

The Cluster of Excellence
Understanding Written Artefacts
at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures

and the ERC project
Hebrew Philosophical Manuscripts as Sites of Engagement
(HEPMASITE) at the Institute for Jewish Philosophy and Religion

cordially invite you to the workshop

Medieval Manuscripts of Natural Philosophy

Wednesday, 15 May 2024, 10:00 am – 4:45 pm CEST

Thursday, 16 May 2024, 9:30 am – 6:30 pm CEST

Organised by Christian Brockmann, José Maksimczuk,
Yoav Meyrav, and Lucas Oro Hershtein
(Universität Hamburg)

Registration:

<https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/en/register/workshop56>

This workshop is the second in a series devoted to investigating the material manifestations of intellectual pursuits across diverse philosophical disciplines. The initial session, held in Hamburg in 2023, focused on medieval manuscripts of logic within the Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin linguistic realms. It featured discussions on codicology, philology, historiography, and material analysis methodologies. In the present workshop we will shift our attention to the philosophy of nature, covering a broad spectrum that includes physics, cosmology, meteorology, medicine, psychology, and more. The primary objective is to foster a comparative dialogue aimed at uncovering the universal traits present in manuscripts pertaining to the philosophy of nature, thereby overcoming the traditional linguistic and chronological barriers typically imposed.

This workshop is part of the ERC Project HEPMASITE (Hebrew Philosophical Manuscripts as Sites of Engagement). This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 101041376).

Programme

Wednesday, 15 May 2024, 10:00 am – 5:30 pm

Venue: Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (Universität Hamburg)
Warburgstraße 26, 20354 Hamburg, pavilion

10:00 – 10:15 Accreditation

10:15 – 10:30 Christian Brockmann (Universität Hamburg) and Giuseppe Veltri (Universität Hamburg)
Welcome and Introduction

Greek Manuscripts

Chair: Dieter Harlfinger (Universität Hamburg)

10:30 – 11:15 Justin Winzenrieth (Universität Tübingen)
How Many Books does Alexander's Commentary on the De sensu Have?

11:15 – 12:00 Luigi Orlandi (Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften)
Laying Medicine Out. Remarks on Contents and Paracontents in Greek-Byzantine Manuscripts

12:00 – 2:00 Lunch

Hebrew Manuscripts

Chair: Yoav Meyrav (Universität Hamburg)

2:00 – 2:45 Hanna Gentili (Universität Hamburg)
Moses Narboni and the Quaestio: A Case Study in the Transmission of Jewish Natural Philosophy

2:45 – 3:30 Michael Engel (Universität Hamburg)
The Hebrew Version of Averroes's Middle Commentary on the Physics: A Reassessment of the Manuscript Evidence

3:30 – 4:00 Coffee Break

Greek Manuscripts

Chair: José Maksimczuk (Universität Hamburg)

4:00 – 4:45 Mai-Lan Boureau (KU Leuven)

The Transmission of Peripatetic Natural Philosophy in Manuscript Laur. 87.20

7:00 Dinner (Greentable Vegan Restaurant, Schauenburgerstraße 55, 20095 Hamburg)

Thursday, 16 May 2024, 9:30 am – 6:30 pm

Venue: Institute for Jewish Philosophy and Religion (Universität Hamburg)

Jungiusstraße 11, 20355 Hamburg (3rd Floor)

Hebrew Manuscripts

Chair: Hanna Gentili (Universität Hamburg)

9:30 – 10:15 Yoav Meyrav (Universität Hamburg)

Presence, Absence, and the Presence of Absence: Geometrical Diagrams in the Manuscript Tradition of the Hebrew Translation of Averroes's Epitome of Aristotle's Meteorology

10:15 – 10:30 Coffee Break

Greek Manuscripts

Chair: Christian Brockmann (Universität Hamburg)

10:30 – 11:15 José Maksimczuk (Universität Hamburg)

Some Remarks on Neap. III D 7: Material Aspects and Transmission

11:15 – 12:00 Stefano Valente (Universität Hamburg)

Greek Philosophy of Nature for Beginners: A Journey through the Manuscripts of Nikephoros Blemmydes' Compendium on Physics

12:00 – 2:00 Lunch Break

Latin Manuscripts

Chair: Michael Engel (Universität Hamburg)

