

The first paper of the last panel, delivered by Marion Pragt (KU Leuven), dealt with ‘The Syriac Reception of Gregory of Nyssa’s *Homilies on the Song of Songs*’. M. Pragt presented the interesting case of the translation of the *Homilies*, which are preceded by the Peshitta version of the Song of Songs and two additional letters. One of the letters is authored by the translator, who describes his task, and seems to be aware of various Septuagint translations as well as of other works of Gregory. The presenter compared the translation’s features of a sixth-century Syriac witness of Gregory’s *Homilies* (Vat. sir. 106) with the ninth-century *Collection of Simeon* (Vat. sir. 103), reminding of the various interpretations of Gregory’s *Homilies on the Song of Songs*.

For the closing of the panel, Adrian Pirtea (Freie Universität Berlin) delivered a paper on ‘Isaac of Niniveh’s ‘Gnostic Chapters’ in the Sogdian Monastic Anthology E27’. After an overview of languages and manuscripts in which the works of Isaac have survived (and existing editions), he discussed the authorship of a Christian Sogdian fragment, which is part of a large monastic anthology (MS E27) comprising Sogdian translations from Greek and Syriac ascetic authors (Pseudo-Macarius, Evagrius, Abba Isaiah, Dādīšō ‘Qatrāyā, and others). Identifying Isaac as the author of a Sogdian fragment in E27, A. Pirtea underlines the significance of this new fragment, being the only work of Isaac translated into Sogdian, and thus a unique witness to the reception of Isaac’s *Second Part*, and also an input for the textual history of Isaac’s *Kephalaia*.

The ‘Caught in Translation’ panel grouped ten case studies on translation of patristic works in mainly oriental languages. This offered the opportunity for scholars working on different corpora to present and discuss a number of problems which proved to be shared by all, including the question of selection and of linguistic equivalences in the process of translation of this type of literature. The papers are being currently prepared for publication.

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The Coptic Book between the 6th and the 8th Century

Rome, 21–22 September 2017

The kick-off meeting of the ERC Advanced Grant 2015 ‘PATHs-Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths: An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature’, the international conference ‘The Coptic Book Between 6th and 8th Century: Codicological Features, Places of Production, Intellectual Trends’, took place in Rome on 21 and 22 September 2017.

The panel of the first day, entitled Literary culture(s), and book production in Egypt between the 6th and the 8th century, was convened at the Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia — Sapienza Università di Roma. The host project (see project description in the COMSt Bulletin 3/1, 45–47) was prominently featured. The complex relational database behind it was introduced by Julian Bogdani in his talk “PATHs’: an advanced draft of the information system’. Maria Chiara Giorda, in her paper ‘Encoding Coptic literature: new perspective of analysis and valorization of Coptic hagiographic and homiletic texts’, illustrated (on the example of *Vita Pauli de Tamma*) how the project team were marking up a selected corpus of texts — that are consistent as for cultural and literary milieu, period and genre — in order to obtain useful information for the Atlas of Coptic Literature of the project and to put at disposal of other scholars annotated texts useful for further research.

Paola Buzi presented the first results of a survey of a unique manuscript collection in her paper ‘The Coptic papyrus codices preserved in the Egyptian Museum, Turin: new strategies for the valorization and conservation of the library from This’. The latest known example of an Egyptian library entirely transmitted by papyrus codices, probably to be dated between the end of the seventh century and the beginning of the eighth, the This manuscripts represent a crucial and transitional instance in the history of Coptic books, which saw on the one hand the creation of new codicological and palaeographical features and on the other the progressive emergence of multiple-text codices. Some yet unclassified fragments in the holdings of the Egyptian Museum may also belong to the library and shall be closely studied within the framework of the PATHs project.

In his paper ‘Greek and Coptic Paideia in Late Antique Egypt: Comparing the Incomparable?’, Gianfranco Agosti offered a fresh approach to the comparison of such apparently distant texts as Greek epic poems and Coptic hagiographies, dismissing the former high/low dichotomy often applied to Greek/Coptic literary tradition in Egypt of the fifth to seventh centuries.

An outlook on a somewhat later manuscript tradition was provided by Tito Orlandi in his presentation ‘The monasteries of Shenoute and Macarius: a comparison between two different bibliological arrangements’. The codices, mostly from the ninth to eleventh century, seem similar in liturgical scope and choice of texts, yet differ in variety. This should point to the fact that the religious-cultural work of choice and transformation of the preexisting texts was in fact conducted in the Shenute monastery.

