

Conference Report:

Paradigmes et perspectives de la littérature médiévale comparée
Paradigmen und Perspektiven einer Mediävistischen Komparatistik
Paradigms and Perspectives of a Comparative Medieval Literature

Fribourg Colloquium 2021

08.–10.09.2021, Institut d'études médiéval, University of Fribourg, Switzerland

Organised by medieval literature scholars of the Institut d'études médiévales at the University of Fribourg, ¹ the Fribourg Colloquium 2021 discussed current paradigms, perspectives and methodologies in Comparative Medieval Literature Studies. Specialists from a range of medieval disciplines from 7 countries converged physically and virtually in Fribourg to present their research and reflections on comparative themes. The contributions will be published in the book series *Scrinium Friburgense* by 2023 and can then be read in full. The following detailed account of the conference documents only the core issues and theses of the papers given at the conference, and outlines the main features of the discussions that followed them.

The Fribourg Colloquium was introduced by one of the organisers; Cornelia Herberichs outlined the background for the conference by describing a lack of attention to Comparative Medieval Studies within the Comparative scientific community. On the one hand, the relevance of comparative approaches for the study of medieval literature has been apparent from the beginnings of this field; questions concerning the transmission and translations of literary texts as well as the transfer of cultural and technical knowledge constitute an important foundation for the work of many scholars in Medieval Studies. On the other hand, as Caroline D. Eckhardt noted in 2004, despite the thriving body of medievalist research on comparative themes, there is a certain lack of visibility, insofar as Medieval Studies seem

¹ Hugo Bizzari (Filología hispánica), Paolo Borsa (Letteratura e filologia italiana), Elisabeth Dutton (English Philology), Cornelia Herberichs (Germanistische Mediävistik), Martin Rohde (managing director of the IEM), Marion Uhlig (Langues et littératures françaises du Moyen Âge).

often to be »taking place outside named associations and journals« of the Comparative discipline.² One of the reasons that Medieval Comparative Studies are rarely grouped with Comparative Studies could be that, in the twenty-first century, scholars of Comparative Studies see themselves as part of a »presentist discipline«, and are »preoccupied with objects of knowledge and kinds of discourse that entail direct engagement with the social and political issues of our own times«. ³ With reference to the first academic journal devoted to Comparative Literature Studies, the *Acta Comparationis Litteratura Universalis*, founded in 1877, and one of its founding editors, the Hungarian Germanist Hugo Meltzl, Herberichs compared the status of Medieval Studies within the Comparative discipline then and now. In his essay ›Preliminary Tasks of Comparative Literature‹ Meltzl counts the comparative study of medieval literature among the tasks of Comparative Literature as a universalistic »science of the future« (»Zukunftswissenschaft«), and recognizes that research in medieval literary traditions has a significant impact on the understanding of political affairs of his own time. By contrast, today there seems to be little concern about the relevance of Medieval Comparative Studies for current intercultural discourses. One of the aims of the Fribourg Colloquium was to incite a discussion about the ways in which the study of Medieval Literature, History and Art History can reciprocally motivate reflections on the methodology of General and Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies which are devoted to modernity. Another aim was to promote explicit discussion of the paradigms and perspectives of medievalists' comparative work. This was also to confirm that the historical and cultural peculiarities of the medieval period could contribute decisively to the improvement and differentiation of comparative categories such as ›alterity‹, ›historicity‹, and a historically differentiated definition of the concept of ›culture‹.

For the organisers, two peculiarities of Medieval History and Literature formed a focal point for the Colloquium's comparative discussions: the first was the materiality and mediality of medieval manuscript culture (Section 1), and the second, the crucial role of the Latin language as a trans-regional *lingua franca* and a driving force for exchange and innovation beyond linguistic borders (Section 2). A third important aspect of the Colloquium

² Caroline D. Eckhardt: Old Fields, New Corn, and Present Ways of Writing about the Past, in: Haun Saussy (ed.): Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization. The American Comparative Literature Association Report on the State of the Discipline 2004, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 2006 p. 139–154, p. 140. A similar picture is produced in Ursula Heise (ed.): Futures of Comparative Literature. ACLA State of the Discipline report, Brill: London, New York 2017.

³ Eckhardt (a.a.O.), p. 140.

was methodological reflection on Comparative Studies in a historical perspective (Section 3).

