ISMI: International Standard Manuscript Identifier. Project of unique and stable identifiers for Manuscripts

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Initial observation: multiplication of online resources on manuscripts. Usual way of referring to manuscripts: shelfmark (at least in the occidental world…), is not adapted to online references and links. It is too complicated to work on a harmonisation of shelfmarks systems in all online resources; we need direct and easy links.

I. Greek: Diktyon (http://www.diktyon.org)

Previous experience: Greek, since 2013.

Discussion between people managing databases about Greek manuscripts, various approaches and interests. Decision: a unique register of Greek manuscripts, giving identifiers for manuscripts, identified by their shelfmark. Identifiers: numeric, without signification, short.

Insertion of identifiers in all the databases of the network.

Particular situation: already a database with almost all the Greek manuscripts, Pinakes, used as a register for the network. Already many information and links inside this register.

II. ISMI, an ongoing project

Three Meetings in Paris: April 2017, October 2017, May 2018.

Overview of national and thematic practices

https://www.irht.cnrs.fr/?q=fr/agenda/manuscript-ids-identifiants-des-manuscrits

https://www.irht.cnrs.fr/?q=fr/agenda/manuscript-ids-pour-un-identifiant-unique-des-manuscrits-2

https://census-2017.sciencesconf.org/ (see https://manuscrits.hypotheses.org/1282, https://manuscrits.hypotheses.org/1304, and https://manuscrits.hypotheses.org/1319 for a presentation of the Conference)

Starting point: many different resources online on a given manuscript, or on types of manuscripts. How to link them together? How to centralise information, how to help researchers and librarians to find all relevant information on a given manuscript?

Consensus was:

- to use a unique id for manuscripts, numeric, without signification. machine and human readable, together with an ark.
- To use shelfmark to identify a given manuscript.
- To build a database working as a register for all manuscripts.
- Aggregation of links, as much as possible (furnished by libraries and research institutions, possible harvesting).

Core-team: Western European libraries and researcher, medieval manuscripts, Mediterranean and European area. Libraries and research centres. Should be open to other areas, languages, type of manuscripts, etc.

What to do next: working group with some institutions in order to investigate further, prepare the structure of register and work on an ISO standard for this manuscript identifier.

Open to collaboration and manifestation of interest. Please, contact: matthieu.cassin@irht.cnrs.fr