

“BOOKS OF THOT”

EGYPTIAN MAGICAL FORMULARIES OF THE 1ST MILLENIUM C.E. IN THE INTERDISCIPLINARY FOCUS OF MULTI-METHOD RESEARCH

Venue: -1.2057 – Time: Tuesday 4.00-6.00 p.m. – Start: Tuesday 21 October – Credit Points: 5

Exposé

Demotic magical formularies, transmitted in partly multilingual and multiscriptural handbooks together with Greek and so-called “Old-Coptic” texts and text passages, have been subject to research by demotic scholars for a long time. The large corpus of Coptic magical text too has been studied since long, notably certain conspicuously pagan traditions therein which have been frequently commented on from perspectives of Egyptology and the history of religion.

Egyptian magical formularies of the 1 millennium CE are extant in different book formats – scroll, codex, and rotulus. They are multimedia knowledge repositories, verbalizing in different scripts and languages, and partly visualizing, magical rituals in term of their practical manipulations (“*praxis*”), including required utensils and substances, in terms of the words (“*logos*”) to be recited over magical objects or to be written with specific writing liquids on specific writing supports, and in terms of sacrifices to be offered (“*thysia*”). Some ancient assemblages of Demotic, Greek, “Old-Coptic”, or Coptic manuscripts, thus magical “libraries” or “archives”, can partly be reconstructed from available provenience information.

For a long time, magical formularies have been perceived and studied through specific philological (Greek, Demotic, Coptic) lenses in disciplinary isolation, as mere texts, i.e. merely linguistic items. Only through the recent years, raised awareness has been devoted to manuscript- and text-internal (linguistic, graphemic, content-related) complexities, on different contexts and, last but not least, on materiality, so that these ancient knowledge repositories are now in the focus of a multi-method, multi-layered, interdisciplinary research agenda (e.g., O’Connell 2022, Dosoo 2025; Dosoo & Torallas Tovar 2022). The **Hauptseminar** shall be dedicated to these complexities and this novel research agenda. Its topics will include:

1. “*praxis*”, “*logos*”, “*thysia*”: towards the functional structure of magical formularies –
2. Magical formularies in the (finding) context of ancient collections of texts –
3. Reading exercises: Demotic magical formularies (P.BM 10588, P.Lond.Leid.) –
4. Reading exercises: Coptic magical formularies: (Berlin Magical Archive, Hays Archive) –
5. Multimediality: Multilingualism and multiscripturalism, text and image –
6. Scroll, codex, rotulus: book formats and *mis-en-page* of magical formularies –
7. Writing supports and writing liquids: Towards the functionality and semantics of magical materials –
8. Institutional, social, and religious contexts of magical formularies.

Introduction

JÖRDENS, Andrea und AST, Rodney: Ägyptische Magie im Wandel der Zeiten: Eine Ausstellung des Instituts für Papyrologie in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Institut für Ägyptologie der Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg: heiBOOKS, 2017 (Universitätsmuseum Heidelberg: Kataloge, Band 5).
<https://doi.org/10.11588/heibooks.71.61>

RICHTER, Tonio Sebastian. „Magic“. In: Cäcilia Fluck, Gisela Helmecke, Elisabeth R. O’Connell (eds.), Egypt. Faith after the Pharaohs. Catalogue accompanying the exhibition British Museum, London, 29 October 2015 – 14 February 2016, London: The British Museum 2015, 190-197.

JÖRDENS, Andrea (Hsg.), *Ägyptische Magie und ihre Umwelt*. Philippika 80. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2015