

Gessner Studies: state of the research and new perspectives on 16th-century studies in natural history*

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Summary

The field of Gesnerian studies is still to a large extent underdeveloped. This statement sums up in a nutshell the state of research on the body of work of the Zurich physician. Yet, no place for pessimism in this succinct conclusion: in what follows we trace some major tendencies and developments in the study of the Gesnerian corpus. On the whole, it is mostly his illustrations that have drawn scholars' attention, providing interesting perspectives on art history and the representation of nature in the 16th century, as well as, through the study of the circulation of images, on the scholarly networks and knowledge communication in the Renaissance. The second part of this article builds on concrete examples to provide possible perspectives on the paratext of *Historia animalium*, and on the various additions made to it by its author. In conclusion, it appears that numerous aspects of the Renaissance perception of nature remain unexplored, but also that a reading that makes use of precise lexicological and statistical tools is necessary and promising. This conclusion is positive and seeks to highlight the network established between scholars from different domains of the humanities, and also the technical means available at present, which open new possibilities for comparison, exchange and collating of research information.

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