

Conference reports

New Light on Old Manuscripts: Recent Advances in Palimpsest Studies

Vienna, 25–27 April 2018

The international conference ‘New Light on Old Manuscripts: Recent Advances in Palimpsest Studies’, organized within the framework of the Wittgenstein Prize Project ‘Moving Byzantium: Mobility, Microstructure and Personal Agency’, took place in Vienna on 20 to 22 April 2018. The organizing team included the project leader Claudia Rapp and project members Jana Grusková, Grigory Kessel, Giulia Rossetto, and Paraskevi Sykopetritou.

The conference prominently featured work that has been accomplished in the course of the Sinai Palimpsests Project (<<http://sinaipalimpsests.org>>), introduced to the audience on the day before the conference, 24 April 2018, by Father Justin Sinaïtes (Saint Catherine of Sinai) in his lecture ‘The Sinai Palimpsests: Recovering Ancient Texts and the Early History of the Monastery’. The morning session of the conference on 25 April further developed the topic, first by Michael B. Phelps (EMEL: Early Manuscripts Electronic Library) in his presentation ‘The Sinai Palimpsests Project: its History, Philosophy, and Contributions’ and Claudia Rapp who spoke on ‘The Palimpsest Corpus at St. Catherine’s Monastery in the Sinai Preliminary Observations’.

Most of the research featured during the conference was related to the work conducted on Sinai manuscripts, in particular those of the New Finds.

Greek texts in Sinai manuscripts were in the focus of papers of Giulia Rossetto (Vienna), ‘Greek under Arabic: Behind the Lines of *Sinaiticus arabicus* NF 66’, Pasquale Orsini (Rome), ‘Greek Scripts, Books and Texts: New Materials from Sinai’, and Agamemnon Tselikas (Athens), ‘Textual Observations on Some Sinai Majuscule Palimpsests’. Greek palimpsests of other provenance were in the focus of papers by Dieter Harlfinger (Hamburg), ‘Palimpsest-Forschung am Beispiel der Athener Handschrift EBE 192 mit juristischen Texten und Aristoteles-Kommentaren’, and André Binggeli (Paris), ‘The Making of a Greek Palimpsest from the Patriarchal Library in Istanbul’. Felix Albrecht (Göttingen) and Chiara Francesca Faraggiana di Sarzana (Bologna) spoke of ‘A Carbonized Septuagint Palimpsest of the *Libri Sapientiales* in Biblical Majuscule, Codex Taurinensis, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, C.V. 25 (Rahlfs-Ms. 3010): Its Text and Context’. Jana Grusková (Vienna) and Giuseppe De Gregorio (Salerno) presented a paper entitled ‘Neueste Ein-

blicke in einige palimpsestierte Handschriftenunikate aus den griechischen Beständen der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek'. Bernard H. Stolte (Groningen) spoke on 'Editing the Basilica and the Role of Palimpsests. The Case of Vindob. Suppl. gr. 200'.

Ethiopic undertexts in Sinai (Greek) manuscripts were revealed by Steve Delamarter (Portland, OR) and Getatchew Haile (Collegeville, MI) in their paper 'The Ethiopic Undertext of Sinai Greek NF 90: Discovery and Analysis'.

Slavonic texts in palimpsests from Sinai were introduced by Heinz Miklas (Vienna) in his paper "'Excavating" the Slavonic Palimpsests in the New Sinaitic Finds'.

Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic traditions featured in Sinai palimpsests were in the focus of attention of Grigory Kessel (Vienna) ('Codex Arabicus (Sinai Arabic 514) Revisited'), Sebastian P. Brock (Oxford) ('What Can Be Learnt, and What Not, from the Experience of the Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic Palimpsests'), Christa Müller-Kessler (Jena) ('A Florilegium of Christian Palestinian Aramaic Palimpsests from St. Catherine's Monastery'), and Alain J. Desreumaux (Paris) ('L'apport des palimpsestes du Sinai à la codicologie araméenne christopalestinienne et aux versions anciennes des textes bibliques'). Other palimpsests with underlying Syriac texts were used by Peter E. Pormann (Manchester) for his research on 'The Syriac Galen Palimpsest: Between Philology and Digital Humanities'.