In her introduction to the **First Section**, *Codices Compared: Manuscript Cultures from a Comparative Perspective*, **Marion Uhlig** emphasised the importance of material aspects for a Medieval Comparative Literature. Research on literary texts that were transmitted, translated and appropriated across linguistic borders in the Middle Ages cannot be limited to linguistic variation. For Uhlig it is also crucial to include aspects of palaeography and codicology, for example the *mise en page*, text-image relationships, illustration and rubrication techniques etc. Moreover, as Uhlig stated, traces left by manuscript readers could also be fruitful for comparative research. These material aspects can inform us today about the significance of cultural contacts and exchanges in the Middle Ages. Finally, in order to be able to assess linguistic variation as precisely as possible, Uhlig pointed out the necessity for scholars to study the original manuscripts when engaging in Comparative Studies, and not simply work with modern editions.

In his paper **Fabio Zinelli** (Philologie romane, École pratique des hautes études Paris): *Langue et littérature ou ›scripta et littérature‹: un paradigme nouveau pour l'histoire littéraire*, made the case that, unlike in modern times, where the political force of language is related to the ›discourse‹ in the Foucaultian sense, for the Middle Ages the *scripta*, thus the spelling and grammar, equates to the discourse. Zinelli discussed on the one hand the different factors creating change in a *scripta*, and on the other hand the stability a *scripta* preserves. For Zinelli, a possible formalisation of the model-/copy relationship is provided by the structuralist concept of Diasystème, which serves to describe linguistic variance concerning two closely related languages. In the medieval continuum of romance languages, Zinelli used the concept of ›translation zones‹ (Emily Apter) to focus on two main linguistic and cultural borders: the moving frontier of the Mediterranean and the geopolitical border between Catalonia and the Languedoc. He illustrated his claim that in medieval culture *scripta* and *discours* were inseparable with various case studies, among others focussing on the transmission of the *Histoire ancienne*, the formation of cyclical narrative structures such as the *Tristan en prose*, and the transmission of religious literature in the networks of communities or religious orders within the discursive continuum of the Catalan-Occitan *scripta*. – The **discussion** took up the question of further possible common issues between linguistic and literary studies in a comparative perspective, the possible role of the concept

of Diasystème for constructing stemmas of manuscripts, and the significance of linguistically mixed *scriptae*. Concerning the need for a precise terminology, the boundary between ›dialects‹ and ›languages‹, and the concept of a ›standard language‹ in the Middle Ages were questioned. The question was also raised whether and in relation to which stage of the fabrication of a manuscript one could speak of a ›koiné‹ in regard to medieval *scripta*.

Stefan Abel (Germanistische Mediävistik, Universität Bern), *Paläographische Zugänge zu den altfranzösischen Vorlagen von Wolframs Parzival*, demonstrated the importance of taking into account codicological aspects when aiming to identify the written source of an adaptation of a literary text. Using the example of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* (c. 1200), a German adaptation of the unfinished *Conte du Graal* by Chrétien de Troyes and of parts of the *Première Continuation*, Abel discussed how palaeographic and codicological observations can support the arguments of textual equivalence. Whereas up to now researchers in the field of German Studies had mainly considered content-related, motivic and linguistic criteria for identifying the source manuscript, Abel expanded the field of research by examining palaeographical indications. The use of capitals at the beginning of verses, certain abbreviations and the use of lombards etc. in a manuscript source may have had an influence on the manuscript design of an adapted version in another language. - In the **discussion**, possible models of how authors, translators and *scriptoria* may have interacted in the adaptation processes of written sources were discussed. From a comparative perspective, Abel's argument also raised further questions about the cultural specificity of concepts and models such as authorship and adaptation.

The paper of **Darwin Smith** (Littérature et histoire médiévale, LAMOP – Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), *Le théâtre ›médiéval‹ en ›France‹: ce que disent les manuscrits*, explored characteristics of French medieval play manuscripts. At first Smith drew attention to textual repetitions that were indicated by *marginalia* in the manuscripts. Smith posited that this practice of repetition had parallels in the liturgy, where repeating a phrase or a chant with slight variation can intensify the words expressed. Studying this textual specificity in French play manuscripts, as for example in the *Ystoire de la destruccion de Troyes le Grant* by Jacques Milet, could help explain analogous phenomena in German play scripts, as Smith illustrated comparatively with the example of a textual repetition in the *Donaueschinger Passionsspiel*. Finally, in his lecture Smith analysed the performative function of the so-called *crochets alinéaires*, a kind of stage direction written

in the margins of some play manuscripts. Drawing on these handwritten signs, Smith discussed the possible import and transfer of a technique of glossing from the domain of learned into the domain of vernacular literature. – In the **discussion** of Smith’s paper, the question was raised how a pan-European perspective on plays could make apparent analogous functions of manuscripts: with reference to the only surviving French conductor’s book, the *Abrégé* of Mons (Bibliothèque de l’Université de Mons, MS 1086) and its counterpart in a German conductor’s manuscript, the *Frankfurter Dirrigierrolle*, is it possible to discern international conventions and traditions for the production of different types of play scripts? The comparative view was also regarded as fruitful insofar as historical sources from different countries can provide information about practices of performance, which were supra-regional.

