

fragments from the Qubbat al-Khazna in Syrian manuscripts'. Finally, Arianna D'Ottone Rambach introduced the early woodcut prints discovered at the Qubba in her paper 'Unpublished exemplars of block-printed Arabic amulets from the Qubbat al-Khazna'.

The programme and abstracts are available at <<https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/islamwiss/forschung/Konferenzen-und-Workshops/Qubbat-al-Khazna/>>.

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Beyond the *Physiologus* Animal Stories and Representations in Oriental Manuscripts Hamburg, 28–29 June 2018

On 28 and 29 June 2018 the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC, at Hamburg University) hosted the conference 'Beyond the *Physiologus* – Animal Stories and Representations in Oriental Manuscripts', organized with the support of the COMSt network and Fritz Thyssen foundation. The workshop, intended to promote the discussion of themes, new findings and ongoing researches about zoography in Oriental manuscript traditions, was not the first initiative of its kind to be organized in the past years. It constituted, in fact, the ideal continuation of the conference 'The *Physiologus* between East and West. Transmission and dissemination of an early Christian text on nature', held in Paris from 15 to 17 June 2017. Aim of the CSMC conference was to expand the area of investigation from the *Physiologus* (the well-known early Christian collection of natural descriptions and their moralizing teaching) to a broader context, and to explore parallel material containing animal-related stories in the main Oriental literary traditions.

During the seven sessions of the conference no major cultural area was left untouched. In his paper 'Mischwesen im *Physiologus*: Das Echidna-Kapitel', Horst Schneider (Universität München) drew attention to the imprecise rendering of the word 'echidna' in modern editions. The echidna, habitually translated as 'viper' on the basis of the biblical passage Mt 3.7 which opens the *Physiologus* chapter, is in fact clearly described as a monstrous hybrid between a man and a crocodile. Caroline Macé (then at the Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, presently at the University of Lausanne) expressed 'Methodological considerations and new hypotheses about the recensions of the Greek *Physiologus* and their indirect tradition', with respect to the intricate tradition of the chapter on the aspidochelone, i.e. the widespread legend of the island-whale which dives into the depths and drowns the sailors who anchored on it. Within the Hebrew literary context, Malachi Beit-Arié (Hebrew Univer-

sity Jerusalem) presented a paper entitled ‘The Hebrew *Perek Shira* and the *Physiologus*’, in which he traced parallels between the Jewish compilation of hymns on the creation and the *Physiologus*. Animals in the Arabic tradition were the subject of two presentations. A role for a still unpublished text, the *Nu ‘ūt al-ḥayawān*, in the shaping of the Arabic animal-related literature was studied by Remke Kruk (Leiden University), who spoke of ‘The mysterious *Nu ‘ūt al-ḥayawān* and Arabic zoography’. The presentation by Lucia Raggetti (then Freie Universität Berlin, now Bologna University), ‘Goodfeathers: The amazing pigeons in the Arabic animal lore’, contemplated the rich and even extravagant features and properties of pigeons as transmitted in the Arabo-Islamic tradition, and particularly by al-Ġāhīz. Two papers covered the Ethiopic tradition. In his ‘Exegesis and Lexicography in the Ethiopian Tradition: The Impact of the *Physiologus*’, Massimo Villa (then at Universität Hamburg, now University of Naples ‘L’Orientale’) offered a survey on the influence of the *Physiologus* in later commentaries and vocabularies in Ethiopic and Amharic, especially in the treatment of rare or uniquely-attested zoonyms. The pictorial representations of imaginary animals in the Ethiopian art were the subject of Ewa Balicka-Witakowska’s (Uppsala University) paper, entitled ‘Imagery of fantastic or hybrid animals in Ethiopian painting’. The Syriac also benefited from two distinct presentations. Sami Aydin (Uppsala University) illustrated his research on ‘Traces of the *Physiologus* in the Syriac hexaemeral tradition and other commentaries’. Adrian Pirtea (Freie Universität Berlin) spoke about ‘Some distinctive features of the Leiden Syriac *Physiologus* and a newly identified manuscript witness’, which would strongly support an Origenist background to the Syriac version. Further traditions in other languages were explored by several presenters. The fascinating theme of the cosmic bird was in the focus of attention of Ana Stoykova’s (Bulgarian Academy Sofia) paper, entitled ‘From Mesopotamia to late medieval Bulgaria: Transformations of the giant cosmic bird myth’. Emanuela Timotin (Rumanian Academy of Sciences, Bucarest) spoke of ‘The *Physiologus* in the Romanian manuscript tradition’. Ani Shahnazaryan (Matenadaran) developed the theme of ‘The *Physiologus* influence on medieval Armenian fables’. Georgian parallels to the *Physiologus* were traced by Jost Gippert (Universität Frankfurt), ‘The Georgian *Physiologus* in context’. Finally, the paper by Isabel Grimm-Stadelmann (Universität München), ‘Graeco-Egyptian texts of ritual power and their tradition’, dealt with the reception of some motifs inherited from Graeco-Egyptian papyri and survived in the late antique and Byzantine traditions.

Finally, an editorial meeting, led by Caroline Macé and attended by some of the presenters, was organized with the scope of discussing a variety of issues concerning the forthcoming edited volume, *The Physiologus: multi-*

lingual history of an early Christian text. The oldest Greek recension and its translations. The workshop programme is available at <https://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/register_physiologus2018.html>.

Massimo Villa
University of Naples 'L'Orientale'

Traces on Ink. Experiences of Philology and Replication Bologna, 12 July 2018

The workshop 'Traces of Ink', which took place in Bologna on 12 July 2018, was the second of two joint workshops on the history of alchemy convened within the framework of the ERC Project *AlchemEast: Alchemy in the Making*.

Many ancient and premodern cultures, with the due differences, shared the reflection upon writing supports, the production of written artefacts with all the tools and substances involved in the action of leaving a clear impression of the written signs. A double path of traces can be followed in order to reconstruct the different writing practices and cultures: on the one side, the material objects connected to the act of writing, and the technical literature dealing with the art of writing on the other. The material and the textual aspects, however, do not exist in isolation; there rather are large areas of overlap, so that the different disciplines engaged in their study (codicology, palaeography, chemistry, archaeology, philology) can achieve better results in cooperation. This spirit has animated the programme of the workshop: its three sessions were chronologically arranged (Ancient Near East, Greek Late Antiquity and Arabo-Islamic Middle Ages) and, each of them saw two scholarly approaches together, one more focussed on the philological aspects, the other on the material and technical ones.

The first session (Ancient Near East), with Maddalena Rumor as discussant, included a joint presentation given by Michele Cammarosano and Katja Weirauch, who shared the results of their joint research on the use of wax tablets as writing support in the Mesopotamian and Hittite cultures.

With Lawrence Principe as discussant, the second session (Greek Late Antiquity) was opened by Miriam Blanco, who discussed the composition and use of red inks in the Greek magical papyri. Ira Rabin presented an overview of the technical analysis personally carried out on written artefacts from Antiquity well into the Middle Ages.

The third and last session (Arabo-Islamic Middle Ages), with Bink Halum in the role of discussant, started with Sara Fani sketching the literary dimension of the Arabic treatises on ink making, and was concluded by Claudia