

# Preface

## Migration and Change: Causes and Consequences of Mobility in the Ancient World

*Albert Dietz, Aaltje Hidding, Julia Dorothea Preisigke*

The Distant Worlds Journal (DWJ) is an online peer-reviewed journal established especially for presenting the research of early-career scholars on the ancient world. Each edition of the DWJ centres on a specific question or topic pertinent to the diverse disciplines engaged in the study of ancient cultures. In our third edition, we investigate a phenomenon that has shaped today's society as well as the ancient world: migration and mobility. Particular attention will be paid to what we know about its causes and consequences: Why does migration happen, what are its effects and how do we as scholars deal with migration and mobility of past peoples?

Whether it is tourists going on a holiday or pilgrims travelling to holy places, migrant workers pursuing a better life abroad, or refugees trying to escape natural disasters or political or religious wars in their home countries, today as well as in the ancient world migration and mobility have an immense impact on societies. In this edition, we take a closer look at these complex phenomena as they occurred in distant worlds, focusing on its causes and consequences.

Migration is to be understood as 'the crossing of the boundary of a political or administrative unit for a certain minimum period of time'.<sup>1</sup> It includes the movement of tourists, migrant workers, students and refugees, and it affects all aspects of the lives of those involved. During the last decennia, the causes and consequences of migration and mo-

bility in the ancient world have received an increasing amount of attention. The third issue of the *Distant Worlds Journal* seeks an interdisciplinary approach to the various forms of migration and mobility in Antiquity by exploring the social, cultural, religious, political, and economic underpinnings and implications of movement in the ancient world. In doing so, we aim to transcend the boundaries between different disciplines, since all articles address the same fundamental question: why do people migrate and how does migration influence both the places of origin and destination?

In his opening paper, Stefan Burmeister, Curator of the Varusschlacht-Museum in Kalkriese, starts with a concise overview of previous scholarship on 'migration' and 'mobility' and discusses their definitions and consequences. Using examples from sources of prehistoric and early Europe, for instance the linear pottery culture and the It-Girl from Denmark, his article draws attentions to the prejudices modern scholars have

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of UNESCO is available online at <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/migrant/> (Accessed September 28, 2017).

towards migration and mobility in the ancient world. In doing so, his article emphasizes that the ancients too, travelled long distances and did so on a large scale. Burmeister furthermore argues for the importance of keeping both individual and group migration in mind when studying movement in the ancient world. Additionally, he shows how individual choices about migration and their consequences are shaped by and reflect broader social processes and cultural frameworks.

The following collection of papers aims to analyse migration and mobility either from a methodological perspective or in the form of case studies. It contains articles on movement among certain social groups, such as travelling women in Pharaonic Egypt. Heidi Köpp-Junk examines how they left their homes due to professional duties, marriage or religious reasons, and undertook long-distance travels by sedan chairs, chariots and boats to distant cities in Egypt and to foreign places. Other articles address the distribution of objects and ideas as a result of migration and mobility. Nora Kuch analyses the Minoan Genius, who is believed to have derived from the Egyptian hippopotamus goddess Taweret. By discussing the appearances and functions of the goddess Taweret and examining the networks of exchange in the Mediterranean, she concludes that the development of the Minoan Genius can be traced back with iconographical comparisons. Using theoretical approaches like *entanglement* she shows how objects and ideas can be distributed by moving people. Karl-Stéphan Bouthillette discusses the intellectual environment of sixth-century India as a dynamic ecosystem using the social-ecological coexistence theory. After presenting the sociohistorical context he investigates the structure of the Buddhist philoso-

pher Bhāviveka's most important work; the *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya-kārikā*, and proposes the reading as a handbook for the victory over the competing philosophical groups. The difficulty of reconstructing causes and consequences of migration in past societies and generating knowledge from the fragmentary sources we have at our disposal becomes especially apparent in the article by T. Larsen Høisæter, who discusses migration as the reason for the spread of the Kharosthi script in North-West India. A close study of the textual and material evidence leads Høisæter to the conclusion that migration was probably not the cause of the spread of the script.

The articles in this edition do not aim for completeness, but are meant to illustrate some of the main problems and principles of migration in the ancient world within the scope of this journal. We hope that some of the ideas will stimulate further research, both within and outside our Graduate School.

We would like to thank the members of our Advisory Board and the scholars all over the world who have acted as peer-reviewers. The Heidelberg University Library, in cooperation with the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, hosts – as with the previous two issues – our journal at the academic online publishing platform Propyläum, and we are grateful to both for their support.

Last but not least, our many thanks go to the entire Editorial Board and to the authors for their contributions to this volume. All mistakes remain, of course, our own.

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