

The Material Traditions of the Psalms (Hamburg/online, 25-26 Jun 26)

Hamburg, Warburg-Haus / Online, Jun 25–26, 2026

Erene Rafik Morcos, Basel

For over two millennia, the Psalms have served as a source of devotion, identity, and artistic inspiration across cultures and traditions. While their textual traditions are relatively well studied, the extent of the Psalms' rich material and visual heritage—transcribed on parchment, carved in stone, woven into textiles, and integrated into diverse media—has never been fully investigated. This conference seeks to explore the Psalms not simply as text, but as a vast collection of objectified, visualised, and embodied traditions. Sessions will explore the visual and material expressions of this sacred poetry with particular attention to material choices, modes of transmission, and the dynamics of fragmentation and reproduction. Tracing how these sacred texts move across languages, technologies, and formats, this conference invites conversation on the Psalms as a materially embedded and expanding written tradition.

Organizers: Erene Morcos (University of Cologne), Hanna Wimmer (University of Hamburg), and Karin Becker (University of Hamburg).

Programme

THURSDAY, 25 June 2026, 9:45 am – 6:00 pm

9:45 – 10:00: Arrival and Registration

10:00 – 10:45: Warburg-Haus Tour with Hannah Neufang

10:45 – 11:30: Introduction

11:30 – 12:00: Coffee Break

Section I – Sound and Substance within and beyond the Codex

Chair: Karin Becker

12:00 – 12:45: Oliver Huck (University of Hamburg)

Written Music in the Psalter and the Psalms with Music in Medieval
Western European Manuscripts

12:45 – 1:30: Chrysi Kotsifou (Niedersächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen)

The Coptic Psalms and their Transmission on Papyrus, Parchment, Stone, and Clay

1:30 – 2:30: Lunch Break

Section II – Origins and Transmissions

Chair: José Maksimczuk

2:30 – 3:15: Justin Willson (Yale University)
Textual Survivor: The Psalter in Slavonic Author Images

3:15 – 4:00: Ronny Vollandt (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität)
Arabic Translations of the Book of Psalms: A Survey

4:00 – 4:30: Coffee Break

Section III – The Materiality of Sacred Writing
Chair: Hanna Wimmer

4:30 – 5:15: Uta Lauer (Universität Hamburg)
From Faith to Life-Style Product – Psalms and Chinese Cultural Conventions

5:15 – 6:00: David Ganz (Universität Zürich)
Psalms in Golden Splendor

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FRIDAY, 26 June 2026, 10:00 am – 5:30 pm

Section IV – The Canon and Innovation
Chair: Erene Rafik Morcos

10:00 – 10:45: Sophia Dege-Müller and Jonas Karlsson (University of Hamburg)
Continuity and Innovation in the Ethiopic Tradition of the Psalms

10:45 – 11:30: Georgi Parpulov
The Seven Penitential Psalms in Greek

11:30 – 12:00 Coffee Break

Section V – Visual Frameworks
Chair: Hanna Wimmer

12:00 – 12:45: Grace Clipson (Yale University)
Constructing Devotion: Architectural Frameworks in the Queen Mary Psalter

12:45 – 1:30 Marco Pavan (Università degli Studi Roma Tre | Pontificia Università di San Tommaso d'Aquino)
The Internal Segmentation, and Graphic Arrangement of Hebrew Poetry at Qumrân. The Dead Sea «Psalms» Scrolls and the Hodayot as a Case in Point

1:30 – 2:30 Lunch Break

Section VI – Shield and Shelter: Apotropaic Practices
Chair: Michael Kohs

2:30 – 3:15: Anastasia Tsacheiridou (Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης)
Whoever Dwells in the Shelter of the Most High (Psalm 91/90): Psalms and Apotropaic Practices
in Byzantine Minor Art

3:15 – 4:00: Giovanni Ruffini (Fairfield University)
The Psalms as Nubia's Shield

4:00 – 4:30: Coffee Break

4:30 – 5:30: Roundtable Discussion

To register for remote or in-person attendance, please visit the event website and click 'Book Now'
at the bottom of the page: <https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/register/workshop77>

For any questions about the conference please contact: Hanna Wimmer [hanna.wimmer(at)u-
ni-hamburg.de] or Erene Rafik Morcos [emorcos(at)uni-koeln.de]

Reference:

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