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Forum

A Case for the Study of Modern Literary Manuscripts

Christian Benne | Copenhagen

What is a manuscript? A universal definition across eras, languages and traditions seems problematic, if not downright impossible. This is one of the reasons why an interdisciplinary hub for manuscript studies (Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, CSMC, in Hamburg) was established in the first place.¹ Descriptive definitions are difficult to sustain even at the best of times. In the field of philosophy, they have come under attack in recent decades, following the work of the logician Saul A. Kripke in the early 1970s. Kripke argued that names in particular cannot be defined descriptively or only descriptively, for various reasons. Rather, they should be recognised as being rigid designators (with the same reference in every possible world or counterfactual situation), which at the same time, are dependent on a historical chain of semantic transmission:

In general our reference depends not just on what we think ourselves, but on other people in the community, the history of how the name reached one, and things like that. It is by following such a history that one gets to the reference. [...] An initial 'baptism' takes place. Here the object may be named by ostension, or the reference of the name may be fixed by a description. When the name is 'passed from link to link', the receiver of the name must, I think, intend when he learns it to use it with the same reference as the man from whom he heard it.²

Kripke himself was prepared to apply this analysis beyond the domain of names. Without going into detail here, I believe it is well suited to solve some definitory problems of reference surrounding the name-like concept of the manuscript, such as the fact that we also refer to an 'author's written, typed, or word-processed copy of a work, as distinguished from

the print of the same'³, i.e. to documents which, strictly speaking, are not even written by hand.

If the concept of the manuscript does, indeed, receive its reference by way of a historical chain of designations and practices, it follows that any temporal restriction in either direction would be inadmissible. A research centre devoted to manuscript cultures would have to acknowledge cultures of manuscripts beyond a more or less contingent date. I therefore propose to extend the notion of manuscript cultures to include the modern period. By that I mean the distinct role that manuscripts that were produced and collected after the widespread use (rather than invention) of printing technology in the West around 1500 CE. My arguments are derived from an extensive, comparative study of modern Western European manuscripts (predominantly those of a literary nature), their theoretical and archival status.⁴ While offering a short summary of selected aspects of this study here, I wish to make a case for understanding the persistence of manuscripts in the modern world as a necessary basis for our (literary) culture in a broad sense. Leaving out the theoretical framework and analyses of specific cases, I will concentrate on some historical developments in the history of the semantic charging of the manuscript since the eighteenth century.

The starting point for any research into modern manuscripts must be their continual and, indeed, growing significance in an age often identified as 'the Gutenberg galaxy' or as a transitional period of print culture on the way to the digital age. In Europe, manuscripts began to acquire a new prestige from around the mid-eighteenth century. Although they already played a role before then, this is really where a new appreciation of them seems to originate in most literary traditions. Contrary to common assumption, writing by hand and the reading of manuscripts was never wholly superseded by print, and handwritten materials gained specific functions

¹ See Sonderforschungsbereich 950 'Manuscript Cultures in Asia, Africa and Europe' <www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/index_e.html> and cf. T. Meier, Ott, and Sauer 2015.

² Kripke 1972, 95f.

³ 'Manuscript', in *OED Online*.

⁴ Benne 2015.

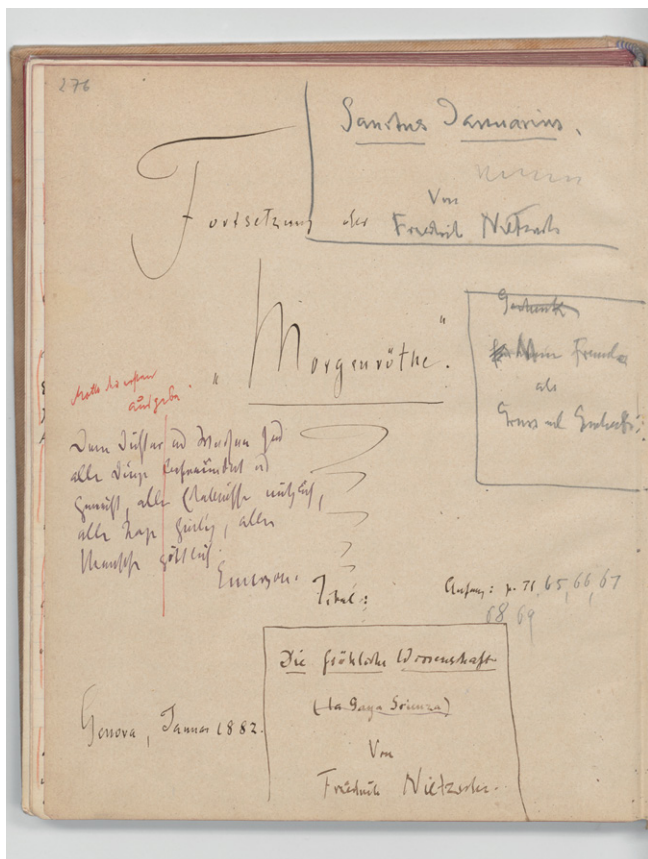


Fig. 1: Friedrich Nietzsche, Notebook M-III-6, p. 276, drafts and notes to *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* ('The Gay Science'), 1881–1882, title page (Nietzsche started writing from the back of the book), Goethe and Schiller Archive Weimar, no. 71/133; *Digital Facsimile Edition* <<http://www.nietzschesource.org/M-III-6,276>>.

unavailable to physical books (in the same way that books have not simply been ousted by digital devices today). Media technologies are embedded in a complex web of factors and are not subject to linear causalities. Instead of disappearing, they are allocated new purposes or niches. This inevitably readjusts the entire field in which they operate.