The second day, convened at the Academia Belgica, offered papers focusing on Coptic Books from the Theban region. Elisabeth R. O’Connell, in her paper ‘Theban books in context’, presented a general survey of literature

from the Theban area. Over half of the published corpus of Coptic documentary texts (*c.*4300) can be attributed to the Theban region. By localizing papyri and ostraca documents within the Theban landscape, we are able to populate the monasteries, churches, saints' shrines and dwellings with named and titled individuals and to identify their networks. Codices and literary fragments excavated in the area have been the subject of editions focusing on their composition and stemma, rather than the communities who copied or read them or both. Yet, new palaeographic and codicological study, together with the study of fragments and bindings, is now revealing a distinctively Theban corpus and gradually bringing into focus the production and use of codices in the region.

Along these lines, Anne Boud'hors, in her talk on 'Revisiting P.Bodmer 58 in the light of book production and circulation in Thebes (7th cent.)', offered an analysis of all the aspects of the papyrus, correctly dated by W. Crum to the seventh century, including palaeography and codicology, content, and production milieu.

The archaeological setting of the Coptic manuscripts in the Theban region was illustrated on the example of the findings of the Polish Archaeological Mission in Šayḥ 'Abd al-Gurnah in 2005 by Ewa Wipszycka and Tomasz Górecki in the presentation 'Scoperta di tre codici copti a Tebe Occidentale: il contesto archeologico'.

A close study of one of the codices revealed during that very expedition was offered by Renate Dekker, 'The manuscript containing the Sahidic Encomium on Bishop Pesynthius of Koptos: its conservation, significance and context'.

Another manuscript discovered by the mission and containing the Canons attributed to Basil of Caesarea (now Cairo, Coptic Museum, inv. 13448) was studied from various viewpoints by several scholars. Thus, Ágnes Mihálykó spoke of 'The Canons of Basil in the context of the liturgy in Western Thebes'. Alberto Camplani and Federico Contardi, in the presentation 'The Canons attributed to Basil of Caesarea in the context of the canonical literature preserved in Coptic', focused on the text of the Canons, offering an overview of the previously known and edited versions in both Coptic and Arabic as well as a detailed analysis of the structure and the contents of Basil's Canons in comparison with those Coptic works in which norms for Christian secular conduct are joined with the regulations for clerical hierarchy and directions for liturgy. A codicological analysis of the manuscript, carried out within the framework of the PAThs project, was offered by Nathan Carlig in his paper 'Osservazioni codicologiche sul codice pseudo-Basiliano del MMA 1152 (Cairo, Coptic Museum, inv. 13448)'. Agostino Soldati focused on the colophon contained in the same manuscript in his talk 'One of the earliest

extant Coptic colophons'. It offers a new valuable instance of a so far poorly attested type of scribal subscriptions, while enhancing our knowledge of the prosopography of Byzantine Thebes and allowing a quite likely dating thanks to the analysis of its palaeographical features.

Another finding of the Polish Archaeological Mission, two leaves from the parchment codex found in Šayḥ 'Abd al-Gurnah, was studied by Przemysław Piwowarczyk who provided 'Some remarks on the codex decoration and the text of *Martyrium Petri* preserved in the manuscript from Sheikh Abd el-Gurna'. The leaves appear to contain the text of the *Martyrium Petri* in a version differing reasonably from the already published manuscripts; the opening section (roughly corresponding to the section four of the Greek text) was previously unknown in the Coptic translation.

A general discussion completed the conference.

The full programme and conference abstracts are available at <<http://paths.uniroma1.it/international-conference-coptic-book>>.

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Von der Historienbibel zur Weltchronik: Die byzantinisch-slavische Palaea / Paleja

Greifswald, 28–30 September 2017

Palaea / Paleja is a term referring to a genre of anthologies about Old Testament history. It includes the Byzantine *Palaea Historica* and the Old Church Slavonic *Tolkovaja Paleja* and their chronographic arrangements. The *Paleja* is a particular branch of biblical reception, closely linked to other genres, above all to Christian chronography. The *Palaea* literature paraphrases and embellishes the great narrative from the creation to the time of the kings. Among the many additions there are attacks against various Jewish and Christian apocrypha. While some of the apocrypha themselves have since been lost, the *Palaea* passages are their only reflections remaining. The conference 'Von der Historienbibel zur Weltchronik. Die byzantinisch-slavische *Palaea / Paleja*', convened by Christfried Böttrich at Alfried-Krupp-Wissenschaftskolleg from 28 to 30 September 2017, dealt with this great literary context and the manifold intertextual connections of *Paleja* literature.

In his opening talk Christfried Böttrich tried to answer the question, 'Wovon erzählen 'Historienbibeln'?' Whereas most papers focused on the Slavic *Paleja* (e.g. Alen Novalija, 'The Serbian Transmission of the *Tolko-*