

Preface

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The Munich Graduate School for Ancient Studies

The Graduate School Distant Worlds has been funded by the ‘Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft’ (DFG) and the Excellence Initiative since 2012. With its conceptual orientation, it pursued the goal of promoting the research of young scholars in the entire field of ancient studies in an innovative and interdisciplinary way. In 8 years, the GSDW offered several generations of PhD students and postdocs from all over the world the possibility to conduct and discuss their research in a supportive academic environment and within the excellent research infrastructure of the LMU Munich. On a personal level, the fellows were supported by a group of enthusiastic professors and postdoctoral fellows, who shaped the intellectual stimuli and professional supervision of the GSDW. From the contents’ point of view, the Graduate School was divided in seven focus areas: the constructions of (1) norms, (2) elites, (3) ‘the beautiful’ (aesthetics as a whole), and the organisation of (4) coexistence, (5) exchange, (6) dealing with dissent, and (7) memory and forgetting. The GSDW not only performed seminars and lecture series each semester to stimulate methodological and expert discussion but also allowed for both individual research trips as well as study trips in groups, which brought the members of different focus areas to destinations like Israel, USA, Iran, and many others. These trips, together with colloquia in smaller and larger groups in which the fellows discussed their

ongoing research, shaped the community of the school on professional and personal levels. The range of activities conducted offered a pool of ideas which fed into the diverse individual projects and focus areas. Sometimes only with some distance, as we observe, do we recognise the extent to which the school has broadened our academic horizons and the many ways in which the discussions and feedback positively influenced our work(s).

About the Journal

The Distant Worlds Journal (DWJ) was founded with the aim of transforming the diversity of subjects present at the Graduate School Distant Worlds into a publication format and thus offering young researchers a platform to publish their articles in a peer-reviewed journal. Between 2016 and 2020, five issues were published, each dedicated to a specific topic: *Continuities and Changes of Meaning* (1, 2016); *Dealing With Antiquity: Case Studies and Methodological Considerations in the Ethical Engagement of Ancient Materials* (2, 2017); *Migration and Change* (3, 2017); *Chances and Problems of Cultural Anthropological Perspectives in Ancient Studies* (4, 2020) and most recently *Ideologie und Organisation: Komparative Untersuchungen antiker Gesellschaften* (5, 2020). In total, 47 authors contributed 39 articles to these fascicles. In addition, two Special Issues have been published: One edited by A. F. Bergmeier, K. Palmberger and J. E. Sanzo called

Erzeugung und Zerstörung von Sakralität zwischen Antike und Mittelalter: Beiträge der internationalen Tagung in München vom 20.–21.10.2015 (2016), and *The Semantics of Space in Greek and Roman Narratives* (2018), edited by V. Fabrizi.

Overall, the reception of the articles in this journal were very successful with articles accessed over 5159 times. Thanks to the open access online publication format, we were happy to see that the readership spans disciplines and across the world. Especially in the challenging times we are facing now, the availability of research for everyone, everywhere becomes indispensable if we want to have a discourse where every scholar can participate.

The Distant Worlds Journal ends with this special issue dedicated to the Graduate School Distant Worlds. For this reason, the call was for scientific papers from anyone formerly or currently affiliated with GSDW. Everyone, from the principal investigators to the pre-doctoral students had the chance to write about their research that was inspired by their time at the Graduate School, which gave them the space to develop new ideas, methods and ways of thinking or to present their research or (new) projects.

Contributions to this Issue

13 contributions of former doctoral students, visiting professors, principal investigators, affiliates and fellows were accepted for publication. The authors write about the research they did during their time at the Graduate School, the research they were inspired by, or the research they are doing at their new place of work. In the following, a brief overview of the contents is given.

Assyriology

Returning to the topic of a former presentation of hers at a GSDW reading group in 2014, **Beatrice Baragli** (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) examines Mircea Eliade's impact on Assyriological studies. She points out that Eliade's work has largely been neglected in Assyriology for decades, despite the attention he previously devoted to other Mesopotamian texts such as glass recipes. Only recently have Assyriologists started to re-discover Eliade's work on the interpretation of these cuneiform sources.

Zsombor J. Földi (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich) describes in his paper how the loss of cylinder seals was dealt with in 3rd and 2nd millennium BCE Mesopotamia. He not only lists the previously known documents recording this loss, but also presents a previously unpublished exemplar of this genre. A comparison with similar documents from Old Babylonian Mesopotamia provides an insight into the handling of such losses.

In her article, **Sarah P. Schlüter** (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich) sheds light on the life of a woman named Madawada, who lived at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE in Kaneš, present-day Turkey. Using what is preserved of the archive of Madawada and some archaeological data, the author attempts to gain information about her life.