Jessica Brantley (Medieval English, Yale University): *Books of Hours in Comparative Perspective*, outlined in her paper that a comparative consideration of books of hours revealed the limitations of imagining a monolithic pan-European culture. Regarding the multilingual texture of some of the books of hours also makes clear that this cultural archive cannot be carved up simply according to nation or language. As a case-study in intermedial comparison, Brantley examined in her paper a late thirteenth-century book of hours from England, Walters MS W.102, which incorporates texts, images, and written music. With special attention to line-filling images and the complex techniques of *mise-en-page*, Brantley demonstrated how a textual page can become a visual one. A media-comparative approach can therefore reveal that a categorical distinction between the two art forms is impossible to maintain. – Among other aspects, the **discussion** focussed on the role of punctuation and line fillers for interaction with readers and for the vocalicity of reading aloud, but also on their potentially mnemonic function. Images of instruments within the prayer book might even represent sound. Another question was related to the omnipresence of worldly images in some books of hours, which might indicate that the manuscript offers a co-presence of practices of meditation and practices of devotion.

William Duba (Philosophie, Universität Freiburg), *The First Word: Inaugural Speeches in Universities and Mendicant Studia*, engaged with inaugural speeches, the so-called *principia*. This genre of speech is best known for the *principia in theologia*, which constituted the first formal act following the promotion of a Master in theology and marked the beginning of his magisterial lectures on theology, but similar *principia* existed also for

lectures on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, and they often appeared at the beginning of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century commentaries on the *Sentences*. Since the *Sentences* were taught both at the universities and at the mendicant *studia*, Duba's comparative study of *principia* on the *Sentences* at Paris and in Florence at the time of Dante revealed the different nature of teaching and society in the two centres. The comparative approach, moreover, revealed the inflections in the presentation and teaching of scholastic thought outside the traditional centres of Paris, Oxford, and Bologna, identifying characteristics unique to each milieu. Comparing the speeches of Remigio de Girolami given in Paris and in Florence makes it evident for Duba that the sermons were adapted to the public given. – The **discussion** of Duba's paper focussed on material aspects of the manuscripts and the different kinds of interaction of author and public in the *principia*. It was pointed out that the comparative approach revealed that the textual differences of the *principia* can only hardly serve to extrapolate ›national‹ peculiarities, but could indicate different cultural situations in terms of the degree of conventionality.

Guillemette Bolens (Medieval English Literature and Comparative Literature, Université de Genève), *Embodied Cognition, Kinesic Intelligence, and Comparative Literary Analysis in Medieval Studies*, analysed text-image relationships in the Utrecht Psalter (AD 820–835), the Harley Psalter (11th c.), the Eadwine Psalter (mid-12th c.), and the Great Canterbury Psalter. Based on the premise that neurophysiological cognition is grounded in sensorimotoricity, Bolens argued that perceptive simulation has also to be taken into account when interpreting images from former epochs in order to avoid anachronism. According to Bolens, a comparative approach of kinesis in literature and art helps not only address readers' and audiences' cognitive participation, but also account for historical traces of cognitive acts, perceptual simulations, and kinesic intelligence in medieval works. As Bolens demonstrated, attention to the question of perceptual simulations may help our understanding of one strand in the refined pictorial strategies developed by the Carolingian artists of the Utrecht Psalter and the Canterbury artists who responded to their art. Innovative iconographic solutions for the visualization of psalms could therefore be understood as traces of perceptive simulations. – In the **discussion** of Bolens' paper the question was raised as to what other contemporary practices could have influenced the innovative iconographic patterns. It was stated that the text-image-relationship indicates a very precise understanding and a high level of reflection on the text. The pictures were discussed as being at the same

time allegorical exegesis of and commentary on the text. It was generally noted that in order to historicise adequately text-image analysis in a comparative perspective, the interaction of various factors should be taken into account: iconographic influences, pre-texts and anthropological universals.

The question of the significance of anthropological universals for comparative research was also addressed in the evening lecture of **Michael Borgolte** (Geschichtswissenschaft, Humboldt Universität Berlin): ›*Das Mittelalter*‹ in neuen europäischen und globalen Herausforderungen. *Der Vergleich in der Historiographie*. Borgolte surveyed prominent historiographical works of Comparative Studies (among others by Marc Bloch and Otto Hinze) and contrasted their concepts of Comparative Studies with approaches from Literary Studies. Utilizing the example of foundations, Borgolte discussed the specific historical benefits of comparative research, namely the fact that intercultural comparison not only serves to illustrate similarities or irreversible cultural diversity, but also often allows insights about global historical contexts. In conclusion, Borgolte also pointed out both the methodological and practical challenges of his comparative approach compared to more regionally historically oriented or more traditional approaches.

