

name from Bobbio Abbey, where it was preserved in part because of a remembered association with the Irish missionary Columbanus (c.540–615 CE). The story of this object ends (for now) in Turin, where the manuscript exists as a collection of dismounted folios. Larsen's approach to the biography of the material Gospel offers new lenses with which to examine the continued and changing materiality of Gospel text.

The publication of collected papers from the conference is intended.

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Exempla Trahunt.
Specimens of Alchemical and Scientific Manuscripts
(Arabic & Syriac)

Bologna, 8–9 July 2019

The study of oriental manuscripts has taken its first steps towards professionalization, without doubt a wise direction to follow. The past twenty-five years, at least, have seen the publication of important research and reference works, along with the institution of many dedicated courses and seminars introducing students to scholarly work on oriental manuscripts. The reference to 'manuscript specimens' in the workshop title hints at a homage to one of the first publications to pave the way to the professionalization of the study of Arabo-Islamic manuscripts. Its author, Jan Just Witkam, opened this workshop with a methodological introduction, addressing the importance of defining a set of basic tools for this scholarly field ('Searching for Anchors: Creating Basic Tools for the Study of Islamic Manuscripts'). The idea of 'specimens', proposed for this workshop, however, was much broader and more inclusive than its paleographic usage. This scholarly meeting gathered a number of typological case studies representative of various features attested in the Arabic and Syriac manuscript traditions dealing with alchemy and science, for instance, multilingual and allographic traditions, fragmentary and over-abundant ones, including prose or poetry texts with (or lacking) the addition of diagrams and illustrations. The typological value of these representative specimens turns them into valuable tools for research and didactic.

After the opening address, the first day of the workshop focused on Arabic alchemical manuscripts. Regula Forster presented the large manuscript tradition of Ibn Arfā' Rā's's *Šudūr al-ḡahab*, showing how to analyse, understand, and handle the tradition of a text that, arguably, met with great success, as evidenced by the impressive number of witnesses revealing considerable material and textual differences produced in the course of several centuries. Bink Hallum chose MS London, British Library, Oriental 13006 as an exam-

ple of a notebook that was produced and owned by an itinerant scholar, stressing the presence of texts in different languages and its idiosyncratic layout. The contribution of Gabriele Ferrario offered a typological overview of the alchemical fragments that emerged from the Genizah. This research compared the data derived from the quantitative aspects of the alchemical fragments in the Genizah collection with an analysis of the different kinds of original formats and textual genres (lists of ingredients, portions of larger texts, recipes, etc.). Marion Dapsens chose MS Rabat, Khizana al-Hasaniyya, 1024, an exemplary Mağribī manuscript that displays most of the features associated with alchemical writings (prose and poetry, symbols and diagrams and the occasional lack thereof).

The second day of the workshop was dedicated to Syriac scientific literature. Emilie Villey gave an overview of extant Syriac astronomical manuscripts. Though few in number, it is possible to establish relations between the existing witnesses and stress common features, such as the small format characterized by relatively ample margins meant for explanatory glosses to clarify the most difficult and obscure passages. In his discussion of Syriac medical manuscripts, Grigory Kessel showed different typologies (in particular, those including tables and diagrams), although there seemed to be no specific attempt to differentiate medical manuscripts from witnesses to other textual traditions. Jury Arzhanov dealt with the forms of transmission of gnomic sayings in Syriac manuscripts. Such sayings were the nascent steps in Syriac rhetorical education, strongly reminiscent of the ancient *paideia* and the Alexandrian curriculum. This emerges, in particular, from the combination of these gnomic sentences with other texts in multiple-text manuscripts. Salam Rassi presented the *Epistle of Alchemy* attributed to the Ps. Aristotle, a text with a double transmission, Christian and Islamic. One of the most striking features of this manuscript tradition is allography, since considerable parts of the text are written in Garshuni, which probably contributed to the fluid transmission of the text. There are plans to publish a selection of the papers presented at this occasion in a monographic issue of the *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts*.

The programme is available at <<https://alchemeast.eu/2019/06/25/exempla-trahunt-specimens-of-alchemical-and-scientific-manuscripts-arabicsyriac/>>.

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