With the advent of print, manuscripts were freed from the function of dissemination. Writing by hand still remained a dominant practice in many areas, however. Letter-writing is an obvious example, having only recently become part of the typographical universe. (Unlike letters in the form of emails, postcards are still predominantly handwritten.) Handwritten signatures – another obvious case – have not been replaced completely even in an age of digitisation. Signing by hand as a token of a legally binding expression of will in contracts, wills and all manner of documents can in many ways be regarded as symbolic of the status of handwriting as a trace of an identifiable individual's activities.

Print enforced this gesture of authorisation because it could no longer be linked directly to the body or bodily movement of an author. It is no coincidence that signatures became common literary motifs – most famously Faust's wager: in mythology, the figure of Faust was, of course, closely related to the invention of print.

Considering signatures as traces of individual authors' activities has had consequences for all types of handwriting: the autographical manuscript, in particular, became emblematic of authorial intention and a new, more autonomous author function. Autographical manuscripts were the domain of personal or intimate genres such as diaries, excerpts, scrapbooks, autobiographical notes and the like (Figs 1 and 2). They expanded the notion of literature itself⁵ and attracted the interest of collectors. This interest was soon extended to the compositional process, sketches, proofs and even calligraphic or stylistic exercises. Traces of handwriting in printed books, such as marginal notes, turned them into unique items on a par with manuscripts and demonstrated the close connection between manual handling and writing, which had made the codex the interactive medium *par excellence* since its widespread adoption in the Middle Ages.

A clear distinction between books, prints and manuscripts was first established centuries after the invention of movable type although privately circulating manuscripts and officially published manuscripts (*ekdosis*) were clearly distinguished already in Antiquity.⁶

Professional copying remained a common practice of duplication and dissemination well into the eighteenth century. This also explains seemingly tautological expressions (often found in the German-speaking context) such as 'eigenhändige Handschrift' – they refer to individually identifiable autographs. It is precisely the production of individual autographs regarded as functionally succinct compared to printing and other forms of writing and disseminating that made books and manuscripts appear to be distinct categories or 'media'. In turn, this change in cultural perception had consequences for the individualisation of handwriting itself. Consciously or subconsciously, graphic marks became graphic expressions which would be turned into the object of a new, scientifically controversial

⁵ See, for example, Campe 1990.

⁶ See already Birt 1882, 1–2, 54, Dorandi 2007 and 2014, and Benne 2015, 22.

