

## Seminar SAW History of Science, History of Text, 2011-2016

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### Parts of texts and writing by compilation

Caspar Hirschi (Universität St.Gallen, Switzerland)

*Handwriting in Print: Graphological Publications during the Dreyfus Affair*

**Abstract** – The rise of graphology as an allegedly “exact” science in the field of handwriting analysis and forensic expertise after 1870 was closely intertwined with new print technologies that enabled the integration of handwritten parts of texts into printed documents. These parts of handwriting could range from single letters to signatures to whole manuscripts. The technology was used in scholarly books, expert reports and public posters. Its purpose was to turn readers of graphological texts into direct witnesses of handwriting analysis and thus to establish graphology as an experimental science according to the positivist ideal of the time. The Dreyfus Affair offered a great opportunity to the champions of graphology to prove the scientific reliability and public usefulness of their science. As soon as the famous «bordereau» was printed in a newspaper, graphologists used the new print technology to highlight the scientific exactitude of their analysis. However, their attempts were not crowned by success as they produced contradictory evidence regarding the authorship of the bordereau and thus added to the public confusion about Dreyfus’ guilt or innocence.