Christian Palestinian Aramaic and Georgian literature as revealed by the palimpsests was explored by Bernard Outtier (Paris), 'New Insights in Christo-Palestinian Aramaic and Georgian Literatures'. Georgian palimpsests of Sinai were further explored by Zaza Aleksidze (Tbilisi) in the talk on 'Dali Chitunashvili Palimpsest N/Sin Geo 7 Kept at the St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai (Identification of the Texts)'. Jost Gippert (Frankfurt) spoke on 'New Light on the Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests of St. Catherine's Monastery'.

Arabic palimpsests were in the focus of the talks of Alba Fedeli (Hamburg and Birmingham), 'A Few Remarks on Qur'anic Palimpsests' and Ronny Vollandt (Munich), 'Palimpsests from Cairo and Damascus: A Comparative Perspective from the Cairo Genizah and the Qubbat al-Khazna'.

A comparative outlook into the non-oriental manuscript traditions was provided by the talks by Michelle P. Brown (London) on 'Arabic NF 8 and the Latin Manuscripts of St. Catherine's, Sinai' and Carla Falluomini (Perugia) on 'The Gothic Palimpsests: New Readings and Discoveries'. Besides, Andreas Janke (Hamburg) spoke of 'Challenges in Working with Music Palimpsests'.

A wide array of papers focused on the technical aspects of imaging and visual analysis. András Németh (Vatican Library) offered an overview of what technology may offer in his talk 'Interactive Learning of Palimpsest Research: Virtual Guided Tour from the Invisible to the Abstract Reconstruction'. Damianos Kasotakis (EMEL) spoke on 'Implementing Spectral Imaging in the Sinai Desert', Kenneth Boydston (MegaVision, Inc., CA) presented on 'Beyond Discovery: Bringing More Good Things to Light', Keith T. Knox (EMEL) introduced 'Recovery of Erased Text Using Unsupervised Methods', Roger L. Easton Jr. (Rochester Institute of Technology) approached the topic of 'Customized Processing of Multispectral Imagery of Palimpsests Based on Spectral Statistics', and Dave Kelbe (Rochester Institute of Technology) delivered a paper entitled 'Is it Magic? The Science Behind Image Processing: Perspectives and Possibilities'. Further on, digital techniques in palimpsest reconstruction were featured in papers by Michael B. Toth (Archimedes Palimpsest Project), 'Dispersed Palimpsest Offers Digital Insight into St. Catherine's Library' and Doug Emery (University of Pennsylvania), 'Reflections on the Digital Palimpsest: Data Modeling and Data Management'.

Imaging techniques for various scopes were also introduced in the talks by Irmgard Schuler (Vatican Library) on 'Imaging for Manuscript Inspection', Simon Brenner (Vienna) on 'Photometric Stereo for Palimpsest Analysis', Leif Glaser (Hamburg) on 'X-Ray Fluorescence Investigations on Erased Text Written in Iron Gall Ink' and Ivan Shevchuk (Hamburg) on 'Full Field Multispectral Imaging as a Tool for Text Recovery in Palimpsests'. Gregory Heyworth (Rochester, IN) delivered a paper entitled 'From Technology to Text: Reading and Editing the Lacunose Manuscript'

The conference thus brought together an international assembly of scholars who have been in the forefront of palimpsest studies in recent years, either in reading and analyzing palimpsests texts, or in making them legible through advanced imaging and image processing methods. The discussion highlighted further directions in which the collaboration between the technology, natural sciences, and philology/codicology may develop in the future. Conference papers are expected to be published in a volume of the conference proceedings.

The conference programme is available at <https://rapp.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/p_rapp/Events_2018/Palimpsests_Conference_Programme_25-27.04.2018.pdf>.

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