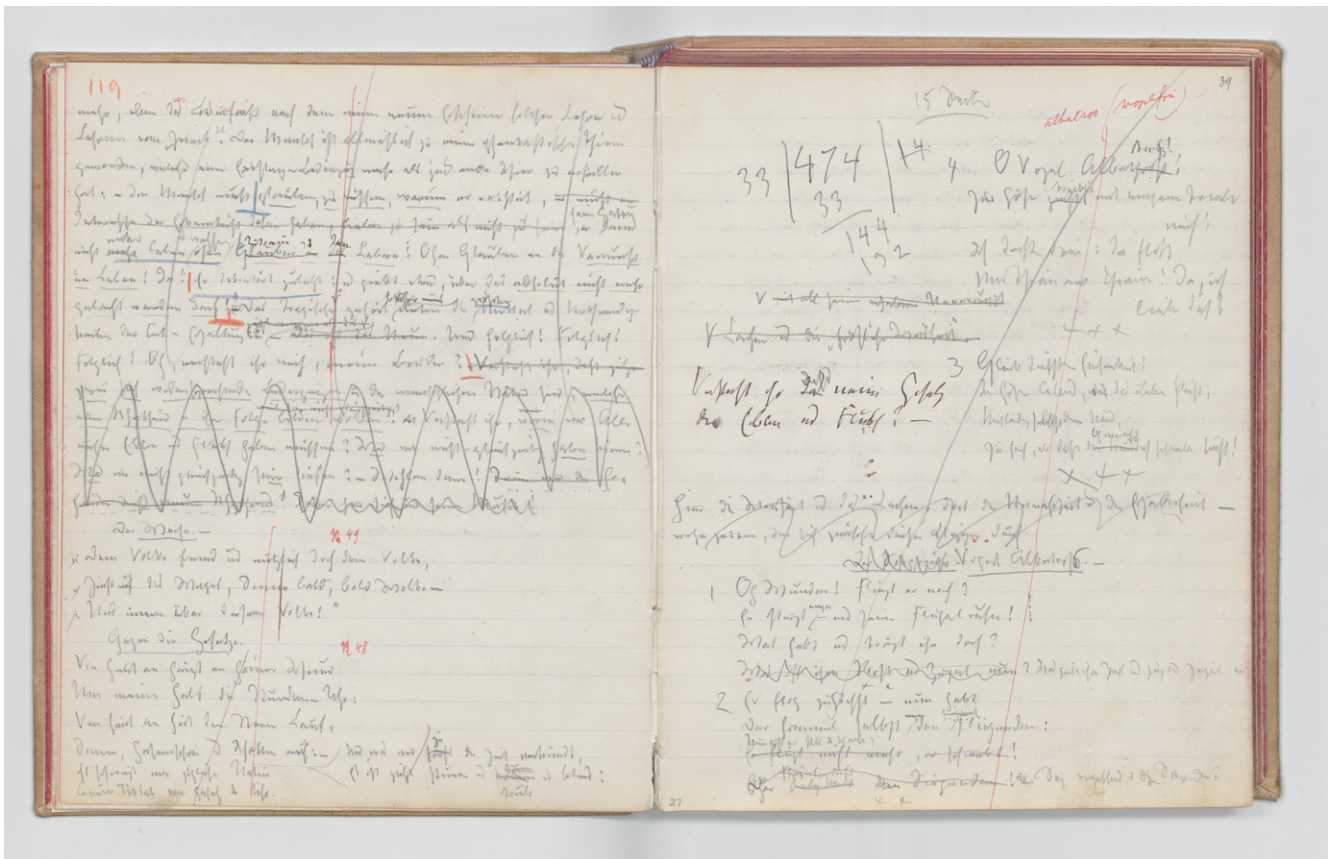


Fig. 2: Friedrich Nietzsche, Notebook M-III-6, pp. 38–39, drafts and notes to *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* ('The Gay Science'), 1881–1882, Goethe and Schiller Archive Weimar, no. 71/133; Digital Facsimile Edition <<http://www.nietzschesource.org/DFGA/M-III-6,38et39>>.

discipline: graphology. In the light of these interconnected developments, it is legitimate to speak of the ‘invention’ of (autograph) manuscripts in Europe about 250 years ago. The status and cultural significance of this invention has not diminished yet. On the contrary, the growing demand for manuscripts as collectors’ items and museum pieces is currently leading to new forms of presentation and institutionalisation ranging from genetic facsimile editions to large-scale exhibitions.

Private collections of manuscripts are not a modern phenomenon in Europe. In the Italian Renaissance, the fashion of owning manuscripts from antiquity was soon followed by the fashion of owning examples of contemporary writing. Even before print, manuscripts could be distinguished from books, even though the books were also handwritten. One point in case is the distinction between archives and libraries, which goes back to late antiquity and was stabilised in the early modern era.⁷ Libraries typically contained tokens of

a type and thus items which circulated, at least potentially. Archives contained unique documents, which were not to be copied and circulated, such as state papers, contracts, protocols or letters. This distinction was valid even where archives were part of a library. It also transcends a simplistic modern categorisation of ‘media’: a rare book belongs in an archive, not a library, and has more in common with manuscripts. On the other hand, despite their name, private prints – sometimes called ‘manuscripts for friends’⁸ – are books which may or may not belong in a library, depending on many different factors.

It is thus because of print, the original task of which was to ease the practice of manuscript-copying, that the literary manuscript came to be valued in its own right. The process of differentiation began already in the sixteenth century⁹ and first peaked around 1800. In the course of this development, manuscripts came to be identified with attributes connected to their function as originals representing traces of specific

⁷ Cf. Schenk 2018 and Friedrich 2018; but see Fournet 2018, Fölster 2018 and Grünbart 2018 for the missing or partial differentiation between library and archive.

⁸ For example, see Spoerhase 2014.

⁹ Cf. Schnell 2007.

individuals. These attributes include exclusivity, authenticity or attentive reception (as opposed to the superficial devouring of novels, in particular). Since manuscripts were not, like books, intended for an anonymous public, the seemingly more intimate relationship between authors and the readers of their manuscripts was ascribed to the fact that it was not affected by the impersonal machineries of book production and book trading.

In addition, the modern literary field established an interface between the archive and literature that had not existed before in any relevant measure. After autographs had slowly disappeared from the literary field with the invention of printing, they reappeared in the archive. Archives of individual authors' manuscripts are therefore a relatively recent phenomenon. Genres that had not had any general significance before became decidedly literary genres and transposed the private archive into the public sphere. The epistolary novel is a case in point here: letters, the handwritten material with the longest history of collecting and archiving, inspired new forms of writing and literary topics. This, in turn, reinforced the status of letters as objects of general interest.

Yet it was not only epistemological, aesthetic or media-related reasons which brought about the new status of manuscripts. As soon as they became economic factors, directly or indirectly, there arose a need for legal regulation, which itself created the notion of a specific value of handwriting. The concept of labour became instrumental in uniting the many facets of manuscripts.

In the eighteenth century, print piracy became a serious problem. In the past, it had profited from a growing, yet unregulated market with non-existent or at least non-enforceable copyright laws. Up until then, printed books had carried the promise of offering more reliable texts than hand-copied manuscripts, which were prone to individual mistakes by the scribes. With piracy, print increasingly came to be seen as destabilising textual integrity since the pirates often changed the wording wilfully to adapt the pirated works to the assumed taste of their customers. Seemingly identical editions more often than not show major variations for this reason. The autograph, which was traditionally destroyed after printing, now advanced to being the source of authenticity as it pointed directly to the author. Therefore, the formulation of modern copyright law is closely connected to the 'invention' and new-found privileging of manuscripts.

The first relevant law protecting intellectual property, the Act of Queen Anne from 1709/10, did not protect authors, but the owners of a given work – typically the printers who had bought the work from the author and were now conceded a copyright for twenty-one years after printing. Authors of unprinted works had fourteen years in which to secure property rights by having them published – these property rights were held by the publishers who paid the authors off. This is also the reason why it was only rational to destroy the manuscript after printing; it had served its purpose and could no longer be misused (e.g. changed and sold off to another publisher).