The **Second Section** was devoted to *Comparative Approaches at the Intersection of Latin and Vernacular Languages*. **Hugo Bizzarri** and **Paolo Borsa** opened the section by underlining that there is no other period in literary history where translation has played such an important role, whereby it must be noted that the language of the author, the translator and of the copyist of a text intersect. At the same time, the languages of the medieval period are neither a homogeneous nor a stable language system, which is true of Latin as well. Bizzarri and Borsa also discussed the political relevance of language, recalling the first grammar of a modern European language, published in 1492 by Antonio de Nebrija: The vernacular Castilian grammar was structured after the model of Latin grammars and is therefore an example for the intersection of Latin and vernacular. Borsa and Bizzari explained that at the same time Nebrija's *Gramática de la lengua castellana* serves as an example that language is »a partner of the empire«, insofar as the grammar book imposed the vernacular languages on colonized peoples. In their Introduction, the co-organisers of the Colloquium also pleaded for a change of focus from researching to teaching Comparative Medieval Literature. Usually restrained by the boundaries of ›national‹ literatures and languages, University curricula often fall short in informing students about Comparative

Medieval Literature. This affects the individual disciplines in different ways. For the ›Romanistes‹, for example, the loss of the umbrella of Romance philology is serious: national literatures probably gain in terms of number of students and academic positions, but in the medium and long term the gain is a loss. Borsa and Bizzari concluded that curricula that involve the integration of different languages, literatures and disciplines, and that provide students with the indispensable tools, also in terms of the historical and cultural contextualisation of literary phenomena, for perfectly informed comparative activities, in the long term would also have an important impact on societies.

Johannes Bartuschat (Italienische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Zürich), dedicated his paper to an enormously successful historiographical text: *Lire, traduire et réécrire les historiens romains entre le XIIIe siècle et le XIVe siècle: Li Fet des Romains en France et en Italie*. He elaborated in particular how different cultures saw themselves in the mirror of Roman history. Italian translations of the French *Faits*, which are based on a Latin source, were very numerous, but vary greatly in length and content, so that in the end none reproduces the French version completely. In his paper Bertuschat demonstrated that, in choosing a comparative approach, a continuum between faithful translation and rewriting has to be taken into account and scaled, and also a great fluidity between different categories of appropriation of a source model. – The **discussion** focussed on the question of whether, in the process of vulgarization of knowledge, a translation or adaptation could also serve as a reflection of the political system, for example concerning military and political vocabulary; this question assumes particular importance in the context of the Angevin court. It was also asked whether it was possible to determine the concrete influence of an adaptation in regard to the knowledge of Latin terms of political concepts, since the Italian translations are based not on Latin but on French models. The discussion also touched on possible different reception interests, which could be political-ideological, but also epic-entertaining: reception interests might also have been different depending to the geographical distribution (e.g. the manuscripts of the Tuscany).

Elizabeth Tyler (Medieval English Literature, University of York): *Entanglements: Vernacular Literary Cultures in the Latin West (c.350–c.1150)* presented in her paper part of a collaborative project in which she investigates the vernacular literary cultures of Latin Europe from late Antiquity to the twelfth century as interconnected elite phenomena rather than as the beginning of national literatures. Therefore, Tyler pleads for research that is

irrespective of what have become modern national boundaries, but situates the texts in the political context of their transmission: By choosing an ›entangled‹ approach, regarding the process of vernacularization as a series of dynamic, contingent, non-linear interactions, she also situates Europe within wider geographical horizons. In a series of detailed text analyses, e.g. of Otfried's *Evangelienbuch*, *Eulalie* and the *Ludwigslied*, Tyler demonstrated that entanglement is a structural feature of the writing of vernaculars in the Early and Central Middle Ages. – The **discussion** deepened various issues raised in the paper, such as the historical validity of various linguistic or political concepts like ›Old High German‹ or the medieval notion of ›England‹. Furthermore, the comparability to other entangled texts was discussed, such as *Beowulf*, *Waltharius*, or the *Strassburg Oaths*. Another focus in the discussion was the relationship of dependence and of independence of *translatio imperii* and *translatio studii* in the Early Middle Ages.