2:00 – 2:45 Andrei Marinca (Babeş-Bolyai University)

Finding Value in a Single Textual Witness: Arnold of Strelley's Questions in Natural Philosophy

2:45 – 3:30 Ioana Curuț (Babeş-Bolyai University)

Textual Transmission of Jewish Sources in Natural Philosophy at the University of Vienna

3:30 – 4:00 Coffee Break

Hebrew and Latin Manuscripts

Chair: Lucas Oro Hershtein (Universität Hamburg)

4:00 – 4:45 Suf Amichay (University of Cambridge)

Bodleian Opp. 578 – An Early Modern Manuscript of Medieval Philosophy

4:45 – 5:30 Dustin Klinger (The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies)

Natural Philosophy between Islamic and Secular Science: On Some Manuscripts in the Topkapı Palace Library of Bayezid II

5:30 – 6:30 Final Discussion

Abstracts and Contributors

Suf Amichay (University of Cambridge)

Bodleian Opp. 578 – An Early Modern Manuscript of Medieval Philosophy

Thursday, 16 May 2024, 4:00 pm – 4:45 pm

Opp. 578, at the Bodleian, is a carefully crafted compendium of Logic and natural philosophy. It has received little scholarly attention. The author, from the 17th century, seems to be a European, Latin-educated man who embellishes the Hebrew text with Latinised terms. The text is interesting both because it offers mature, comprehensive descriptions of Aristotelian natural philosophy, and because it contains evidence of the author being a man of his time, somewhat aware of scientific innovation in the mainstream European world; he mostly chooses to ignore such non-Aristotelian innovations. In the talk I will introduce the text and its structure, highlight hints to the possible profile of the author, and contextualise his medieval natural philosophy within the larger history of science, giving some evidence he was aware of new developments in his time.

Mai-Lan Boureau (KU Leuven)

The Transmission of Peripatetic Natural Philosophy in Manuscript Laur. 87.20

Wednesday, 15 May 2024, 4:00 pm – 4:45 pm

Manuscript Laur. 87.20, believed to have originated in 14th-century Constantinople, stands as a composite compilation containing natural philosophy works from the *Corpus Aristotelicum*, transcribed by at least 11 different scribes. Moreover, it is intricately linked to the transmission of several sets of invaluable and rare scholia spanning different periods. The presence of notable features within the manuscript prompts an inquiry into the purpose underlying its creation. Additionally, despite its heterogeneous composition, this manuscript could provide new insights into the history of the Philosophical Collection through the reconstruction of one of its lost models, bearing characteristics typical of the prestigious collection.

Ioana Curuț (Babeș-Bolyai University)

Textual Transmission of Jewish Sources in Natural Philosophy at the University of Vienna

Thursday, 16 May 2024, 2:45 pm – 3:30 pm

In medieval *Sentences* commentaries, matters of natural philosophy were typically incorporated in questions on Book II. In the early XVth century, several generations of theologians lecturing on the *Sentences* at the new Faculty of Theology from the University of Vienna developed a 'group commentary' by elaborating more or less on the same core text. Based on a preliminary investigation of hitherto neglected and unedited versions of the 'Vienna Group Commentary' on Book II, spread in dozens of manuscripts, I discuss how Jewish thought informs the Viennese scholastic *questions* on various topics in natural philosophy. By adopting a manuscript-based approach I will: 1) contextualize the Rabbinic quotations identified so far; 2) trace some notable name variants across different manuscript traditions and explain how they have been introduced in the transmission process; and 3) address implications in terms of doctrine and reception history. These multiple threads of inquiry converge towards illuminating the manner in which Jewish ideas and arguments reached the Viennese academic discourse and transformed it.

Michael Engel (Universität Hamburg)

The Hebrew Version of Averroes's Middle Commentary on the Physics: A Reassessment of the Manuscript Evidence

Wednesday, 15 May 2024, 2:45 pm – 3:30 pm

The Hebrew translation of the Middle Commentary on the Physics is traditionally ascribed to two translators: Zeraḥiah b. She'altiel Ḥen, who allegedly translated the work in 1284 in Rome, and Kalonymos b. Kalonymos, who apparently translated the work in 1316 in Arles. In the past, scholars have identified the affinity between the two versions, and ascribed it to the influence that Zeraḥiah had on Kalonymos. Instead, and based on a fresh evaluation of the body of manuscripts, I will attempt to show that Kalonymos' version is the result of a process of revising the older version, i.e. not a fresh translation. I will also attempt to point to some manuscripts as carrying an in-between phase of the revision process.