The revaluation of manuscripts went hand in hand with the revaluation of their creators. The author of each manuscript had a vital interest in claiming his or her right to the text with the help of autograph documents interpreted as traces of an individual and autonomous creative process. A new understanding of copyright only gained acceptance when intellectual property was seen as an act of composition which necessarily materialised in written form.¹⁰ Originating in England, copyright was based on a theory of property developed by John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1689). Locke had extended his definition of property as the product of labour to intellectual property. In legal practice, building on this notion, the claim to intellectual property was consequently compared to the cultivation of virgin territories:¹¹ without any proof of cultivation, a claim to intellectual property could not be made. The more elaborate the author's working manuscript, i. e. the autograph, the stronger the claim.

Relating the new importance of the literary manuscript to the equally new conception of poetic genius (where the manuscript would be one of its emanations) is clearly insufficient; it is not genius, but labour which legitimately entitled the creator to ownership of his (or her) work. This cannot be stressed enough because it explains an important shift in attitudes towards autograph manuscripts. Since the end of the eighteenth century, these have not just been kept, archived and documented, but very much reflected upon and talked or written about. Written composition came no longer to be regarded in terms of epiphanic inspiration models, for instance, but in terms of crossing out, cutting up or recombining words and passages. Many authors began to write

¹⁰ See, for example, Clair 2004.

¹¹ Cf. Rose 1993.



Fig. 3: Gleimhaus – Museum der deutschen Aufklärung ('Gleim House – Museum of the German Enlightenment'), Halberstadt, showing the 'Freundschaftstempel' ('Temple of Friendship') where Gleim collected portraits, letters, manuscripts, printed books and other paraphernalia from of his literary friends and put the items on display.

about the act of writing or about writing instruments, paper or their surroundings while they are working.¹² Writing is the production of a manuscript considered as an artefact, a discontinuous merging of practices and institutions, not the linear production of signs.¹³

The insight into the processual nature of artistic creation was not confined to literature, of course, but applied also to painting and music. While Mozart still primarily composed in his head, Beethoven 'struggled' with the musical material, sketching and crossing out scores on reams after reams of paper – musical manuscripts written in his own hand are no rarity today. Sketches, drafts and outlines of all kinds were soon valued for giving access to a deeper understanding not just of a work, but of the artist and the context behind it. Many collectors specialised in both modern literary and

musical autographs – a manuscript, regardless of area and genre, was a selling point in its own right.¹⁴

As a consequence, the concept of the author or creator itself was increasingly associated with the existence of manuscripts. The institutionalisation of literary archives was only a logical step, and it changed the reception of contemporary literature radically. In the German-speaking world, Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim was the first to dedicate an archive to contemporary literary manuscripts – both his own and those of his friends and protégés from his vast network (Fig. 3). As his will testifies, he was already aware of the singular character of manuscripts that set them apart from printed formats. But it was Goethe, for whom Gleim's archive initially served as a model, who first made full use of its potential as a strategic tool in the literary field and as the site of a new form of creativity. His own manuscript archive, founded early in the nineteenth century in connection with the inauguration of a complete edition of his works, did

¹² Cf. Müller 2012.

¹³ Cf., for instance, Campe 1991; Hay 2002; Stingelin 2004.

¹⁴ Cf., for example, Rosenthal 2000.

not just serve as a museum of auratic objects; it was supposed to function as an open workshop, enabling the author to constantly generate new writing by reshuffling old sketches. Doing so demonstrated the complexity of an œuvre that demanded admirers and specialist readers. Archive and work merged because the work continually reflects upon the archive whence it came (Figs 4a and 4b).

Only a few decades later, in 1843, the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard coined the formula of the ‘art of writing posthumous papers’.¹⁵ Writing literature now meant primarily working towards one’s posthumous manuscripts. The nineteenth century turned this into an imperative. Ambitious authors who wished to leave a mark on the cultural memory of the nation needed a personal archive which could be transformed into a *Nachlass* and thus a source for expert students of manuscripts and the national memory alike. This solved another strategic problem, too: namely how to persuade philology – traditionally reserved for antiquity and possibly the vernacular Middle Ages – to serve contemporary writing.

The emergence of modern manuscript cultures thus marked the transition from an era of literary criticism, in which published and finished works were assessed according to a fixed canon of aesthetic criteria, to an era of literary philology, in which not the external aesthetic criteria, but the individual work was beyond doubt. Ideals of authenticity replaced those of perfectibility, and an aesthetic of spontaneity or the fragment replaced the ‘file’.

It is therefore no coincidence that authors start collecting their own manuscripts – and put them at the centre of their poetic self-reflection – the very moment philology establishes itself as a paradigm. If modern authors wanted specialised readers to engage as attentively and intensely

