

World Philology Union

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

The WPU in facts, figures and selected activities. Academic year of 2024–2025.



World Philology Union

W P U

© World Philology Union 2025

The WPU Annual Report is produced in collaboration with:
The Norwegian Institute of Philology
& Hermes Academic Publishing
Printed in Oslo, 2025

Cover image: Carl Peter Hilleström, *Upsala domkyrka* (1800)
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

WORLD PHILOLOGY UNION: REPORT 2024–2025

The WPU in the Academic Year of 2024–2025	1
Conference Organization and Publications	3
Reading Groups	8
WPU Facts and figures	9
The Uppsala Declaration	13

The WPU in the Academic Year of 2024–2025

It is our pleasure to report that the WPU, founded in Oslo in 2021, already has seen a measure of success that we did not foresee at the time of the association's founding. We have engaged a number of colleagues and institutions internationally to be members of the association and to participate actively in its development. The WPU has an active Board which meets regularly and keeps a keen eye on the status of philological research and teaching at major universities and research institutions. We have a principled constitution, we have established good organisational and financial systems, and we have a devoted and very active Executive Committee. The WPU has held two General Assemblies (Rome 2022, Uppsala 2024), and has published a carefully crafted statement on the civilizational value of philology and the importance of its active preservation and cultivation: *The Uppsala Declaration*.

The World Philology Union has not least organised three major conferences: The foundational conference hosted by the Norwegian Institute of Philology at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters in Oslo, Norway (2021), the first biennial international conference hosted by Sapienza University and ISMEO in Rome, Italy (2022) and the second biennial international conference hosted by Uppsala University in Uppsala, Sweden (2024). Now, we have done much of the preparatory work for the next biennial conference, planned in Alexandria, Egypt (2026).

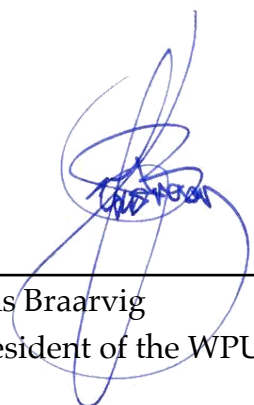
The WPU has established a cooperation with the Academia Europaea (AE), through the Union Académique Internationale (UAI), but also through the AE Hub in Bergen. The AE Bergen Hub contributed, in addition to several other matters, journalistic presence at the Uppsala Conference. This cooperation was confirmed at the AE conference in Wrocław in November 2024. The President represented the WPU at the World Conference of Classics in Beijing, November 2024, where the idea was promoted that Old Chinese also is a classical language like Greek and Latin. This idea is also in line with the WPU's view that there are a number of Classical Languages in addition to those defined by the Graeco-Roman heritage. In late April 2025 the President was part of a UAI delegation to the Annual Meeting of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) in Cambridge, Mass. The aim of the UAI mission to the ACLS was to broaden the cooperation between European and US academic institutions and organisations. In a meeting between the UAI Delegation and leaders of several American organisations in addition to the ACLS, the President

informed the audience about the ideas, scope and organisation of the WPU. The WPU is grateful to the above-mentioned organisations for their support. In May the President participated in the Board Meeting of UAI in Cambridge UK with the same purpose.

In a world where new and wonderful technologies rage on media platforms and in the minds of both the young and the not-so-young, where books and foreign languages are relegated to apps and selected by algorithms to be consumed in snippets, and where education has lost much of the classical wisdom and age-old methodology that once upon a time made schools and universities cornerstones of society, Philology is more important than ever.

We believe that in our modern and “knowledge-based” societies, Philology can be an antidote to the ubiquitous ideological capture of civil discourse, not only at schools and universities, but also in the media, in the arts, in music, in literature – and in culture more broadly. In fact, we hold that Philology – the grammatical and literary study of the oral and written heritage of the world’s various languages – is an antidote to ideological capture of the individual soul. Both in education and in the life of an educated person in a truly educated society, the values represented by Philology should be something we all aspire to. It remains the mission WPU to communicate this message to the world.

