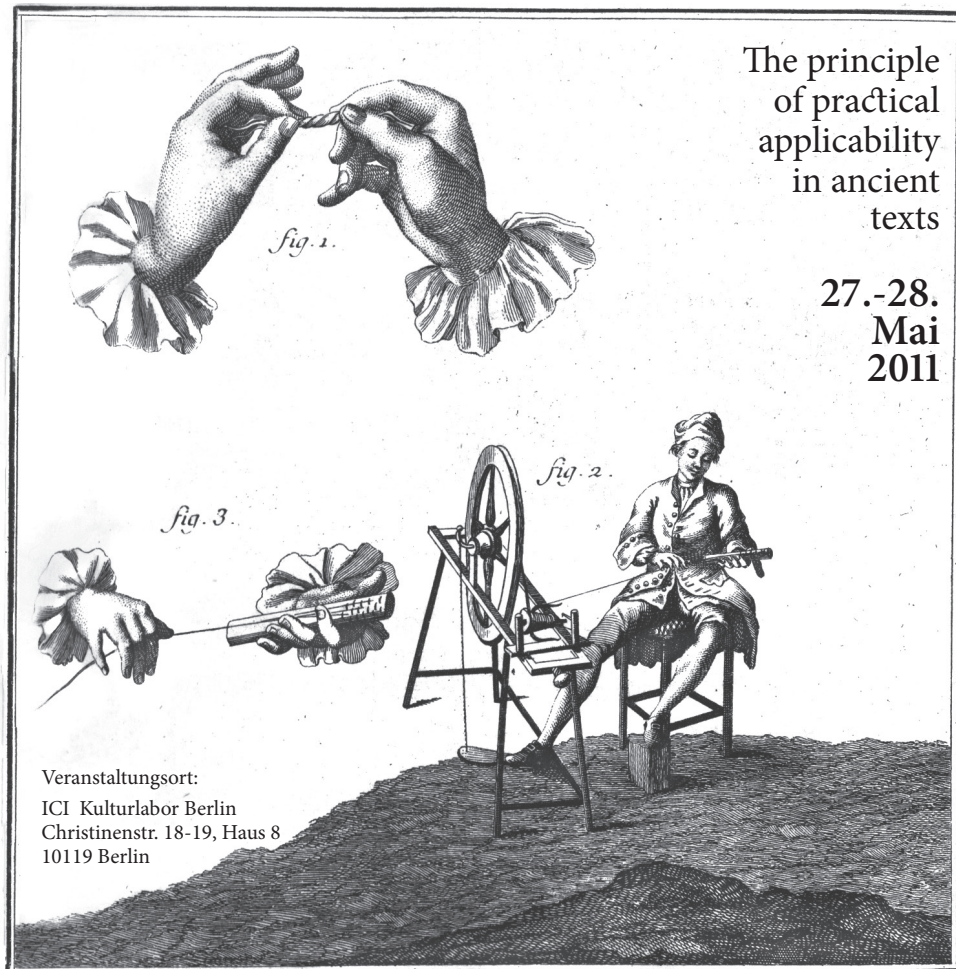


# From Words to Acts?

The principle of practical applicability in ancient texts

27.-28. Mai 2011



Veranstaltungsort:  
ICI Kulturlabor Berlin  
Christinenstr. 18-19, Haus 8  
10119 Berlin

The study of ancient 'technical and scientific' texts has attracted increasing attention from classical scholars over the last 15 years. These texts have been discussed from many perspectives and with a range of methods; but seen as sources for the history of science and technology, they tend to be studied under the aegis of the various disciplines. Among these, the history of ancient medicine traditionally represents the most developed field. Yet in other areas of technical expertise, too, the analysis of textual strategies, rhetoric and styles of argumentation has promoted the comparative study of texts belonging to different disciplines; and by putting the category of 'technical and scientific' writing in relationship with other genres, scholars have clearly shown the cultural and literary complexity of these texts. This conference will focus on one particular textual aspect which seems to have been a guiding concern for most authors of these texts: their applicability, i.e. the extent to which the successful mastery of their contents expresses itself in practical performance, and in the extra-textual realization of the norms, rules and procedures described within the texts themselves. This expectation of extra-textual applicability often marks and distinguishes the role of the author: he or she normally ends up affirming that the work he has written may not have stylistic excellence, but has the advantage of being directly applicable. Yet the transition from reading to action is by no means straightforward. This difficulty concerning the applicability of ancient literature merits further discussion. It is important to acknowledge the centrality of the motif of 'use' to the structure and rhetoric of so-called 'technical and scientific' texts, but also to focus on the highly problematic status of considering a literary phenomenon in terms of theories of knowledge.

## Freitag, 27. Mai

9:30 Grußwort

Claudia Peppel, ICI Berlin  
Einführung

Marco Formisano und Philip van der Eijk

10:00 Elisa Romano (Pavia)

*Si qui voluerit: Architecture as "the Art of the Possible"*

10:45 Markus Asper (Berlin)

*Words to Acts in Ancient Mechanical Writing*

11:30 Kaffeepause

11:45 Serafina Cuomo (London)

*From Words in Stone to Measurement Acts: the Athenian Coinage Decree*

12:30 Ronny Kaiser (Berlin)

*et operi verba sint conformia et opus verbis - Caesars Rheinbrücke in Giovanni Giocondos Descriptio pontis in Rheno (1513)*

13:15 Mittagspause

15:00 Alison Sharrock (Manchester)

*Naso magister erat - sed cui bono?*

*On Not Taking the Poet's Teaching Seriously*

15:45 Christiane Reitz (Rostock)

*Auctoritas im Garten. Zur poetischen Strategie von Columella, De re rustica, B. 10*

16:30 Kaffeepause

17:00 Brooke Holmes (Princeton)

*Teaching Sympathy and Antipathy in Pliny's Natural History*

17:45 Klaus Geus (Berlin)

*Rezeption, Adaption, Transformation der Geographie des Ptolemaios*

18:30 Gerd Graßhoff (Berlin)

*Living According to the Seasons - The Power of Parapegmata*

## Samstag, 28. Mai

9:30 Pilar Perez Canizares (München)

*From Words to Acts and Vice Versa: Applicability and Systematization in the Hippocratics*

10:15 Laurence Totelin (Cardiff)

*From Ugly Words to Beautiful Bodies: Cosmetics in Ancient and Medieval Medical Texts*

11:00 Kaffeepause

11:15 Todd Curtis (Austin)

*Procedural Knowledge in the Galenic Corpus*

12:00 Pietro Li Causi (Palermo)

*From Descriptions to Acts. The Paradoxical Animals of the Ancients in a Cognitive Perspective*

12:45 Abschließende Diskussion

Tagungsleitung:

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