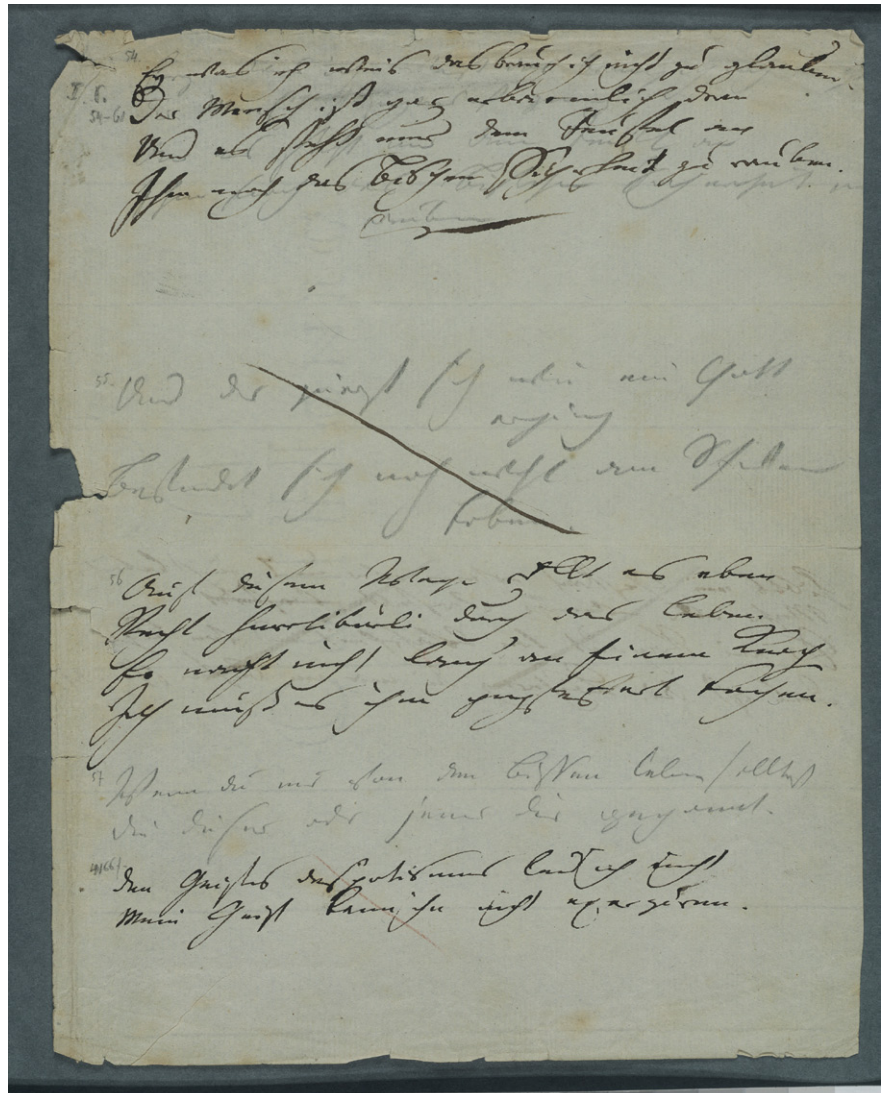


Fig. 4a: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, loose leaf with *Paralipomena to Faust I*, written in ink and pencil. Goethe and Schiller Archive Weimar, GSA 25/W 1399, p. 1.

with their own work as with ancient literature, they had to offer them the material they were used to working with. And the domain of the philologist was precisely the manuscript – in contrast to the printed book, on which the eighteenth-century critic had concentrated. It was the appreciation of the fragments and manuscripts of contemporary writers which allowed the development of modern philology. By pointing out the long and arduous labour involved in producing literary works through posthumous work strategies, highlighting manuscripts and handwriting in literature, editorial projects and the like, authors offered a ‘genetic pact’,¹⁶ which demands that serious readers should adjust the dedication of their reading according to the

¹⁵ Kierkegaard (ed. Cappelørn et al.) 1997, 151–152.

¹⁶ Benne 2015, 350.