Christian Archaeology

Sabine Feist (University of Bonn) describes the unique access in the southern vestibule of Ösk Vank. Here, so-called angel pillars open the boundary between the profane and the sacred, thus creating an easily accessible 'barrier-free' space of Christian sacred architecture. The article discusses the special role of the angel pillar in its liminal function and describes the regionally specific peculiarities of the pictorial representation.

Classical Studies

Susanne Gödde's (Freie Universität Berlin) study deals with the relationship between suffering and salvation in ancient Greek novels. The focus is on the question of whether these novels were influenced by religious – especially Christian – patterns and motifs, as earlier research suggests.

Tonio Hölscher (Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg) sketches in his study a theory of images based on the social aspect of daily life with and around images. He emphasizes the social interaction with images in a community of living and deceased people, rather than focusing on more common questions like: ‘What is an image?’ The author had discussed such thoughts in a Doktoranden-Seminar at the ‘Münchner Zentrum für Antike Welten’ in the winter semester 2014/2015.

Sophie Hüdepohl (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich) presents the Roman city of Guntia (present-day Günzburg) which belonged to the Roman province of Raetia. Her article is based on her doctoral research conducted at the GSDW, focusing on the late-Roman phase of the town and on questions of mobility and migration.

Egyptology

John Baines (University of Oxford) takes up a topic to which he already devoted himself during his time as a visiting professor at the ‘Münchner Zentrum für Antike Welten’: biographies. In his article, he deals with two statues of the Egyptian dignitary Wepwawetaa, housed at museums in Leiden and Munich. On both steles there are biographical inscriptions that provide information about Wepwawetaa to the reader, but also the steles themselves have their own ‘biographies’, their own history.

Patrizia Heindl (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich) discusses the modern history of three statues of the Egyptian lecture-priest Petamenophis, all of them found in Italy. The article recapitulates the circumstances of their discovery and their history since then. It concludes with the story of the re-discovery of one of these statues by the author in 2018. More details shall follow in the author’s forthcoming PhD thesis.

Indology

Karl-Stéphan Bouthillette (Ghent University) discusses the results of his doctoral thesis that he wrote during his time at the GSDW. He highlights the philosophical and spiritual value of doxography, which is nowadays often ignored by philosophers. Focusing on the early Indian evidence, he advocates for a new appreciation of this literary genre.

The contribution of **Tanni Moitra** (Adamas University, Kolkata) investigates the concept of *Āpaddharma* in the Brahmanic and Buddhist traditions. *Āpaddharma* can be translated ‘law of crisis’, and it substitutes, in case of a crisis, for the laws of normal circumstances. It can be therefore understood as a ‘midway’ between *dharma* ‘law, norm’ and *adharma*, its contrary.

Pre- and Early History

Anthony Harding (University of Exeter), former visiting professor at the ‘Münchner Zentrum für Antike Welten’, is presenting a retrospective of plagues, starting with our current situation. The focus is on the archaeological evidence and how we can detect plagues and pandemics. Starting with an overview of plagues that are also recorded in written sources, the author discusses the possibility that gaps in the archaeological record of the later prehistory of Europe could reflect widespread diseases.

Carola Metzner-Nebelsick (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich) reconsiders the use and meaning of chariots in the 2nd millennium BCE in the light of a new find. She argues that chariots were used earlier than generally presumed within the Carpathian Basin, and ascribes a symbolic meaning to chariots as status markers.

The range of topics in this issue reflects the multifaceted nature for which the Graduate School in Munich was known. The numerous disciplines and consistent interdisciplinary discourse shaped the thinking and work of all involved.

The special issue ends with an epilogue by the director and spokesperson of the Graduate School Distant Worlds: **Martin Hose** (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich).

Last Words ...

This final issue is dedicated in gratitude to all those who have contributed with their work to the establishment and functioning of the Graduate School Distant Worlds. Special mention should be made of Martin Hose, Isabella Wiegand, Anna Waldschütz, Nicole Schüler and Monika Seebeck, but also the board members and principal investigators as well as all predoctoral, doctoral and postdoctoral fellows,

who have contributed greatly to the Journal and its success.

Special mention has to be made of the founding members of Distant Worlds Journal, who launched the project in 2016: Henry Albery, Beatrice Baragli, Amanda Bledsoe, Fabian Heil, Polly Lohmann, Lauren Morris, Zsuzsanna Végh, Gioele Zisa and Laurien Zurhake. Through subsequent fellows, the initiative has continued throughout the life of the Graduate School, thus documenting in retrospect, the various research projects at the Graduate School itself, and the reach of the publication platform also among external young scholars.

The Distant Worlds Journal could not have been possible by the support of Martin Hose, Katrin Bemann and the team of Propylaeum at the Heidelberg University Library, nor without the professors who supported the young journal with their professional expertise and by being members of the Advisory Board. They are sincerely thanked for their trust and support.

With the closing of the Graduate School in 2021, we are all moving to new spheres beyond Distant Worlds, without losing our academic roots we all proudly carry.