Oslo, 11 August 2025,



Jens Braarvig
President of the WPU



Amund Haave
Secretary General of the
WPU

Activities in the Academic Year 2024–2025 under the aegis of the WPU

Conference organization and publications

I. Major conferences under the aegis of the WPU in the Academic Year 2024–2025

1. WPU Biennial Conference at Uppsala (s. also the materials on the Dropbox).
2. **International Workshop “Urban Religious Space and its Languages”**, Vienna, 12-14.6. 2025.
 - As part of the work package **“Multilingualism in Eurasian Premodern Societies: Social Hierarchies and Spaces”** of the Eurasian Transformations Cluster of Excellence (ExCI),¹ the collaborating institutions of the Cluster (Austrian Academy of Sciences, University of Vienna, University of Innsbruck and Central European University) in co-operation with the Religion & Urbanity KFG at the Max-Weber-Kolleg of Erfurt University and the Multilingualism Research Group at the WPU (WPU President J. Braarvig, WPU Secretary General Amund B. Haave, WPU Honorary Member G. J. Selz, WPU Board Member V. Sadovski) convened two interdisciplinary workshops in the Academic Year 2024–2025. The workshops built on the spatial turn in historiography and approach the multilingual challenge through the lens of Eurasian cities and towns as administrative, religious, and commercial centres, exploring key situations when language use in urban settings became an issue, a source of conflict, or an instrument of power.
 - The second workshop under the title **“Urban Religious Space and its Languages”** took place in Vienna on 12–14 June 2025 and contained a WPU panel convened by WPU Board Member V. Sadovski with the participation of WPU President J. Braarvig, WPU Secretary General Amund B. Haave, WPU Honorary Member G. J. Selz, in co-operation with the Center of Religious Studies at the University of Bochum (WPU members V. Krech and K. Rezania). The geographic range of contributions comprised selected cities in East Central Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East and Southeast-Asia.
 - A full programme of the Conference and a booklet of abstracts are available online.²

1. <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/eurasian-transformations/home>

2. https://www.oeaw.ac.at/fileadmin/project/eurasian-transformations/pdf/Workshop_2_Programme_210_x_297_mm_Final.pdf

3. International Conference “Taxonomy, Differentiation Processes, and Metaphor in the History of Knowledge, including Religion”, under the aegis of the World Philology Union.

- The Conference is organized by the Collaborative Research Centre 1475 (CRC 1475), at the Center of Religious Studies (CERES) of the University of Bochum, Germany—mainly represented by its Director V. Krech (Director of the CERES) and the Principal Investigator of subproject I/4, K. Rezaia—, the Austrian Academy of Sciences, and the international Multilingualism Research Group (Vienna / Oslo / Rome), represented by its speaker (WPU Board Member Velizar Sadoski) and a number of its founding members and partners from Norway (WPU President J. Braarvig, WPU Secretary General Amund B. Haave), Great Britain (WPU members A. Vergados, M. J. Geller, G. Badalanova Geller), and Italy (WPU members P. M. A. Rossi, D. Muscianisi).
- The Center for Religious Studies (CERES), where parts of the CRC are located, and the Multilingualism Research Group at the WPU share a series of research interests. The key topics “Multilingualism” and “Listenwissenschaften”, represented in several MRG conferences between 2008 and 2024, bring additional inputs to the joint research themes. Within this research framework, the workshop, “Taxonomy, Differentiation Processes and Metaphor in the History of Knowledge, including Religion” is designed to foster dialogue among scholars of religion and philologists.
- The Conference discussed various intriguing topics, including differentiation processes, metaphors, and taxonomies. The keyword “differentiation” refers to the fact that, with increasing complexity, societies begin to differentiate themselves internally according to spheres such as politics, law, economics, medicine, art, and religion, each of which fulfills a specific societal function. This process ends in the modern, functionally differentiated society, but already began in the early societies of antiquity. The differentiation process finds its linguistic expression in corresponding textual documents, so that the respective societal structure can be inferred from them.
- In this way, philology, historical linguistics, and sociology can cooperate. A full programme is available online.³

4. Panel of the World Philology Union (WPU) in the framework of the 35th German Orientalist Congress (DOT) at Erlangen, Germany

- The WPU has been invited by main organizer and WPU Board Member L. Edzard to open the programme with a Panel dedicated on the role of philology in particular with regard to Asian and African Studies.
- The panel includes papers by the WPU President J. Braarvig, WPU Vice-President D. Shanzer, WPU Secretary General Amund B. Haave and WPU Board Members