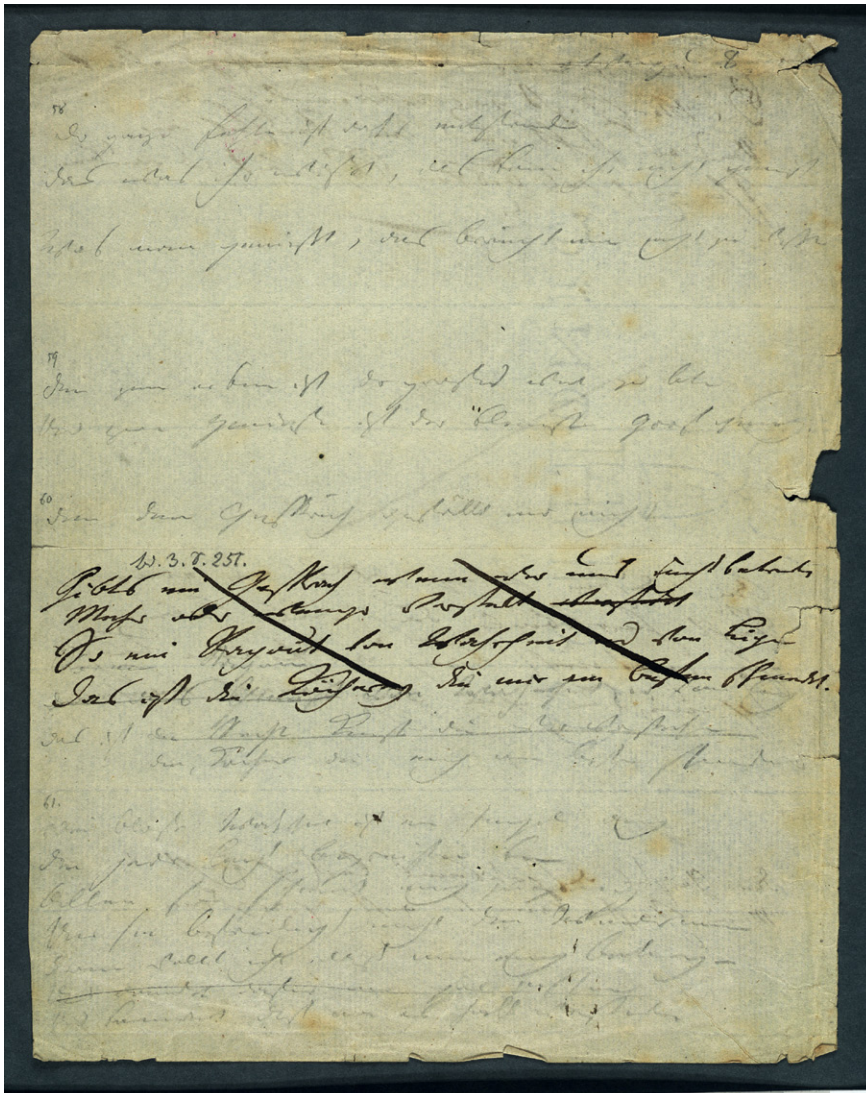


Fig. 4b: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, loose leaf with *Paralipomena to Faust I*, written in ink and pencil. Goethe and Schiller Archive Weimar, GSA 25/W 1399, p. 2.

of long-term historical-critical editorial projects, often outsourced to academies and characterised by the chronological arrangement of the manuscripts on which the edition rested and which were thus made available to the wider public and the next generation – and put back into the circulation of cultural capital which had been dormant in the static archive. Second, the establishment of public and national (rather than just private) manuscript archives, often with additional security and curatorial competence in place. Wilhelm Dilthey, important as he was for the acceptance of hermeneutics as the basic methodology underlying the humanities, made an early call for a national manuscript archive designed to safeguard the nation’s cultural memory.¹⁸ The proliferation of the archive¹⁹ – even private companies started their own collections – is the material shape of historicism’s victory. Explaining a phenomenon meant the ability to trace its lineage. In a national context, this links up with narratives of national identity – both required stable order as well as storage facilities for autograph manuscripts written by historically relevant individuals.

complexity and length of the work’s formation. Reading then includes a specific capacity to recognise traces of this formation on the work’s surface.

In the course of the nineteenth century, modern autograph manuscripts increased in value so considerably that they, like works of art, began to be traded at auctions. In 1851, a comprehensive catalogue of manuscripts was published in Paris, listing all those autographs that had been stolen from public libraries in France (Figs 5a and 5b).¹⁷ All of this led, in the second half of the nineteenth century, to an institutionalisation of the modern manuscript beyond the confines of academic philology. This institutionalisation mainly consisted of two innovations: first, the establishment

Once the collections existed, they continued to influence the individual and collective interest as well as the increase in symbolic value for all kinds of manuscripts. Giving manuscripts away as a token of friendship or mutual admiration became as common as including them in wills. Handing over authors’ estates to archives, university libraries and similar institutions has since become a field for specialists and self-conscious acts of self-promotion – but its history is tightly woven into the fabric of modern literature itself.²⁰

¹⁷ Lalanne and Bordier 1851.

¹⁸ Dilthey 1889. Cf. Thaler 2011.

¹⁹ Hutchinson and Weller 2011; Lepper and Raulff 2016.

²⁰ Cf. Sina and Spoerhase 2016.

OBSERVATIONS

SUR LE COMMERCE DES AUTOGRAPHES.

Depuis plusieurs années, et surtout depuis 1848, l'opinion publique s'est vivement préoccupée de la découverte de soustractions commises dans les bibliothèques et les dépôts d'archives de la France. Le procès Libri n'a fait connaître encore qu'une partie de ces dévastations. Pendant l'instruction de cette affaire dont le retentissement a été si grand et où nous avons été, comme experts, les délégués de la justice, il nous a fallu garder le silence malgré les attaques dirigées contre nous. Si aujourd'hui nous nous décidons à le rompre, en parlant des autographes, ce n'est point pour répondre à des pamphlets que nous avons méprisés, mais pour signaler l'audace et les funestes proportions d'une criminelle industrie. Le travail de notre expertise nous a mis sur la voie d'innombrables méfaits dont nous avons poursuivi la recherche même après l'expiration de notre mission, et nous n'hésitons pas à publier les renseignements que trois années d'investigations dans les bibliothèques de Paris et des départements nous ont permis de recueillir.

Le moment, d'ailleurs, nous semble bien choisi. L'administration de nos bibliothèques, dont quelques-unes ont été si longtemps abandonnées à des mains incapables

ou infidèles, a pris une nouvelle face. De toutes parts on s'occupe avec ardeur de classer et d'inventorier les collections manuscrites qu'elles possèdent. Au département des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale, qui, jusqu'en 1848, a été le théâtre de tant de désordres, ce travail, qu'on poursuit activement, a déjà donné lieu à des revendications devant les tribunaux.

La principale cause des soustractions a été, sans contredit, la facilité que ceux qui s'en rendaient coupables trouvaient à écouler le fruit de leurs vols. Il suffira, pour le démontrer, de tracer brièvement l'historique du commerce des autographes, qui ne date guère en France que d'une trentaine d'années.

Ce fut au mois de mai 1822 que l'on vit paraître pour la première fois à Paris¹ un catalogue consacré exclusivement à une collection d'autographes²; car jusqu'alors ceux-ci s'étaient trouvés dans les ventes confondues avec les livres et les manuscrits³.

¹ Nous le disons-ici, une fois pour toutes, nous n'entendons parler que des ventes faites à Paris. En fait d'autographes, du reste, comme sur tant d'autres points, c'est la France qui a donné le ton à l'Angleterre et à l'Allemagne. — Voyez la préface du catalogue de la Collection renommée de M. François Graffier. Vienne, 1835, in-42.