Rossana Guglielmetti (Letteratura latina medievale e umanistica, Università degli Studi di Milano): *La Navigatio Brendani et ses versions vernaculaires: les frontières nébuleuses entre tradition et remaniement*, demonstrated in her paper the complex textual history of the widely disseminated legend of Saint Brendan. For Guglielmetti it often seems impossible to describe the cultural profile of a certain translator, since each new version of the Brendan legend represents a fusion of both tradition and innovation, and because of the difficulty in discerning in which phase of an adaptation process, and by whom, additions were made. Moreover, polygenetic textual histories must also be taken into account, considering the existence of clear similarities between some Italian and some German versions which cannot be traced back to a common Latin source. Guglielmetti considered also what the aim and form of a critical edition should be from a comparative point of view. – In the **discussion** the question was raised of the quantitative proportions in which the different vernacular traditions were transmitted, and how the differences were to be explained. The paper's example of a Pisan translation that was influenced by a French version also raised some interest in the discussion. Moreover, it became apparent that influences from other Latin works (e.g. geographical, legendary works) and the survival of the ›matière de Brendan‹ in hagiography might be worth further investigation from a comparative perspective.

Christian Høgel (Byzantine Literature, Syddansk Universitet), in his paper *The Rise and Reappearance of Greek as an Imperial Language – and as Model for Latin*, proposed to write

a history of language by using an approach different from traditional ones. Høgel focussed especially on the status of an imperial language and its ability to live beyond the time of the empire. In his sense, an imperial language gains this status by canonization and through its use for acts and texts of self-representation of an empire. Moreover, for Høgel it is typical that new imperial languages often rise on the model of other ones. Høgel also proposed a differentiation between an imperial language and a ›secondary imperial language‹, which he illustrated with the example of ancient Greek. Furthermore, Høgel formulated a historized definition of the concept ›World Literature‹, which applied to the Middle Ages in the sense of literature that is translated from one imperial language to another. Using the example of ›Balaam and Josaphat‹, Høgel defined World Literature in critical discussion with the definitions of David Damrosch, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, Alexander Beecroft and others as ›trans-imperial literature‹. – In the **discussion** the concept of ›empire‹ was discussed, and also the implications of the centrality of power for cultural processes. The temporal and procedural dimensions of an empire attracted much attention in the discussion. The paper also elicited the question of how to study literary transfer between cultural borders that are not also political borders. In engaging with the proposed definition of World Literature, the mechanisms and power structures and also the qualities necessary for a text to become trans-imperial were being discussed.

The **First Round Table**, which took place at the end of the second day, picked up on various aspects of the first two sections of the Colloquium and discussed overarching questions, subjects, and hypotheses. **Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann** (Lateinische Philologie des Mittelalters, Universität Zürich), **Cédric Giraud** (Langue et littérature latines médiévales, Université de Genève), and **Karin Schlapbach** (Klassische Philologie, Universität Freiburg) gave short keynote speeches which were followed by a discussion with the audience. The Round Table touched among others on the following three focal points: the status of Latin, the concept of ›culture‹, and the notion of ›Comparative Literature‹. 1) *The status of Latin*: Under discussion was the applicability of the concept ›Hiéroglossie‹ to compare the relations between Latin and vernacular languages in relation to ›entanglements‹ and imperialism. Techniques and functions of auto-representation of Latin, which was both a transnational and transethnic language, but also a regional language, were also investigated. Translations were to be examined and located within the spectrum of appropriation and assimilation. Also under discussion was a comparison with the present

time, in which English is predominant and under certain conditions triggers counter-movements against this form of cultural dominance. It was also discussed what consequences result for Comparative Studies from the fact that the diffusion of Latin texts changed decisively in the age of printing; moreover, bookhistorical aspects should to be taken into account when discussing the relations between Latin and vernaculars. 2.) *The concept of ›culture‹*: The discussion focussed on the differentiation of cultures and languages. With which categories can we distinguish cultures within a language, which would form the basis of a comparative approach within a speech community? Also, it was stated that the understanding of ›Latin cultures‹ is to be distinguished from ›Latin literary traditions‹. What could be the task of Medieval Comparative Studies here: Is the comparison of a classical Latin text with a medieval Latin text part of Comparative Studies? 3.) *The notion of ›Comparative Studies‹*: It was stated that not every comparison is ›comparative‹, even if a special feature of Medieval Studies is precisely that it has a very capacious understanding of what ›literature‹ is, and has also a strong tradition in interdisciplinarity. Extending Comparative Studies to other intermedial studies in the fields such as music, visual arts, theatre, etc. could thus tie in with already established medievalist traditions and practices, but it would have to be considered whether a limitation to one terrain or to central points of comparative work would have to be a premise. The question that then arises is: What is the conceptual distinction between interdisciplinarity, history of reception and Comparative Studies? The question of whether literature can be regarded as a system at all (in the sense of Claudio Guillén) also proved worthy of discussion. One task would be to differentiate what is (or should remain) actually incommensurable, because the first step of comparing is to make things comparable. It was stated that the principle of comparison does not define the criteria of its possibilities; they depend on the functions and aims of the comparison. Medieval Comparative Studies should be aware that they build a bridge by comparing or neglect connections by not comparing. At the end of the First Round Table, the participants reflected on the multilingualism of the ongoing discussion itself, that made evident how the use of different terminologies can invoke different intellectual worlds. It was stated that the different approaches resulted from the different subjects as well as from the different disciplinary traditions. The discussion led to the question of how and under what circumstances different methods could be combined in the future.