3. <https://ceres.rub.de/de/events/workshop-taxonomy-06-2025/>

L. Edzard and V. Sadovski.

- A full programme and abstracts of the papers are available online.⁴

II. Selected WPU-supported conferences and individual publications

- Panel 'Lists and catalogues in Greek and Indo-European literature: Cosmological, mytho-poetic, anthropological and gnoseological aspects', organized by the WPU members A. Vergados and V. Sadovski in the framework of the XVIIth International Congress of the Fédération Internationale des Associations d'Études Classiques (FIEC), Wrocław, Poland, 7 to 11 July 2025.
 - The cognitive structures underlying the literary genre of lists have been early enough recognized in their importance for the reconstruction of the archaic Greek models of thinking and mind-mapping the Universe – the most obvious examples begin with Hesiod's Theogony and Works and Days and the main Homeric catalogues. Still, the relevant data have mostly been discussed intrinsically, from a purely hellenocentric perspective, largely neglecting the immense heuristic value of the comparison between the Greek and other Indo-European representatives of this genre. Therefore, this panel has brought together specialists in Ancient Greek philology, history of religion, ritual and spiritual ideas with researchers of other Indo-European (Vedic Indian, Old Iranian, Old Germanic) and non-Indo-European (Sumerian and Akkadian) traditions. The contributors have different theoretical backgrounds and work in various directions of the study of lists and catalogues in Greek and beyond, in comparative and historical perspective.
 - The Panel took place on 8 July 2025, with the participation of WPU members from Austria (G. J. Selz, V. Sadovski), Ireland (Chr. Cleary), Great Britain (A. Vergados, I. Rutherford), and Italy (L. Massetti).
 - A full programme and abstracts of the papers are available online.⁵
- Panel 'Indo-Iranian Ritual: comparative aspects of philology, text traditions, religious and cultural history', organized by WPU Board Members Alberto Cantera (Berlin) and V. Sadovski (Vienna), in the framework of the 35th Deutscher Orientalistentag Erlangen, Germany, September 7–11, 2025.
 - Indo-Iranian ritual tradition is transmitted to us in two branches, which exhibit a series of impressive parallels but also notable differences. A reconstruction of a Proto-Indo-Iranian ritual nucleus is only possible when we employ the data of

4. https://express.converia.de/frontend/index.php?page_id=40895&v=List&do=15&day=all&ses=40326#anker_session_40326

page_id=40895&v=List&do=15&day=all&ses=40326#anker_session_40326

5. <https://fiec2025.ptf.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/FIEC-2025-Programme-www.pdf>

both complexes of sources. Noteworthy, scholarly research of Iranian ritual is less advanced than the long-year tradition of studying the richly ramified Vedic ritual schools. The aim of this panel has been to bring together papers that deal with the Vedic and Zoroastrian ritual traditions, either in order to improve our knowledge of either of these traditions independently, or in order to compare them productively, either to reconstruct their common ground or to highlight their differences.