² Cette collection appartenait à M. Villenave. Son catalogue fut joint au supplément du catalogue du fonds de librairie de Pluquet. — Voyez plus loin la liste des ventes, p. 26.

³ « Les autographes, dit M. de Fixerécourt, n'étaient point réunis en collection il y a quarante ans. On rencontrait quelquefois, dans les ventes de livres, un ou deux volumes dans lesquels le propriétaire avait rassemblé, pêle-mêle, une centaine de lettres plus ou moins curieuses, et fort étonnées, la plus souvent, de se trouver ensemble. C'est à la vente de l'abbé de Tersan, que j'ai vu, pour la première fois, un casier assez étendu rempli de cartons qui contenaient des lettres autographes... C'est aussi dès cette époque (vers 1805) que j'ai conçu, pour la première fois, la pensée d'ajouter des lettres autographes à mes livres. » (Préface du catalogue de la collection d'autographes de M. de Fixerécourt. Paris, Techener, 1841, in-8°.)

L'importance des documents politiques originaux, les fit pourtant rassembler de bonne heure. L'un des plus magnifiques recueils de ce genre, est celui qui fut commencé par Philippe, comte de Béthune, frère de Sully. (Voyez plus loin,

Figs 5a and b: Ludovic Lalanne et Henri Léonard Bordier, *Dictionnaire de pièces autographes volées aux bibliothèques publiques de la France : précédé d'observations sur le commerce des autographes*, Paris: Librairie Panckoucke, 1851, pp. 5–6 (beginning of preface). <ark:/12148/bpt6k204173b>.

In Germany, for example, organizations like the Freies Deutsches Hochstift in Frankfurt (founded in 1859), the Goethe and Schiller Archive in Weimar (founded in 1885/1889), or the German Literature Archive (Deutsches Literaturarchiv, DLA) in Marbach (established in 1955 but resuming and expanding the Schiller National Museum founded in 1903) are regional as well as national bodies for collecting sources of literary and intellectual German history – alongside many other similar institutions throughout the country. The German Literature Archive in Marbach alone currently houses c. 1,400 collections of authors, publishers and scholars, among them thousands of manuscripts. These manuscripts, books and objects are regularly exhibited in the adjacent Museum of Modern Literature and the Schiller National Museum.

This development culminates in the current editorial style of the facsimile edition on the one hand, and the explosion of manuscript-related exhibitions on the other. The autograph archive has been turned into a museum, but one that no longer just documents or displays cultural memory, but creates it. The manuscript does not just speak for itself, but in relation to its respective framing: on the desk, in the archive

or behind glass. The merging of archives and museums therefore not only changes both institutions, but also their exhibits (Fig. 6).²¹

The current fascination with modern manuscripts illuminates some of the consequences changing practices have for the perception of objects. The direct handling of a manuscript is successively restricted on its way from the desk to the archive and, finally, to the exhibition room. Where the working manuscript is part of our natural writing environment, it has to be handled with care by a select circle of experts in the archive, whereas a museum, facsimile edition or online scan does no longer allow any direct handling. On the other hand, they at least partly enable a much larger group of people to access them. Publicity and manual handling therefore seem to correlate negatively – as do anonymity and aura. Or to put it differently, the anonymisation which follows from public display draws an absolute border around the artefact that is not to be transgressed and thereby elevates it to a status beyond its original historical function.

²¹ Steedman 2002; Friedrich 2013; Yale 2015.



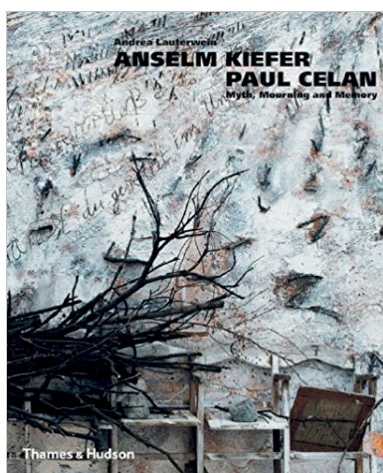
Fig. 6: Permanent exhibition in the Museum of Modern Literature, Marbach, named 'The Soul' ('Die Seele').

Why exactly are audiences in awe of manuscripts, regardless of their actual value or content? Recent studies in empirical reading research and in cognitive science strongly suggest the importance of our motoric system for human cognition, especially the complex working of our hands. Reading and writing are embodied phenomena and are processed, judged

and memorised differently, depending on whether we read or write on loose paper, in a book, on a screen or on a handheld device.²² Against the backdrop of digitisation, we are becoming aware again of the importance of the artefact character of various 'textual objects'. Manuscripts are the most radical illustration of the fact that these objects resist a

complete recording in terms of metadata. Artists such as Anselm Kiefer – and many others, for that matter – have experimented with the combination of writing and pictures for decades (Figs 7a and 7b); the iconicity of the writing system is not restricted to the calligraphic traditions of the East, but is an everyday feature of such diverse domains as commercials or Instagram accounts.

The rise of the modern manuscript coincided with the debate about the relationship between the spirit and the letter. It belongs to and was, indeed, instrumental in the overcoming of various dualisms, especially of the Cartesian variety. Eighteenth-century authors discussed



Figs 7a and 7b: Walter Smerling (ed.) (2015), *Anselm Kiefer: Die Buchstaben* (Keulen: Wienand), front cover; Andréa Lauterwein (2007), *Anselm Kiefer/Paul Celan: Myth, Mourning and Memory* (London: Thames & Hudson), front cover.

