists, should the thesis about three subsequent hands be accepted) betrays no awareness of the

fact that he is arranging material that looks disparate to the historian, but instead gives the impression he is making free use of what he may have perceived as an open repertoire fully at his disposal. In cases like these any detailed reasons for such choices remain beyond the grasp of the modern reader.

Elisabeth Hufnagel's *Adapting the Concept of* Proportio *to Rhythm in the* Ars subtilior: *Ugolino da Orvieto's Compositions and his Statements on Proportion Signs in Codex Casanatense 2151*, bears with it a very different perspective. In the case of early musical notation, comparisons can be made between what is prescribed in treatises and how music is noted down in practice, and in her example, both were actually produced by the same author, Ugolino da Orvieto (who, however, was not the copyist of the manuscript). Here the question is to what extent theory and practice influenced each other and which of the two adapted to the other. Hufnagel finds that (a) not even the proportion signs used in various pieces of music noted down in the same manuscript and ascribed to the same composer appear to follow the same usage, and (b) none of those modes of presentation is congruent with the description of proportion signs in the treatise. She discusses the possibility that an innovation towards a more precise depiction of music took place that found entry in a non-standardised manner in the pieces of the period and that theorists in reaction (unsuccessfully) tried to develop a standard. However, she also considers the possibility that theory and practice were simply divorced by different concerns, speculation on the one hand and the actuality of making music on the other.

Janina Karolewski's *Adaptation of* Buyruk *Manuscripts to Impart Alevi Teachings: Mehmet Yaman Dede and the* Arapgir-Çimen Buyruğu, is the only contribution in this section dealing with a living tradition, placing her in the most enviable position of being able to consult not only the manuscript but to talk to its possessor. Mehmet Yaman Dede is a religious specialist in a period that demands multiple adaptation processes from the Alevi community (urbanisation, state education and a change in alphabet from Arabic to Latin), which in turn are mirrored in a manuscript transmission on the verge of becoming a print tradition. The three greatest changes are the revision of a policy of restriction that left direct access to the written work in the hands of specialists like Mehmet Yaman Dede, the preparation of such manuscripts for print in a new layout, thus making them widely and indiscriminately accessible, and, finally, doing so in the Latin alphabet and in modern Turkish, as used in public education. As a result, the printed books can be read without any need for further education; nonetheless, its interpretation remains the professionals' prerogative.