

6th International Conference ALIENTO

(Linguistic and intercultural analysis of short sapiential statements and of their transmission East/West, West/East)

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Nancy - Paris 15 - 16 - 17 March 2016

“Out of Spain: Posterity and Dissemination of the Aliento corpus in Europe and the Mediterranean”

Previous Aliento Conferences examined medieval sapiential corpora in the Iberian Peninsula, the ancient sources of the medieval corpora, the links between proverbs and sapiential literature in the Middle Ages, and addressed the questions of translation and context. The 6th conference will address the posterity of sapiential texts (of the wider Aliento corpus, in Arabic, Hebrew, Latin, Castilian and Catalan) starting from the Iberian Peninsula and their influence in Europe and the Mediterranean.

It is sometimes difficult to trace back the paths of these texts and, even if a great number of proverbs found in contemporary books of proverbs are linked to them or come from them, we generally do not know anything about the way they arrived to us without any changes, nor do we know when the process of moving to orality took place.

In the 15th C. for example, the *Mukhtar al Hikam*, an 11th C. Arabic text, translated into Castilian under the name *Bocados de oro* and into Latin with the title *Liber philosophorum moralium antiquorum* (better known as *Bonium*) was translated into French by Guillaume de Tignonville, then into English (two known translations) and into Provençal. Fragments from this text can be found in Christine de Pisan's *L'épître d'Othea*. How and where do the tradition of the *Mukhtar* and that of the *De vita et moribus philosophorum* attributed to Walter Burley (14th C.), a probable re-elaboration of Diogenes Laertius's *Vita et sententiae philosophorum* (3rd C.), intersect with the Castilian translation of the *De Vita* (F. Crosas Lopez, 2002; 2010)? What link does exist between W. Burley's Latin text, the 15th C. Castilian translation and the *Mukhtar al-Hikam* tradition? What happens then to it?

The editions and translations provide evidence of the importance of these sapiential treatises and books of sentences much after the 15th C. As an example, Antoine Galland publishes, at the end of the 17th C., *Les paroles remarquables, les bons mots et les maximes des Orientaux...* In the same way, the *Tahkemoni*'s chapter of proverbs (maqama 44) is translated into Italian in the 16th C. and printed in Mantova in 1592; it circulated independently with a new title (E. Disperdi, 2009). The al-**Ibshihi**'s book of adâb *al-Mostatraf* (14th C.) circulated extensively in Egypt during the 18th C., it was re-edited in the 19th C. and G. Rat translated it into French.

It seems that a substantial amount of our sapiential texts that popularize philosophical texts and ethical treatises have become of common use. They are intermediate texts that have been much read, translated and printed.

We know little about the moving toward orality: just that the numerous Spanish proverb books circulating in the 16th and 17th C. represents a link of this transmission as well as their oral use by the expelled Jews and Moriscos out of Spain. The task is then to undo the path in order to go back from the Contemporaneous European and

Mediterranean proverbs-books or from the 16th-19th C. important paremiological compilations to our texts. These links exist as some studies on Castilian and Judeo-Spanish proverbs with a focus on diachrony have shown (E. O'Kane; P. Ohayon Benitah; M. C. Varol; A. Oddo...). Nonetheless, the epistemological gap between folklorists on the one side and specialists of the textual traditions on the other is so great that the junction between written and oral literatures remains largely undone and still has to be made (W. Mieder; C. Buridan). Proverbs are mostly studied as part of anthropological or linguistic research (phraseology). It is largely the case of the very rich and lively Arabic proverb repertory, studied only within the frame of dialectology.

We will focus on the posterity of this legacy in order to shed light on the still existing relationships with the ancient/founding texts, to compare the nature of the continuities and changes from one culture to another. We invite researchers to provide some response and ways of better understanding the links and the paths between orality and writing. The perspective will be essentially diachronic and will deal with the transmission of this sapiential heritage in Europe, North Africa, Near and Middle East. The papers will deal with specific brief sapiential statements, proverbs, sapiential texts or compilations. Comparative studies are very welcome.

Workshops will be dedicated to problems of modeling and to the challenge of the multilingual data treatment. We call upon specialists and computer science researchers working in this domain.