²² This is an exciting new paradigm of research. Cf., for example, Dehaene 2010; Mangen 2016; Mangen and van der Weel 2016; Piper 2012.

the advantages and disadvantages of Blackletter and Antiqua typefaces, romantics enthused about arabesques and hieroglyphs – forms of manuscript writing which could be allegorically linked to the nature of all writing, including (typographical) Western alphabets. Today, it is digitisation which has made it obvious that ‘texts’ are not merely abstract semiotic representations.²³ Sales of expensive notebooks and fountain pens have exploded in recent years.²⁴ Under these new conditions, new manuscript cultures, complementary to both print and digital environments, might slowly evolve.

²³ Cf. Hollmann and Schüller-Zwierlein 2014; Latour and Lowe 2014.

²⁴ See, for example, Brocklehurst 2012, Hall 2012, and Cornu 2017.

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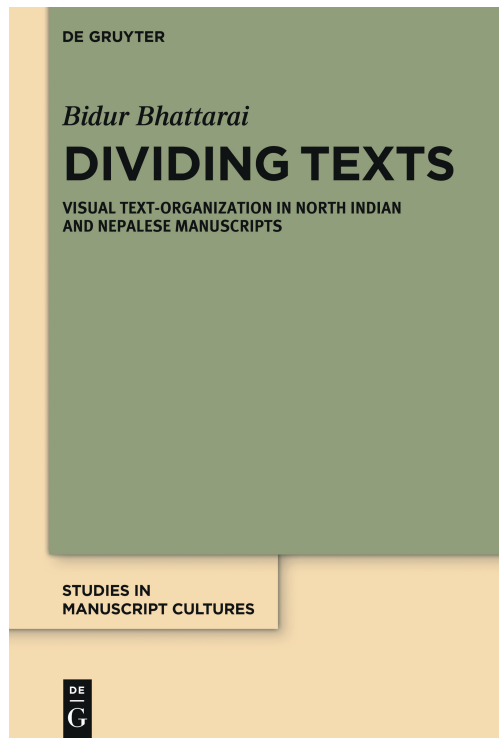
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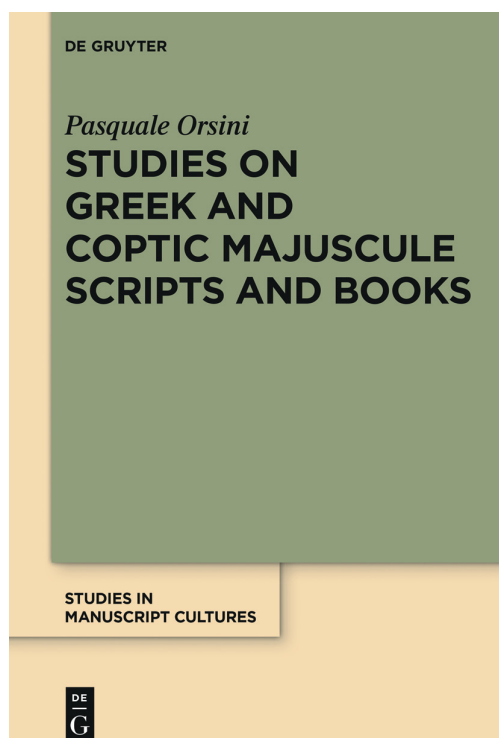
Forthcoming



10 - Dividing Texts: Visual Text-Organization in North Indian and Nepalese Manuscripts by Bidur Bhattarai

The number of manuscripts produced in the Indian sub-continent is astounding and is the result of a massive enterprise that was carried out over a vast geographical area and over a vast stretch of time. Focusing on areas of Northern India and Nepal between 800 to 1300 ^{ce} and on manuscripts containing Sanskrit texts, the present study investigates a fundamental and so far rarely studied aspect of manuscript production: visual organization. Scribes adopted a variety of visual strategies to distinguish one text from another and to differentiate the various sections within a single text (chapters, sub-chapters, etc.). Their repertoire includes the use of space(s) on the folio, the adoption of different writing styles, the inclusion of symbols of various kind, the application of colors (rubrication), or a combination of all these. This study includes a description of these various strategies and an analysis of their different implementations across the selected geographical areas. It sheds light on how manuscripts were produced, as well as on some aspects of their employment in ritual contexts, in different areas of India and Nepal.

Forthcoming



15 - Studies on Greek and Coptic Majuscule Scripts and Books by Pasquale Orsini

The volume contains a critical review of data, results and open problems concerning the principal Greek and Coptic majuscule bookhands, based on previous research of the author, revised and updated to offer an overview of the different graphic phenomena. Although the various chapters address the history of different types of scripts (i.e. biblical majuscule, sloping poitend majuscule, liturgical majuscule, epigraphic and monumental scripts), their juxtaposition allows us to identify common issues of the comparative method of palaeography. From an overall critical assessment of these aspects the impossibility of applying a unique historical paradigm to interpret the formal expressions and the history of the different bookhands comes up, due to the fact that each script follows different paths. Particular attention is also devoted to the use of Greek majuscules in the writing of ancient Christian books. A modern and critical awareness of palaeographic method may help to place the individual witnesses in the context of the main graphic trends, in the social and cultural environments in which they developed, and in a more accurate chronological framework.

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