Hanna Gentili (Universität Hamburg)

Moses Narboni and the Quaestio: A Case Study in the Transmission of Jewish Natural Philosophy

Wednesday, 15 May 2024, 2:00 pm – 2:45 pm

Moses Narboni (c. 1300 – c. 1362) played a fundamental role in the transmission of Averroes' natural philosophy and produced commentaries, among others, on Averroes' *De substantia orbis* and *Questions in Physics*. These works had a complex textual transmission as they circulated in different arrangements, both with and without Narboni's commentary. The Hebrew sources were also fundamental in the reception of Averroes in Latin and became popular among Christian Renaissance scholars as they preserved content that was only partially available in Arabic and Latin.

This paper will start from Averroes' Question V, which deals with time and eternity, to then contextualise Averroes' text and Narboni's commentary in the wider framework of the medieval debates on natural philosophy. The analysis of the text will also provide an opportunity to discuss the genre of the 'quaestio' in Hebrew and some methodological remarks concerning collections of questions with a stratified textual transmission and our understanding of their role in the history of philosophy.

Dustin D. Klinger (The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies)

Natural Philosophy between Islamic and Secular Science: On Some Manuscripts in the Topkapı Palace Library of Bayezid II

Thursday, 16 May 2024, 4:45 pm – 5:30 pm

In 'Atufi's 1503 inventory of books for Bayezid II's palace library some of the most influential works on natural philosophy were put on different shelves. Often featuring in tripartite summae that besides physics included logic and metaphysics, texts and their commentaries on natural philosophy connected to, for example, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-manṭiq wa al-ḥikma* or Sirāj al-Dīn al-Urmawī's (d. 1283) *Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-manṭiq wa al-ḥikma* and Maṭāli' *al-anwār fī al-manṭiq wa al-ḥikma al-islāmiyya*. Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī's (d. 1265) *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*, however, containing one of the most influential madrasa texts on natural philosophy, was shelved elsewhere under "Philosophical philosophy" (*al-ḥikma al-falsafiyya*). This division reflects a perceived distinction between two different kinds of doing (natural) philosophy that informed the organization of the encyclopedic knowledge contained in the Sultan's collection at the time. But the place of natural philosophy was not only contested in the organization of a library. The ambivalent place that physics held between metaphysics and theology already in Aristotle came to be negotiated within works on philosophy between Avicenna and the 15th century. Taking my departure from the inventory of Bayezid II's library, in this paper I explore some

of the ways in which natural philosophy hovered between Islamic and secular science, as well as between metaphysics and theology, in the postclassical tradition.

José Maksimczuk (Universität Hamburg)

Some Remarks on Neap. III D 7: Material Aspects and Transmission

Thursday, 16 May 2024, 10:30 am – 11:15 am

This paper focuses on the manuscript Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III, III D 7, a codex containing Aristotle's treatises on natural philosophy (Physics, Parts of Animals, Generation of Animals). It discusses features of Neap. III D 7 such as its scribe and annotators, its visual organization, its paracontent, which I believe will provide us important information to understand the transmission and circulation of the Corpus Aristotelicum in Constantinople between the mid 14th and the early 15th centuries.

Andrei Marinca (Babeş-Bolyai University)

Finding Value in a Single Textual Witness: Arnold of Strelley's Questions in Natural Philosophy

Thursday, 16 May 2024, 2:00 pm – 2:45 pm

Studying a philosophical work that has survived in a single manuscript has its limitations, as well as its silver linings. Codex Universitätsbibliothek Erfurt, Dep. Erf., CA 2° 180 is one such example, since it contains the only extant copy of the commentary to Peter Lombard's *Sentences* attributed to the Dominican Arnold of Strelley, who lectured at the Oxford Blackfriars convent around 1325. Despite Strelley's lectures being an important document for the history of philosophy between Ockham and the Black Death, his unedited questions in natural philosophy have been entirely overlooked. In this paper I show that a strong philosophical inclination, overriding theological concerns, is discernible across Strelley's text, and that a thorough reading of ms. UB Erfurt, Dep. Erf., CA 2° 180 proves fruitful for charting the development of a logico-mathematical approach toward natural philosophy in the 14th century.

