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DISTANT WORLDS
MUNICH GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR ANCIENT STUDIES

GS DW

Graduate School
Distant Worlds

Call for Papers: opening edition of the Distant Worlds Journal (DWJ)*

Making Meanings: continuity and change through production, consumption and reception

Research on the ancient world naturally has to be based on the analysis of material remains, as we all deal with past societies. Such material remains include all kinds of human-made objects from architecture to small finds; images, symbols, and texts can, in as much as they were inscribed or painted onto a surface, also be regarded as material objects. In the absence of empirical evidence, however, the meanings of human-made objects of ancient societies are rarely straightforward to us. In this first issue of the Distant Worlds Journal, we want to discuss: what is the connection between an object and its meaning?

Theoretical development in recent decades offers the following insights: an object is not simply the raw and unmediated intentions of a producer made manifest. Rather, expression is subject to constraints. Indeed, in the making of meaning, the stages of production, consumption and reception can intersect: a writer may compose a play to be performed, an architect may build a temple to be used as a house by the gods, and an artist may attempt to communicate with the viewer through images. The meaning of an object can, however, change throughout its life; an object's producer may give the object a different meaning than the consumer does, and a modern researcher may interpret the same object in yet another way. On the one hand, the cultural context and knowledge of a consumer can affect their interpretation of an object – if there is no shared knowledge of producer and consumer or recipient, the meaning of an object may change between the different stages of its life. On the other hand, the tangible features of an object may be designed to reflect the meaning intended by the producer, and the spatial contexts in which an object is produced and consumed can inform us, the latest recipients, about the meaning which was ascribed to it.

With case studies drawn from the ancient world, this first issue aims to revisit the question of how an object and its meaning(s) are connected, and explore how meaning may persist or change throughout an object's life. The case studies may analyse whether meaning is imbued in the design of objects, trace the biographies of objects (including changing receptions of texts or symbols), or show the methodological difficulties we face in interpreting material evidence.

Contributions of 3000 to 6000 words in English or German are welcome. If you are interested in publishing a paper in this first volume of the DWJ, please send an abstract (150 words max.) to dw-journal@mzaw.lmu.de till 25th June 2015. We will then come back to you with further information on the editorial guidelines and the review process. The papers will be due on 31st August 2015 and be published by the end of the year. Looking forward to your contributions:

Henry Albery

Polly Lohmann

Laurien Zurhake

Fellows of the Munich Graduate School for Ancient Studies 'Distant Worlds'

***Distant Worlds Journal (DWJ)**



The Distant Worlds Journal (DWJ) is a peer-reviewed online journal that seeks to provide a platform for early-career researchers to present their findings and perspectives on cultures of the ancient world. It has its inspiration in the Munich Graduate School for Ancient Studies 'Distant Worlds', which currently incorporates Prehistorical Archaeology, Classical Archaeology and Philology, Byzantine Studies, Ancient History and Philosophy, Theology, Egyptology, Biblical Studies, Near Eastern Archaeology, Assyriology and Hittite Studies, Indology, Tibetology, and Sinology. The aspiration of Distant Worlds is to draw together scholars from a variety of disciplines and to engage in interdisciplinary discussion regarding broader questions surrounding the study of the ancient world. In this manner, the DWJ aims to cultivate a forum with which to engage the wider scholarly community.

Each edition of the Journal will be centred on a specific thematic issue that can be engaged in by a diversity of disciplines and considered from a variety of methodological approaches. The individual theme therefore acts as a fulcrum around which a range of individual topics may be discussed. Each paper should engage with the specific theme in question whilst simultaneously dealing with the current issues within an individual specialism or considering broader theoretical and interdisciplinary issues. We envisage that each paper will further the broader dialogue in studies of the ancient world by engaging in critical and shared questions. It is only by the breaking of boundaries that fresh ideas can be developed; through this journal we hope to especially empower doctoral and postdoctoral scholars to voice their views at an international level.

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