The **Third Section**, entitled *Comparative Medieval Studies in the Twenty-First Century: Tasks and Visions*, was opened by a short introduction by **Elisabeth Dutton** and **Cornelia Herberichs**. They pointed out that for them the aim of the Colloquium could not be to define a unique methodology of Comparative Literature, but rather to ask what relevance the research results of medievalists have beyond their own discipline. When scholars examine texts and literature across language and cultural boundaries, they make a number of preliminary decisions about what distinguishes between two cultures, be it language, religion, learning. These preliminary decisions need to be discussed in an interdisciplinary approach. Herberichs and Dutton reflected on the possibility of articulating common interests across different disciplines by using shared terminologies. One of the difficulties would lie in the fact that this would need to happen without neglecting traditional disciplinary identities, which would nevertheless would stay important and meaningful for university structures as also for student formation, research and school teaching.

Andreas Kablitz (Romanistik/Komparatistik, Universität zu Köln) and **Maximilian Benz** (Germanistische Mediävistik, Universität Bielefeld), in their paper *Der fremde Text. Zur kulturgenerierenden Leistung der Rezeption biblischer Texte als Grundlegung mittelalterlicher Kultur*, outlined a research program that conceived of the Middle Ages not in terms of a replacement of the ancient culture, but as the product of a symbiosis. From this perspective, Christian theology appears to be an adaptation of biblical tenets to the philosophical thinking of antiquity and vice versa. For Kablitz and Benz, this dialectic continues to be valid today. They differentiated various effects of this symbiosis by offering two case studies, one of the medieval receptions of the *Barlaam und Josaphat*-legend and another of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. Both speakers moreover challenged the concept of Renaissance (also in the plural: Renaissances), identifying it as one-sided and not adequately accounting to historical complexities. – The **discussion** raised questions about the similarities and differences between the two case studies in relation to the paper's main thesis of intercultural symbiosis. Turning attention to the Reformation, it was moreover discussed whether Protestant theology tends to disintegrate this symbiosis. The analysis of the concept of ›Renaissance‹ was deepened in the discussion by considering in what respects the shifts in the eleventh and twelfth centuries raise the problem of periodisation respectively. Finally, a proposal was formulated to distinguish in a comparative perspective the biblical text in the Western world from its counterpart in the Orthodox world.

Jan-Dirk Müller (Germanistische Mediävistik, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München): *Der fehlende Urtext*, threw new light on the specifics of literary transmission in a transitional phase between orality and literality with the example of the *Nibelungenlied*. Developing details of his current research project, he demonstrated, by analysing the entire manuscript transmission including the fragments of this heroic epic, that already at an early stage textual stability on the level of the plot structure contrasted with a great variance on the level of the concrete wording of the text. Müller emphasised that general structural conditions had to be taken into account, to which literary texts in different languages and in different cultures are subject in certain historical phases, and which can only be described and explained comparatively. With reference to Greek, Indian, Jewish, and Egyptian literatures, Müller proved that surprising parallels exist with the evidence of the transmission of German heroic epic, insofar as oral and written practices intersect in each case. With his conclusion that textual variance need not be the result of oral performance, he decisively turned away from models of literary transmission that have hitherto been unquestioned. For Müller, Comparative Literature Studies has among others the task of lining up similar literary or cultural phenomena at different historical times or from different geographical regions, and studying the premises of their parallels. The **discussion** of the paper opened up a series of reflections on the semantic dimensions of textual variance and on the temporal extension of its occurrences. It was stated that stabilisation processes, like the stabilisation of the *Nibelungenlied* from the fourteenth century onwards, allowed informative insights into the historical contexts of text transmission. The paper elicited also the question about the augmentation of epic texts due to knowledge of oral sagas, especially in late medieval manuscripts. The discussion also picked up on the specificities of the transmission of heroic epic, the oral poetry formulaic tradition, and cultural differences of writing, with the example of Italian, where the occurrence of literality is different to German speaking regions, and with reference to the *Chanson de Roland*.