- The Panel took place on 11 September 2025, with the participation of WPU members and partners from Austria (V. Sadovski), France (J. Houben, C. Redard), Germany (A. Cantera, K. Li, J. Martínez-Porro, B. Peschl), Italy (L. Massetti).
- A full programme and abstracts of the papers are available online.⁶
- Sadovski, Velizar: ‘Grammaticography of Early Modern East Slavic and topics of complex sentence syntax in the no-man’s land between grammar and rhetoric, II. Second period: 16th and early 17th century manuals’. In: COTTICELLI-KURRAS, Paola (ed.): *Metalinguage, glossing and conceptualization in the grammars of the Middle Ages*. (Ergänzungshefte zu den Nodus-Beiträgen zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft). Münster: Nodus-Publikationen, 2024, 85–115.
- The volume contains the materials of a Bologna conference under the aegis of the WPU, convened by the Universities of Verona, Palermo and Macerata, in co-operation with the Multilingualism Research Group (WPU members P. Cotticelli, V. Sadovski)
- Edition: In December 2024, the Scripta Minora of WPU Board Member N. Sims-Williams were submitted for publication to the Austrian Academy of Sciences Press in the series “Grammatica Iranica”, ed. by V. Sadovski, and approved by the ÖAW Publication Committee including WPU Vice President D. Shanzer.
- Sadovski, Velizar: ‘Evidence for Indo-Iranian lexemes and phraseology in Armenian onomastic transmission: Part 1. (RFRPVA, V)’. *Studies on Central Asia and the Caucasus* 1, 2024, 5–24.
- Start of the ongoing co-operation between the WPU and the ASIAC (Italian Association for Studies in Central Asia and the Caucasus). In the framework of this co-operation, in December 2025 WPU represented by its President J. Braarvig will be responsible for the Keynote Lecture at the ASIAC Annual Conference in Venice (15–18.12.2025) and will have its own panel on Philology (15.12.), convened by the WPU treasurer V. Sadovski and with the participation of WPU President J. Braarvig, WPU Secretary General Amund B. Haave and other WPU members (V. Sadovski, K. Rezaia).
- Sadovski, Velizar: ‘The rite time to worship (Ritual formulae and ritual pragmatics in the Veda and Avesta, VI)’. *Estudios Iranios y Turanios* 6, 2024 (= *Homenaje a Jean*

6. https://express.converia.de/frontend/index.php?page_id=40895&v=List&do=15&day=all&ses=38614#anker_session_38614

Kellens), Girona 2024, 289–314.

- The book launch was simultaneously a conference in cooperation between the WPU, the Multilingualism Research Group (WPU Board Member V. Sadovski, WPU Honorary Member A. Rossi, A. Panaino) and the Spanish Association of Iranian Studies (WPU board member Alberto Cantera).
- Sadovski, Velizar: 'Syntactical stylistics of Old Indic and Iranian poetical texts. A brief historical outline of the subject and two case-studies'. In: Cotticelli, Paola / De Decker, Filip (eds.): *Berthold Delbrück, Historical and Comparative Indo-European Syntax 1922–2022*. Wiesbaden 2024, 105–128.
- Paper in a Verona conference under the aegis of the WPU, in cooperation between the University of Verona and the Multilingualism Research Group (WPU members V. Sadovski, P. Cotticelli).

III. Conference sessions co-sponsored by the WPU

- 60th International Congress on Medieval Studies. May 8–10, 2025.

Medieval Institute
College of Arts and Sciences
Western Michigan University
1903 W. Michigan Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5432
wmich.edu/medieval

WPU co-sponsored:

Session 38: Curiosa and Exotica
Session 191: Narrativa and Historica (Including *Hagiographica*)
Session 350: Philologica and Ekdótica

(Nine papers)

- Leeds International Congress on the Study of the Middle Ages (300–1500), 7–10 July, 2025

WPU co-sponsored Session 1301
Late Antique And Medieval Latin Poetry: Two papers

WPU Latin Reading Group (weekly)

Going Sightreading in the Wonderous World of Late and Medieval Latin Literature
(<https://philology.org/activities>)

In this group, we will be reading excerpts from Late and Medieval Latin literature at sight. The authors chosen range from old favorites, such as Walter Map and Iacobus de Voragine, to figures that are rarely read in the English-speaking world, such as Vincent of Krakow and Johannes de Alta Silva. We hope to present you with some delectable morsels that may be enjoyed in two hours or less and will leave you with a greater appreciation for all that Medieval literature can be, including whimsical fairy tales, fire and brimstone sermons, saints and sinners, kings and conquerors, and everything in between.

The group is aimed at intermediate Latinists, those who have attained functional capability in Latin but still struggle with the syntax at times or could do with a refresher course. We will not be drilling morphology, but we will be happy to address grammatical questions as they arise with neither shaming nor caning. You are surely not the only one wondering just what kind of genitive that is. Latin is not easy, but it is our aim to help you cross the threshold from treating each sentence as a puzzle to reading intuitively and at speed and only occasionally breaking out the grammatical can-opener. This is a skill that one can only develop through exposure and experience, which is what we provide in a stress-free, non-judgmental environment.