Yoav Meyrav (Universität Hamburg)

Presence, Absence, and the Presence of Absence: Geometrical Diagrams in the Manuscript Tradition of the Hebrew Translation of Averroes's Epitome of Aristotle's Meteorology

Thursday, 16 May 2024, 9:30 am – 10:15 am

Averroes's *Epitome of Aristotle's Meteorology* (1159, with subsequent revisions) contains geometrical discussions that attempt to explain halos and rainbows through principles of optics. In the surviving Arabic manuscripts, these discussions are sometimes accompanied by three diagrams. In some of the manuscripts of Moses ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation (1251, with subsequent revisions by other scholars), the diagrams appear while in others they are absent. When the diagrams appear, they are not always the same. In the present paper I will ask what the appearance/absence/variation of the diagrams can teach us about the transmission process and the division of labour among the various agents of production, both with regard to the *Meteorology* epitome on its own terms, and in the context of the Hebrew circulation of Averroes's Aristotelian epitomes in general.

Luigi Orlandi (Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften)

Laying Medicine Out. Remarks on Contents and Paracontents in Greek-Byzantine Manuscripts

Wednesday, 15 May 2024, 11:15 am – 12:00 am

The paper deals with issues concerning visual organization, structure of contents and paracontents in Greek medical manuscripts dating from the 10th up to the 15th century. In the recent past, scholars carried out major work on this subject. One shall mention at least the conference devoted to 'medical paracontents' in Byzantine manuscripts which took place in Glasgow in September 2022 and resulted in a significant advance in our understanding of how medical manuscripts were conceived, penned and used in the Middle Ages. In my talk, I shall draw attention to many of the topics addressed at the Glasgow conference, such as features of scribal paratextuality as well as patterns playing a key role as visual aids in both scholarly and scholastic settings. In doing so, disparate materials will be presented by analyzing different strategies of layout, the emergence of common threads notwithstanding: on the one hand, books destined for consultation and preservation in rich private manuscript collections or libraries connected to institutions (monasteries or hospitals); on the other hand, modest-looking manuscripts belonging to Byzantine scholars operating themselves as physicians in the Paleologan Renaissance.

Stefano Valente (Universität Hamburg)

Greek Philosophy of Nature for Beginners: A Journey through the Manuscripts of Nikephoros Blemmydes' Compendium on Physics

Thursday, 16 May 2024, 11:15 am – 12:00 am

In the 13th century, the Byzantine theologian and philosopher Nikephoros Blemmydes composed a very successful coursebook (*Epitome Isagogica*), containing an introduction on logic (*Epitome logica*) in the first book and on physics, meteorology and astronomy in the second one (*Epitome physica*). It was conceived to support his learning and teaching activity. The two books enjoyed a wide reception and circulated in manuscripts both together and as autonomous treatises. The present paper will focus on some remarkable written artefacts transmitting the *Epitome physica* from among the more than one hundred still surviving ones and dating from the 13th to the 18th century. The materiality of representative manuscripts as well as layout- and content-related features will be analysed to trace constant features and innovations in the dissemination of Blemmydes' *Epitome pyhsica* across different times and cultural centres.

Justin Winzenrieth (Universität Tübingen)

How Many Books Does Alexander's Commentary on the De sensu Have?

Wednesday, 15 May 2024, 10:30 am – 11:15 am

The commentary on Aristotle's *De sensu et sensibilibus* by Alexander of Aphrodisias, as it has been edited in the CAG series, presents the unique feature of being divided into two books whereas standard editions of Aristotle's treatise do not introduce any book-division at all. It turns out that this striking discrepancy is a by-product of the peculiar way in which Alexander's commentary has been transmitted: what was presumably a mere shift between two scrolls has been turned into an internal structure of the text. As a result, modern editions of Alexander should arguably drop any such book-division. This situation has also impacted the transmission of Aristotle's work. Several attempts have been made to introduce a similar division (especially during the second half of the 15th century), thus revealing a complex layer of interaction with the transmission of Alexander's commentary.