The paper of **Victor Millet** (Filología Alemana, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela): *Chrétien de Troyes and Hartmann von Aue. A special relation revisited*, was devoted to the second Arthurian novel of Chrétien, *Yvain*, and its German adaptation. For Millet, the case of Hartmann's adaptation of this early Arthurian novel poses special problems for comparatistic research insofar as the two authors are close in time and place, and have a similar audience. Millet problematized in a critical overview terms and

interpretations used by former research, such as the term *adaptation courtoise*, and the concept of ›irony‹. For Millet the comedic structure of the *Yvain* seems to be a core element for interpreting the story correctly. Since irony also characterizes Hartmann's text, to Millet this is a clear sign of his kindred understanding of Chrétien's literary strategy. The aporetic juxtaposition of love and chivalry, Millet suggested, is not solved in the two novels, but simply mitigated by the humorous tone, yet with partly different strategies. The **discussion** of the paper focussed among others on the cultural conditions to produce and to recognize irony. From the point of view of a foreign culture or from a certain historical distance, it appeared debatable how irony can be analytically studied. Moreover, linguistic irony could not always be transposed into another language. Other points in the discussion were the literary negotiations of the problem of integrating an individual into society, which was also a crucial subject of both *Iwein*-novels. Finally the question was discussed how to identify the concrete manuscript source of Hartmann, in order to be able to judge his handling of Chrétien's text adequately from a comparative perspective.

Michele Bacci (Kunstgeschichte des Mittelalters, Universität Freiburg): *Comparative Perspectives on Medieval Arts: Limits and Advantages*, made the point that, given the interconnectedness of artworks with each other, many traditional methodologies of art history, like those of Bernard Berenson or Erwin Panofsky, are distinctively comparative. Recent scholarship, according to Bacci, tries to understand art in a global perspective, and he outlined two methods prevailing in the current discourse. The one compares pre-modern artistic phenomena on a world scale even when they are mutually unrelated, in order to work out new interpretive frameworks; the other is interested in verifiable facts of interaction and mutual interchange of different cultures. In his case study, Bacci explored the limits and advantages of the two perspectives by comparing townscapes, architectures and artworks of the two cities Toledo and Famagusta. Both places were at the time meeting points of multicultural networks, and were home to a composite population, different languages, rites and beliefs. Bacci demonstrated that between the two cities parallel developments can be supposed that were independent from each other as well as developments due to direct connections; the paper showed therefore that art history should not regard the two possibilities as alternatives, but face the complexity of the issue of Comparative Art Studies. Based on some of the concepts the paper touched upon, the **discussion** raised questions about spatial concepts like ›centre‹ vs. ›periphery‹. But other terms and metaphors which

art history traditionally uses to work comparatively were also discussed: The concept of ›rhizomatic‹ structures, as well as metaphors such as ›influence‹, ›translation‹, ›adaptation‹, ›appropriation‹, ›transformation‹, ›recreation‹. Questions of the impact of geographical conditions on similarities and differences of artistic styles were also deepened in the discussion. It was stated that parallels can be evidence of the fact that similar aesthetic answers could be given to similar questions and needs.

Rüdiger Zymner (Allgemeine Literaturwissenschaft, Bergische Universität Wuppertal): *Mediävale Weltliteratur*, argued that the role of the concept of ›World Literature‹ is central to Comparative Studies dealing with modern literature. Approaching the question of ›Paradigms and Perspectives of Comparative Medieval Literature‹ from a point of view of the ›Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft‹ which is mainly occupied with modern literature, he pondered in what way one could speak of a medieval ›World Literature‹. Zymner emphasised the great importance of comparative perspectives for Medieval Studies, and underlined and illustrated that it would be worthwhile to extend these studies to non-European contexts. Moreover, Zymner pleaded for a concept of Comparative Medieval Studies that must not be reduced to a science of comparison, but to reflect on general principles of literature. In the **discussion** the medieval concept of ›literature‹ was contrasted with the modern concept of literature. It was also discussed whether the models of medieval World Literature and modern World Literature were commensurable.

Sabine Haupt (Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft, Universität Freiburg): *Kanon und Kanonen. Vom Politischen (in) der Komparatistik. Oder: Warum die moderne Komparatistik lieber aus- als vergleicht*, opened her paper with a differentiation between different types of comparison: the inductive and the deductive comparison. After an overview of different models of Comparative Literature, she contrasted theories of the universality of comparability with models of incommensurability and alterity. She emphasised that the method of comparison creates its object, and that Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies scholars are not neutral observers of objectively existing relations. The etymological relationship between ›canon‹ and ›cannons‹ illustrates for Haupt the reality of the book trade, namely that market, might and manner are linked together. This alliance of political and cultural hegemony should be overridden by modern Comparative Studies, according to Haupt, by balancing (›ausgleichen‹) rather than merely comparing (›vergleichen‹). In view of the practical limits already imposed by the limited linguistic

competence of each scholar, Haupt stated that a truly ›balanced‹ Comparative Literature cannot be achieved, but at least a counterweight should be set by following the principle of mindfulness. **Discussion:** Questions were asked concerning the valuations implied by the different types of comparisons, which were defined by Haupt. The possibilities of allowing ›mindfulness‹ (›Achtsamkeit‹) to prevail were discussed in the context of school and university teaching. It was also asked whether ›ausgleichen‹ could also lead to ›levelling‹, in a negative sense. Hegemonies that arise through translations were also discussed. In view of the utopian aspect of ›Ausgleich‹ through Comparative Studies, the proposal was discussed whether this concept might not be able to do justice to literature in reality, but at least express a researcher's perspective and vision.