The group meets virtually on Fridays at 20:00 CEST (19:00 GMT; 14:00 EST; 13:00 CST) on Zoom, starting on September 8 2023. Late-comers welcome. Meetings run for ca. 90 minutes. Your hosts are post-docs in Late and Medieval Latin. The language of instruction is English and we translate into English, but the instructors also speak the main modern European languages required for studying Late and Medieval Latin Philology.

WPU in facts and figures

www.philology.org

The World Philology Union (WPU) was founded on 2 December 2021 at the Norwegian Academy of Sciences in Oslo by a group of scholars representing various philological disciplines globally. More information about the Founding Members and the current Members of the Board is found below.

The purpose of the WPU is to promote philology – i.e. the scholarly study of oral and written cultural heritage – in research, education, society and culture. The founding members of the WPU consider philology to be the bedrock of all humanistic studies. Indeed, the philological study of ancient and classical texts has always been the foundation of the humanities, but during the last half-century it has been either completely marginalised within university departments or, at some universities, even altogether banished from the academic portfolio.

The WPU invites philologists in all fields to unite in an effort to promote philology as a unified discipline at all levels of education and research. Without these fields, which historically and conceptually lie at the very core of the study of human culture, the very existence of the humanities as a meaningful academic activity is at risk.

The first General Assembly of the WPU was held in Rome on 15 December 2022. At the same occasion, the first WPU biennial conference was held, 14–16 December, hosted by the Sapienza University of Rome and ISMEO – The International Association of Mediterranean and Oriental Studies. At the conference, the main topic of discussion was the current state of philology at universities and other academic institutions worldwide.

The second General Assembly was held in Uppsala on 6 December 2024, at the end of the second WPU biennial conference, 4–6 December 2024, hosted by the University of Uppsala and supported by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation and several other institutions. The theme of the conference was “Philology and the Narrative Heritage”.

One of the immediate outcomes of the second biennial conference in December 2024 was the adoption by the WPU General Assembly of the “Uppsala Declaration on the Preservation of Philology and the Study of Historical Languages”.

WPU Basic information: www.philology.org/docs/wpu-poster.pdf
The WPU Constitution: www.philology.org/WPU_Constitution.pdf
Rome Conference 2022: www.philology.org/WPU_RomeConferenceProgram.pdf
Uppsala Conference 2024: www.philology.org/docs/Uppsala2024/Program.pdf

The Uppsala Declaration

www.philology.org/UppsalaDeclaration.pdf

Membership in the World Philology Union (WPU)

Membership, which is formally granted by the WPU board in consecutive meetings, is open to institutions, organisations, individual scholars (ordinary members) as well as (doctoral) students with a particular interest in philology. The Board of the WPU holds two or three regular meetings each year, and may in addition be summoned to discuss urgent matters when the need arises.

To register as an Ordinary Member, please write to members@philology.org – briefly stating your name, address, main academic field(s), academic degree or position, and institutional affiliation.

World Philology Union (WPU)
c/o Norwegian Institute of Philology
Gydaskveien 4, 0363 Oslo, Norway
Mail: P.O. Box 2709, 0204 Oslo
Email: secretary@philology.org
Phone: +47 954 01 754

Founding members of the World Philology Union (2 December 2021)

Øivind Andersen	Yasunori Kasai	Danuta Shanzer
Jens Braarvig	Samuel Lieu	Nicholas Sims-Williams
Jean-Luc De Paepe	Luisa Migliorati	Beatrice Gründler
Lutz Edzard	Velizar Sadovski	Torbjörn Lodén
Amund Haave	Lena Sadovski	Martha T. Roth
Thomas Kjeller Johansen	Walther Sallaberger	Shoichi Sato

Members of the Board of the World Philology Union (as of 6 December 2024)

Jens Braarvig (President) – Emeritus Professor, University of Oslo, and Director of the Norwegian Institute of Philology.

Alberto Cantera – Professor of Iranian Studies, Free University of Berlin.

Eleanor Dickey – Professor of Classics, University of Reading.

Lutz Edzard – Professor in Arabic and Semitic Linguistics, Erlangen University.

Jaehye Han – Assistant Professor, Buddhist Studies Department, Dongguk University.

Samuel Lieu – Honorary President of the International Union of Academies, UAI.

Torbjörn Lodén – Emeritus Professor of Chinese language and culture, Stockholm University.

Luisa Migliorati – Professor of Archaeology, Sapienza University of Rome.

