



**ON
THE
TRAIL
OF
THE**

NEVERENDING MANUSCRIPT

Comparative perspectives on rewritable media

With talks by Gian Pietro BASELLO • Georgios BOUDALIS •
Andrea BRIGAGLIA • Paola BUZI • Claudia COLINI • Gianluca
DEL MASTRO • Chiara GHIDINI • Carmen GÜTSCHOW • Elena
Luise HERTEL • Samuel JOHNS • Antonio MANIERI • Cécile
MICHEL • Dahir Lawan MU'AZ • Jamie NOVOTNY • Mélanie
ROFFET-SALQUE • Marc SMITH • Susanne TÖPFER • Thomas
WOZNIAK

∴ and a performance by Laura NOVIELLO & Marco SCIASCIA

Concept & organization: Michele CAMMAROSANO

Palazzo Corigliano, piazza San Domenico Maggiore 12, Naples, 30–31 May 2023



UNIVERSITÀ DI NAPOLI
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DAAM
DIPARTIMENTO ASIA,
AFRICA E MEDITERRANEO



More info:

<https://sites.google.com/view/ductulivesuviani/neverending-manuscript/workshop-2023>



Who wants to live forever? 🎵

... Maybe some types of manuscripts do.

In many cases, the deliberate destruction of a text has nothing to do with *auto da fé*, *damnatio memoriae* or the like, nor does it imply the destruction of manuscripts, but is instead a welcome, 'green' option that saves time, space and resources. Schooling, accounting and literary creation are just some of the typical contexts in which this happens: erase and rewrite, erase and rewrite... the 'ideal' manuscript, here, is the one that allows us to do it endlessly, and with as little effort as possible.

Manuscript cultures have responded to this challenge by inventing clay and wax tablets, rewritable inks, eraser and pencil, and much more, with complex processes of cultural transfer, contamination, and profound implications in terms of memorisation and composition, acquisition of writing, and conceptualisation of mental processes.

We will go in search of the 'neverending manuscript' by traveling through time and space with the help of specialists in cultures, manuscripts, and materials far and near, and during a hands-on session we will be able to indulge in writing on it and listening to its voice.

Venue: Palazzo Corigliano,
Piazza San Domenico Maggiore 12,
Naples; Conference hall, 2nd floor

Free admission

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Info & abstracts:



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Comparative perspectives on
rewritable media

International workshop
Naples, 30–31 May 2023



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Program

Tuesday, May 30, 14:30–18:30 Session 1: *Clay & Papyrus*

Chair: Noemi Borrelli

14:30 **Michele Cammarosano**: *Introduction*

15:00 **Carmen Gütschow** (Berlin):
Rewritable Media – Clay tablets in conservation

15:25 **Cécile Michel** (Paris, CNRS / Universität Hamburg, CSMC):
Erasing signs and lines on Old Assyrian cuneiform clay tablets

15:50 **Jamie Novotny** (LMU, Munich):
Ashurbanipal and objects for the temples Esagil and Esharra: a case study of erasing and rewriting texts on clay, metal, and stone at the height of the Assyrian empire

16:15 break

16:45 **Gian Pietro Basello** (L'Orientale):
They rewrote on clay... and also wax and metal. The terminology of rewritable media in Elam

17:10 **Susanne Töpfer** (Museo Egizio, Turin):
Objects, documents and writings: the reconstruction of 'multi-text' papyrus manuscripts in the Museo Egizio

17:35 **Elena Luise Hertel** (Universität Basel):
Why reuse manuscripts in Late Bronze Age Egypt? An attempt to explain the coexistence of reused and non-reused papyri in Deir el-Medina

18:00 discussion

Wednesday, May 31, 9:00–13:00 Session 2: *Wax*

Chair: Tommaso Raiola

9:00 **Mélanie Roffet-Salque & Samuel Johns** (University of Bristol):
Identifying the ancient use of beeswax – a biomolecular approach

9:25 **Gianluca Del Mastro** (Università della Campania 'L. Vanvitelli'):
Reuse in classical antiquity: papyri and other writing materials

9:50 **Thomas Wozniak** (Universität Tübingen):
Wax tablets as writing media during the Middle Ages

10:15 **Marc H. Smith** (Paris, École nationale des chartes / EPHE (PSL)):
Writing on wax tablets and the evolution of cursive scripts in the Latin West

10:40 discussion

11:10 break

11:40 **Laura Noviello & Marco Sciascia**:
'Waxed chants': Chant, aulos & lyra performance

12:00 *Hands-on session with experimental replicas of historical wax tablets and styli, metalpoint writing, and Quranic tablets* (Andrea Brigaglia, Michele Cammarosano & Marco Sciascia)

13:00 standing lunch



Wednesday, May 31, 14:30–18:30 Session 3: *Wood, Parchment & Paper*

Chair: Ester Simoes B Ferreira

14:30 **Claudia Colini** (Univ. Hamburg, CSMC):
Second chances: how to erase inks according to recipes from the Arab world

14:55 **Paola Buzi** (La Sapienza, Rome):
The second life of Coptic manuscripts: when, where and why?

15:20 **Georgios Boudalis** (The Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki):
The 'patchwork' palimpsests of Sinai

15:45 **Antonio Manieri** (L'Orientale):
Writing and re-writing wooden tablets in 7th-8th century Japan: the mokkan for learning practice

16:10 break

16:40 **Chiara Ghidini** (L'Orientale):
Discipline, profession, religious practice, and purification: a cultural history of copying and coping in Nara Japan and beyond

17:05 **Andrea Brigaglia & Dahir Lawan Mu'az** (L'Orientale):
Writing on Wood in West Africa: description, state of the art, and possible future research on an Islamic cultural practice

17:30 discussion

18:00 general discussion, conclusion

20:00 conference dinner