

## Conference “Mistakes and the study of manuscripts” 2016

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### Discrepancies as clues on practices

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*Divinare oportet, non legere. Identification and Interpretation of Errors in Arabic Manuscripts on Natural Sciences*

**Abstract** – For many centuries Arabic has been an important lingua franca of science. The nature of the language itself—together with its script, defective and redundant at the same time— deeply influenced the written transmission of knowledge. A gallery of examples from a number of textual traditions will present different typologies of error, along with the reconstruction of the process that brought them about. The attitude of the copyists, with their different degrees of attention and awareness, is a fundamental component in the genesis of the error. Only with a deep understanding of this complex and articulated process the philologist can read through the text, in order to reconstruct its tradition and the intellectual history behind it.