Martha T. Roth – Chauncey S. Boucher Distinguished Service Professor of Assyriology in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago.

Velizar Sadovski (Treasurer) – Distinguished Research Fellow and Iranian Linguistics Group Leader, Austrian Academy of Sciences.

Walther Sallaberger – Professor of Assyriology at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München.

Danuta Shanzer (Vice President) – Professor of Late Antique and Medieval Latin Philology, University of Vienna.

Jianrong Shi – Assistant Professor Grade Teaching Staff, Department of Religious Studies at Fu Jen Catholic University, Taipei.

Nicholas Sims-Williams – Emeritus Professor of Iranian and Central Asian Studies, SOAS University of London.

Luisa Villani – Postdoctoral Researcher, National Autonomous University of Mexico.

Kazuhiko Yoshida – Emeritus Professor of Linguistics, Kyoto University.

The Executive Committee of the World Philology Union

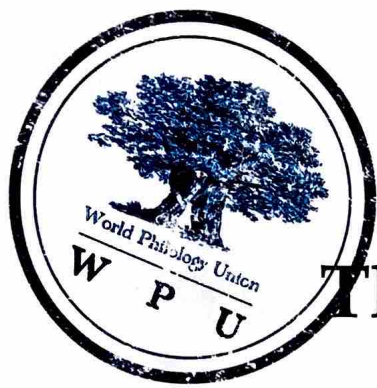
(as of 6 December 2024)

Jens Braarvig (President) – Emeritus Professor, University of Oslo, and Director of the Norwegian Institute of Philology.

Danuta Shanzer (Vice President) – Professor of Late Antique and Medieval Latin Philology, University of Vienna.

Amund Haave (Secretary General) – Executive Director of the Norwegian Institute of Philology.

Velizar Sadovski (Treasurer) – Distinguished Research Fellow and Iranian Linguistics Group Leader, Austrian Academy of Sciences.



The Uppsala Declaration

on the Preservation of Philology and the Study of Historical Languages

*adopted by the General Assembly of the World Philology Union
in Uppsala, Sweden, on the 6th of December, 2024*

The signatories to this Declaration hold that

- § 1 Philology, defined as the grammatical and literary study of the oral and written heritage of the world's various languages, is the ultimate foundation of the humanities.
- § 2 Philology, as an academic pursuit, should be a central component of the curriculum of any modern university.
- § 3 More specifically, competence in one or more philological fields is inherently a prerequisite for all informed study of both historical human cultures and present-day societies in their diversity.
- § 4 Philology is an important element in education on all levels, as a method to access classical texts that preserve the cultural heritage, and as a mode of reading which advances a more comprehensive literacy.
- § 5 Philology is also of crucial importance to society at large, since (1) we need to listen to the human voices of the past, in their own languages, if we want to understand the history and cultural traditions of any society; (2) only a society that studies and actively reflects on its own past can be a healthy and truly prosperous society; (3) the philological mode of reading historical documents can be an antidote to ideological abuses of history, in particular ideological readings of national literature or religious writings.
- § 6 Seeing that Philology has always been the foundation of the humanities, the signatories are alarmed that during the last half-century many philological fields have been either completely marginalised within university departments and faculties or, at some universities, eliminated from the academic portfolio.
- § 7 When universities, and even faculties and departments where the humanities are otherwise promoted, do not acknowledge the pivotal role of Philology in underpinning and preserving the relevance of the humanities to society at large, Philology becomes an endangered species among academic disciplines. Without Philology the very existence of the humanities as a meaningful academic activity is at risk.
- § 8 Accordingly, the signatories resolve to take action to ensure the preservation and flourishing of the rich academic traditions within the different fields of philology.

World Philology Union
WPU – www.philology.org

P.O. Box 2709
0204 Oslo
Norway

Tel.: +47 954 01 754
E-mail: post@philology.org

Visiting Address:

Norwegian Institute of Philology
Gydas vei 4, Majorstuen
0363 Oslo
Norway

Administrative office:
Norwegian Institute of Philology (PHI)

Bank account:
1251.06.74357

IBAN: NO06 1251 0674 357
BIC (Swift): DNBANOKKXXX



World Philology Union – WPU