Ancient Jewish and Christian Apocalypses: Transfer of Knowledge and Genre Definition

The conference aims at discussing how the literary genre “apocalypse” promoted specific domains of knowledge in Late Antiquity, such as eschatology, soteriology, angelology, demonology, ecclesiology, ethics and anthropology, and how it influenced Jewish and Christian concepts of the afterlife.

The colloquium is part of an ongoing research project that will eventually result in the publication of a new translation and commentary on all ancient apocalypses. Fifty-five texts have been selected based on the phenomenological definition of apocalyptic literature introduced by John J. Collins in 1979. These texts, composed up to the middle of the 8th century CE, have been distributed among forty philologists, historians, and theologians, who are examining them to determine what types of knowledge they transmit and how these types of knowledge are transformed by inclusion in the genre “apocalypse”. The definition of the genre will then be central to the conversation.

In addition to keynote lectures by John J. Collins, Martha Himmelfarb and Jane Baun, the conference will include four sessions focusing on different research questions:

1. Defining the Genre
2. Mapping Jewish and Christian Traditions
3. Identifying Characteristics of Late Apocalypses
4. Transmission of Knowledge in Apocalyptic Literature.

Each participant will discuss his or her text in at least one of the sessions, providing initial answers to the proposed questions in a short talk. It is expected that a modified definition of “apocalypse” and an inventory of the types of knowledge reflected in early and late apocalyptic texts will emerge by the end of the conference.

Collaborative Research Centre “Episteme in Motion: Transfer of Knowledge from the Ancient World to the Early Modern Period” (SFB 980)

Humboldt University Berlin
Department of Theology
Chair of Ancient Church History

Further information
www.antikes-christentum.de

Contact
Emiliano Fiori (emfiori@gmail.com)
Stefanie Rabe (stefanie.rabe@hu-berlin.de)
Friday, 14 November 2014
Heilig-Geist-Kapelle, Spandauer Straße 1, 10178 Berlin
09.00–09.15 Conference Opening and Welcome
First Panel: 09.15–13.00
Defining the Genre
Chair: Christoph Markschies
09.15–10.00 Keynote Lecture
John J. Collins (Yale Divinity School)
The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered
10.00–10.30 Discussion
10.30–11.00 Short Papers
11.00–11.30 Coffee Break
11.30–12.00 Enrico Norelli (University of Geneva)
Why Did Early Believers in Jesus Write Apocalypses?
12.00–12.30 Emmanouela Grypeou
(Talking Skulls: On Some Personal Accounts on
Afterlife and Their Place in Apocalyptic Literature
12.30–13.00 Short Papers
13.00–14.00 Lunch
14.00–14.30 Coffee

Second Panel: 14.30–18.45
Mapping Jewish and Christian Traditions
Chair: Florentina Badalanova-Geller
14.30–15.15 Keynote Lecture
Martha Himmelfarb (Princeton University)
Eschatology and Empire: A Parting of the Ways
for Jewish and Christian Apocalypses?
15.15–15.45 Discussion
15.45–16.15 Short Papers
16.15–16.45 Coffee Break
16.45–17.15 Johannes Reinhart (University of Vienna)
The Slavonic Apocalypse of Abraham
17.15–17.45 Bernd J. Diebner (University of Heidelberg)
Is It Legitimate to Consider the Book of Ezekiel
as Apocalyptic Literature?
17.45–18.15 Break
18.15–18.45 Short Papers

Saturday, 15 November 2014
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Burgstraße 26,
Theologische Fakultät, Room 117
Third Panel: 09.00–12.45
Identifying Characteristics of Late Apocalypses
Chair: Emiliano Fiori
09.00–09.45 Keynote Lecture
Jane Baun (University of Oxford)
“Forth Out of His Treasure Things New and
Things Old” (Matthew 13:52): Knowledge
Transfer between Late Antique and Medieval
Apocalypses in the Byzantine Sphere
09.45–10.15 Discussion
10.15–10.45 Short Papers
10.45–11.15 Coffee Break
11.15–11.45 Lutz Greisiger (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
Some Ethno- and Geographical Eschata from
7th Century Middle-Eastern Apocalyptic
Narratives in Latin Sources
11.45–12.15 John Carey (University of Cork)
The Concealment and Disclosure of Knowledge in
the Old Irish In Tenga Bithnua
12.15–12.45 Short Papers
12.45–14.00 Lunch
14.00–14.30 Coffee

Fourth Panel: 14.30–18.00
Transmission of Knowledge in Apocalyptic Literature
Chair: Jens Schröter
14.30–15.00 Emiliano Fiori (Humboldt University, Berlin)
Death and Judgment in the Apocalypse of
Paul: Old Imagery and Monastic Reinvention
15.00–15.30 Daniele Tripaldi (University of Bologna)
Edfu and the Oriens: Transmission of Ancient
Egyptian Lore in Two Coptic Apocalypses
15.30–16.00 Short Papers
16.00–16.30 Break
16.30–17.00 Short Papers
17.00–18.00 Concluding Remarks
Christoph Markschies (Humboldt University, Berlin)

Short papers will be delivered by
Florentina Badalanova-Geller (Berlin)
Cordula Bandt (Berlin)
Alessandro Bausi (Hamburg)
Klaus Berger (Heidelberg)
Jan Dochhorn (Aarhus)
Lutz Doering (Münster)
Judith Hartenstein (Koblenz-Landau)
Uta Heil (Erlangen-Nürnberg)
Andreas Heiser (Ewersbach)
Matthias Henze (Houston)
Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer (Aberdeen)
Julian Petkov (Heidelberg)
Karl Pinggéra (Marburg)
Loren Stuckenbruck (München)
Harald Suermann (Bonn)
Claudia Tiersch (Berlin)
Emanuela Valeriani (Rome)
Vadim Vitkowsky (Berlin)
Gregor Wurst (Augsburg)
Claudio Zamagni (Geneva)
Gregor Wurst (Augsburg)