## Report on the creation of the Arabic Codicological Glossary

*Arabic Codicological Glossary*: Anne-Marie Edde (CNRS- National Centre for Scientific Research – IRHT: Institute for Textual Research and History), Marie-Genviève Guesdon (BNF- National Library of France) Marc Geoffroy (CNRS – Monotheisms Study Group) with the collaboration of Youssef Baratli (University Paris IV- Sorbonne).

This glossary was conceived several years ago as a result of one observation: although a fundamental working tool permitting the description and scientific study of Western medieval manuscripts (Latin and Greek) has existed since 1985 (Denis Muzerelle, *Codicological Vocabulary: A Methodical Index of French Terms Relating to Manuscripts*, Paris, Editions CEMI, 1985, online at: http://vocabulaire.irht.cnrs.fr/).), nothing comparable existed for Arabic manuscripts. The work in Arabic of Ahmed Chouqui Binebine and Mutapha Taoubi (*Codicological Vocabulary of the Arabic Handwritten Book*, Rabat, Royal Library, 2011 [4<sup>th</sup> edition]) has been of incontestable value, but is far from complete. In English, and from a much more historical perspective, Adam Gacek has published his landmark works on the Arabic vocabulary of the book, in particular *The Arabic Manuscript Tradition: a Glossary of Technical Terms and Bibliography* (Leiden, Brill, 2001), The Arabic Manuscript Tradition: a Glossary of Technical Terms and Bibliography-Supplement (Leiden, Brill, 2008) and *Arabic Manuscripts: a Vademecum for Readers* (Leiden, Boston, Brill, 2009).

We have made extensive use of these works, but always with the unique objective of creating a modern Arabic vocabulary for describing manuscript accessible to all those interested in Arabic manuscripts, whether Arabic- or French-speakers. Therefore, we deliberately did not include terms used by old writers which are no longer in use today.

Largely inspired by the *Codicological Vocabulary* of D. Muzerelle, the *Arabic Codicological Glossary* takes many definitions from it. The user will find not only the translations of French codicological terms in Arabic, but also the definitions in Arabic of these terms, with their technical meanings.

Progress in digital technology allowed us to opt for online publication, which has many advantages. It allows a direct link back to Muzerelle's *Codicological Vocabulary* which has already published a great number of terms online, translated into English, Italian, and Spanish. These two working tools are therefore consultable henceforth within the same programme (provisionally called *Codicologia*) which also integrates the lexicon created by Philippe Bobichon on the page settings and text settings of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin

manuscript (see: <u>http://www.irht.cnrs.fr/publications/lexicon</u>). This assemblage forms the first extensive multilingual codicological database. Online publication also allows us to add the latest updates regularly and to implement any modifications desired. It can be freely consulted from anywhere in the world thanks to the internet. Finally, thanks to the collaboration of the BNF, online publication allows us to attach high-quality colour images taken of Arabic, Turkish and Persian manuscripts to the Arabic definitions.

The structure of the database is simple and its use is intuitive. Starting with a French term, one can find the Arabic term or terms which correspond to it, as well as its definition in Arabic. The search can also start with the Arabic term (or its root). A thematic approach was proposed, based on the classification found in Muzerelle's *Codicological Vocabulary*. Finally, a search function allows the user to locate a word or part of a word in the index as well as in the definitions themselves.

The team, whose members were all working under the auspices of their respective institutions, benefitted in 2010 from a grant of £5000 provided by the Islamic Manuscript Association. This allowed them to recruit, for a little less than two months, a PhD student, Youssef Baratli. After having perfectly performed this task, he decided to join the team.

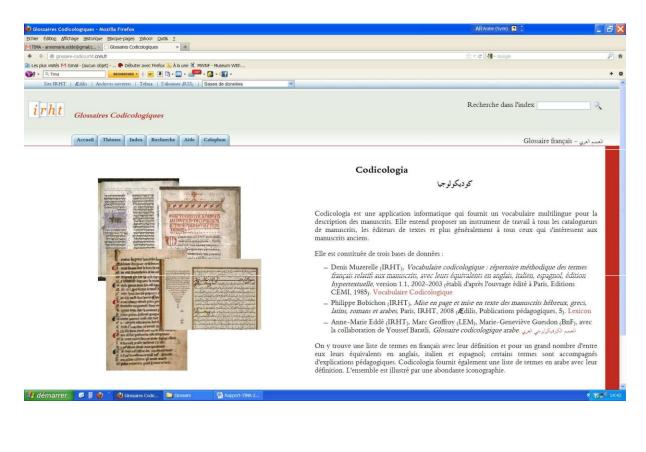
The research work is now complete. More than one thousand Arabic terms (1093) have been included along with their French translation and their definitions in Arabic. More than half of the illustrations have been found, and research in the collection of the BNF continues.

The technological programming is sufficiently advanced to allow the online consultation of the database, which was created by the IRHT's IT service in collaboration with the research team. The IRHT website is currently hosting the database at: <u>http://glossaire-codico.irht.cnrs.fr/</u>. In the coming months it will be necessary to correct some remaining technical faults, create a homepage in English, and improve the graphics of the programme to make it more attractive. We hope that IRHT will be also able to take care of this.

At this stage we are soliciting feedback from various specialists regarding the *Arabic Codicological Glossary*, especially those terms which are indicated by a question mark. The public access online launch is scheduled to take place at the end of 2012 or beginning of 2013.

October 2012

## Codicologia Screenshots



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