Articles will be published in the journal: *ALIENTO – Echanges Sapientiels en Méditerranée*

Abstracts should be submitted by January 15th, 2016 to:

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Description of the ALIENTO project

(Linguistic and intercultural analysis of short sapiential statements and of their transmission East/West, West/East)

In the ninth century, the rich Arab tradition of the *adab* finds its way into Spain, or rather al-Andalus, a country that played a prominent role in the exchange of knowledge from the East to the West in the 11th and 12th centuries especially via the monasteries in the North of the Iberian Peninsula. It is also in al-Andalus where the *adab* literature meets the Jewish sapiential tradition of the Midrashic literature. New collections are composed, including original works from the 10th and 11th centuries, and from the 12th century on, *exempla* and philosophers' sayings are translated into Hebrew, Latin and the Romance languages. Much of this complex heritage is found in the extensive Spanish paremiological literature, which is at its highest in the 16th and 17th centuries, as well as in contemporary Spanish, Judeo-Spanish and Maghrebian collections of proverbs.

Although the main lines of these exchanges are well-known, we still lack specific information on the circulation of these short sapiential statements (our basic research units) as well as on the successive translating choices made by the translators, their cultural reinterpretations or the importance of some loanwords over others. If sapiential textual filiations and translation sequences should be treated cautiously, this is particularly true of the sapiential statements to be found in these texts. Due to the difficulty in understanding them, these volatile elements, whose categorisation varies with time and cultures, have never been the subject of a comprehensive textual study which could recount their sources, circulation and evolution across the different spoken or written languages of the three cultures living in the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle-Ages. The paremiological studies have mostly produced compilations of proverbs (thesauri), critical editions and erudite studies, dedicated to a single work, a single language or a single culture, except for the remarkable ground-breaking work on the *Philosophical Quartet* (1975) by D. Gutas. The few existing databases are for the most part monolingual contemporary corpora of *paremiae* or otherwise have a translation-based perspective.

Therefore the aim of the ALIENTO project is to work out concordances, even partial, close or distant connections, in order to reassess inter-textual relations by comparing a great quantity of data and by interconnecting encoded texts written in different languages.

This is why the project, which needs a close interdisciplinary collaboration between computational researchers (ATILF), linguists and specialists in literature (MSH Lorraine + INALCO and the international network of collaborators), will develop a piece of software transferable to other similar texts to be used with a large reference corpus made up of 8 related texts –582 pages for an estimated 9,570 sapiential statements–, which circulated in the Iberian Peninsula (in Latin, Arabic, Hebrew, Spanish and Catalan).

The produced software will extract and connect short sapiential statements through concordances generated by the specific encoding system scientifically developed and explained in an encoding manual XML-TEI. ATILF will create a multilingual interrogation programme (in French, Spanish and English) of the matched data and will give access online to the ALIENTO corpus annotated texts via the CNRTL in order to ensure a permanent archiving of the texts.

At the end of the project we shall have:

- a body of texts in a multilingual corpus, digitised, tagged in XML/TEI and publicly accessible, linked to a set of data about the texts and their authors.
- a set of short sapiential units with their XML/TEI annotations, accessible free of charge.

- a trilingual questioning interface that will display the concordanced statements contained in these works, with information that could be used to study them, irrespective of the language.
- an encoding methodology and a piece of software for matching data that could be used with other similar corpora.

Considerations arising from the project:

The aim of the project consists in reviewing the role of the Iberian Peninsula in the transfer and exchange of the sapiential knowledge from the East to the West and from the West to the East in the Middle Ages by studying the brief sapiential statements they contain (maxims, sentences, proverbes, aphorisms). The raised issues are:

- 1) Which are the precise links between the exchanged sapiential texts between different languages, different cultures and three religions in the Iberian Peninsula (and Provence) in the Middle Ages?
- 2) What changes were brought about by the translations, re-interpretations and readings, contained in the numerous works and compilations written between the 9th and 15th centuries?
- 3) Starting from the ancient sapiential sources, how do we get to the modern and contemporary Mediterranean collections of proverbs.