The **Second Round Table** closed the last section and provided also the occasion to look back at the conference as a whole. The participants **Jens Herlth** (Slavistik, Universität Freiburg), **Lars Boje Mortensen** (Ancient and Medieval Cultural History, University of Southern Denmark), and **Michael Stolz** (Germanistische Mediävistik, Universität Bern) gave short input statements that led to a discussion open to the floor. Among others three subjects were treated in the Round table: Methodology, Institutionalism, and Political aspects of a Medieval Comparative Literature, past and present. 1.) *Methodology*: The discussion began with the observation that two basic motivations for Comparative Studies generally could be distinguished: Either researchers conduct groundwork from which they formulate a research question that extends beyond a single field or philology, or researchers are engaged with a general problem or hypothesis and draw in comparative material. The motivation will influence the choice of methodology, and, closely related to this, the choice of terminology. The participants stated that a plenitude of metaphors have been used during the Colloquium, and the advantages and disadvantages of some of them were discussed, like ›connection‹ vs. ›entanglement‹, ›transfer‹ vs. ›translation‹, ›rhizom‹ and ›paradigm‹. It was highlighted that every metaphor used makes a researcher or student of Comparative Studies see and interpret things differently. It was stated that scientific research cannot do without metaphors, but all kind of studies, perhaps especially Cultural Studies, had to be aware that their view is shaped by them. In this context it was seen as significant that the metaphor of ›influence‹ had been used extremely sparingly at the Fribourg Colloquium. For the participants in the discussion, this was an indication that nowadays Comparative Studies use a different language. There was a consensus that because of the differences of motivations,

cognitive interests, subjects and cases no single methodology should be dominant for Comparative literature as a whole, and that Comparative Medieval Studies should also shape the discipline General Literary Studies. 2.) *Institutionality*: The discussion touched on the given academic reality, where course schemes often do not allow the teaching of Medieval Studies as Comparative. The circumstances under which a Comparative approach would be reasonable in language teachers was also debated. Furthermore, for the formation of future University teachers it is crucial to train specialists in one field, in order to avoid superficiality. It was agreed that interdisciplinarity had to be distinguished from trans-disciplinarity. It was also stated that in order to compare methodological practices it is important to understand the ›thought style‹ (›Denkstil‹, cf. Ludwig Fleck) of other disciplines. It was stated that the situation for Medieval Studies at universities is very different in different countries, and that this should be taken into account in the planning of international networks on Comparative Medieval Literature. 3.) *Political aspects of a Medieval Comparative Literature, past and present*: The question was raised as to what Medieval Studies could learn from research history like the work of Ernst Robert Curtius, who wanted to move Comparative Literature to General Literature Studies by employing the concept of ›Topoi‹, which was incited by Aby Warburg's ›Pathosformel‹. It was stated that Curtius' book bears the mark of its own time of conflict in World War II; nowadays, since contemporary challenges are global in nature, researchers tend to aim at a global literature. The contribution of a Medieval Comparative Studies to this goal could be to provide anthropological insights. It was stated that there were also risks when the Middle Ages serve (or are misrepresented) in Reenactments and so-called ›revivals‹ of the Middle Ages. There is a special risk in national and political contexts: Postcolonial Studies are in this context a very important source of inspiration for medievalists, but can also serve tendencies towards nationalism through retrospective national projections. It would therefore be important for medievalists to present the Middle Ages as complex, polyglot, polycultural, and polyreligious. In doing so, in contrast to current trends in Comparative Studies concerned with modern literature, it is debatable if it is indeed always important to stress the globality of the Middle Ages. It was stated that Europe (in the wider, medieval sense of ›Europe‹) is and has always been a legitimate subject of Medieval Comparative Studies. It was asked whether medievalists sometimes lack sufficient self-confidence in describing the Middle Ages in all its peculiarities and complexities, and tend to take a

defensive position. What happens to the Middle Ages in public history, in cultural politics, in current political discourses, is also a task for Medieval Comparative Studies, which has to address itself to these processes.

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