

Conference reports

The *Physiologus* between East and West. Transmission and dissemination of an early Christian text on nature

Paris, 15–17 June 2017

The *Physiologus* is an early Christian (second or third century?) collection of moralizing stories about animals, plants and stones. Written originally in Greek, it was translated into Latin, Syriac, Armenian, Ethiopic, Georgian, Arabic and Slavonic in the Middle Ages, not forgetting the translations from Latin into Western vernacular languages and their influence on the rich tradition of bestiaries. The conference ‘The *Physiologus* between East and West. Transmission and dissemination of an early Christian text on nature’, organized in Paris (Maison de la Recherche) from 15 to 17 June 2017 by Anna Dorofeeva, Stavros Lazaris, Caroline Macé and Arnaud Zucker, aimed at shedding some light on the early history of the text, to which ancient translations are of crucial importance.

After an introductory paper by Horst Schneider (‘Der *Physiologus*: Grundlagen und Perspektiven’), the first session was devoted to the Greek tradition of the *Physiologus*: Arnaud Zucker explained the relationships between its three recensions, Adele Di Lorenzo spoke about the intriguing history of the editio princeps (by Ponce de Leon in 1587) and its manuscripts, and Alain Touwaide followed the fortune of the *Physiologus* in the tradition of the ‘iatrosophia’. In the second session, illustrated Latin and Greek copies of the *Physiologus* were presented by Massimo Bernabò (who discussed the Greek ‘Smyrna Physiologus’, burnt during the sack of Smyrna in 1922, whose date is still highly debated), Jacqueline Leclercq-Marx (who spoke about the Bruxellensis 10066-77, a tenth-century Latin manuscript) and Stavros Lazaris (who considered an illustrated fragment of a Greek manuscript discovered in Saint-Catherine monastery on Mount Sinai).

The other sessions of the conference concentrated on various translations of the Greek *Physiologus*. Gohar Muradyan and Aram Topchyan presented the Armenian translation, made as early as the fifth century. Jost Gippert demonstrated that the Georgian translation, preserved in a tenth-century manuscript (the famous ‘Šatberdi codex’) was based upon the Armenian text, for which the Georgian constitutes a most precious witness. Alin Suciú showed that the *Physiologus* left some traces in Coptic, and that there are some connections

between the Latin translation and one Coptic fragment. Massimo Villa presented his discoveries of previously unknown Ethiopic manuscripts containing the *Physiologus*, and demonstrated the existence of several recensions of the Ethiopic translation, that need to be taken into account in the new critical edition he is preparing. Sami Aydin showed the weaknesses of the extant editions of the Syriac *Physiologus*, and highlighted the necessity of a new critical edition. Sibylle Wentker, who edited the Arabic *Physiologus* in 2002, offered some insights into interesting aspects of the translation. Anissava Miltenova and Ana Stoykova presented the manuscript tradition of the south Slavonic translation of the *Physiologus*, based on the second Greek recension. Anna Dorofeeva and Emmanuelle Kuhry offered complementary analyses, codicological and philological, of the early Latin tradition. In the last paper of the conference, Caroline Macé showed how much can be gained in the research about the history of the Greek text, by looking at the ancient translations. A round-table led by Valentine A. Pakis closed the meeting.

The complete programme and summaries are available at <<https://colloquephysiologus2017.wordpress.com/>>. The results of the conference will be published in the form of a book, edited by Jost Gippert and Caroline Macé, entitled *The Physiologus: multilingual history of an early Christian text*. Another conference, focusing on traditions parallel to the *Physiologus* in oriental manuscripts, will be held in the Hamburg Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures on 28 and 29 June 2018.

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Hagiographico-homiletic Collections in Greek and Oriental Manuscripts: Histories of Books and Text Transmission in a Comparative Perspective

Hamburg, 23 June 2017

On 23 June 2017, Jost Gippert and Caroline Macé organized a workshop dedicated to Hagiographico-homiletic Collections in Greek and Oriental Manuscripts at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures at Hamburg University.

The vast majority of manuscripts in the Christian world, both west and east, consists of Bibles and liturgical books, florilegia, and hagiographic-patristic collections (homiliaries). The same kind of manuscripts exists in dif-