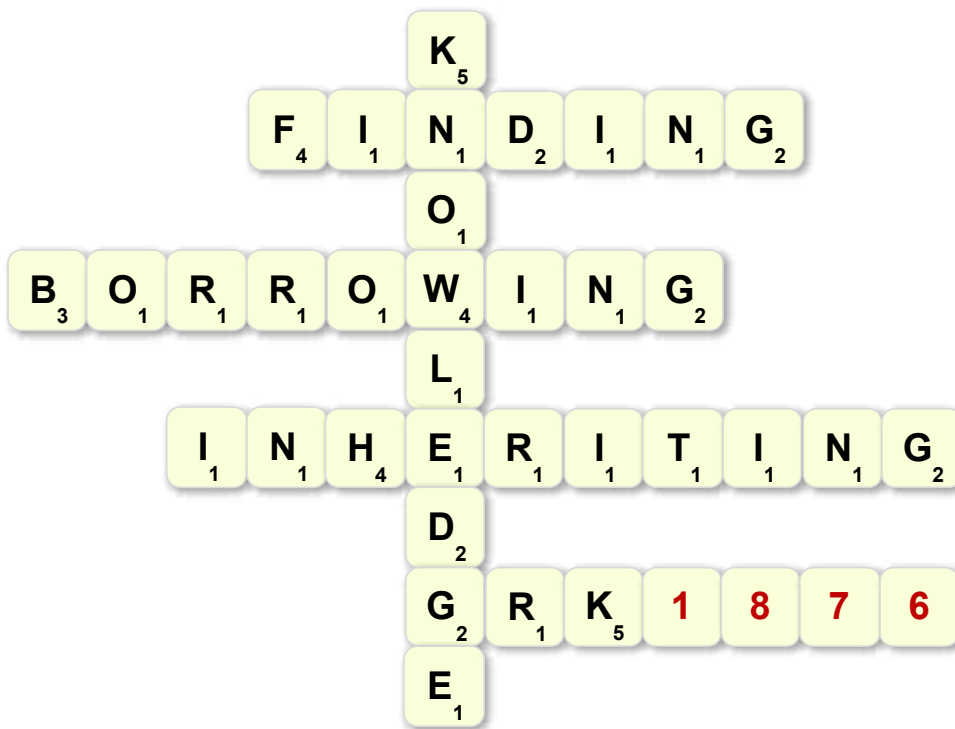


Finding, Inheriting or Borrowing? Construction and Transfer of Knowledge about Man and Nature in Antiquity and the Middle Ages

International Conference
of the
Research Training Group 1876
“Early Concepts of Man and Nature:
Universal, Local, Borrowed”



Finding, Inheriting or Borrowing? Construction and Transfer of Knowledge about Man and Nature in Antiquity and the Middle Ages

Venues:

September 14th, 2016
Institut Français, Schillerstr. 11, 55116 Mainz

September 15th and 16th, 2016
Erbacher Hof, Grebenstr. 24-26, 55116 Mainz

Organisation:

Jochen Althoff
Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz
Institute of Ancient Studies
Classical Philology
Jakob-Welder-Weg 18, Philosophicum
55128 Mainz
E-mail: jalthoff@uni-mainz.de

Johannes Pahlitzsch
Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz
Historical Seminar
Byzantine Studies
Jakob-Welder-Weg 18, Philosophicum
55128 Mainz
E-mail: pahlitzsch@uni-mainz.de

Tanja Pommerening
Institute of Ancient Studies
Egyptology
Hegelstr. 59
55122 Mainz
E-mail: tpommere@uni-mainz.de

Coordination office:

Silke Bechler; Research Training Group 1876 „Early Concepts of Man and Nature“;
E-mail: sibechl@uni-mainz.de; Phone: +49 6131 39-38340

Conference website:

<https://www.grk-konzepte-mensch-natur.uni-mainz.de/international-conference/>

Finding, Inheriting or Borrowing? Construction and Transfer of Knowledge about Man and Nature in Antiquity and the Middle Ages

The overall aim of the Research Training Group (RTG) 1876 “Early Concepts of Man and Nature: Universal, Local, Borrowed” is to study early concepts of man and nature based on texts, iconography and material evidence from the Near East, North-Eastern Africa and Europe dating from about 3.200 B.C. to the Middle Ages. It is interested in establishing where and when similar beliefs and concepts originated, whether this happened independently, if such concepts were transmitted or exchanged between early cultures and how they then changed over time.

For its international conference the RTG wants to focus on the process of developing and legitimizing knowledge.

The conference aims at answering questions dealing with the creation and justification of knowledge, such as: How is ‘foreign’ knowledge given authority? What are the mechanisms of legitimation? Are the ascriptions by the sources concerning the knowledge’s origin (inherited or borrowed) traceable or artificial and unfounded? Does transferred knowledge create new concepts during the act of borrowing? Are there special fields of knowledge that are linked to certain societies or social groups?

In this conference we want to apply a broad definition of knowledge that includes cultural practice.

In order to open up a coherent discussion of our research questions, we will focus on four thematic sections, each dealing with a special field of knowledge on man and nature:

- A) Methodological and theoretical aspects
- B) Of man and moon – Knowledge and cultural meaning of the moon
- C) The end of the world in fire – Imaginations from Antiquity to the Middle Ages
- D) Pejorative description and distinction based on human perceptions of animals

Programme

Wednesday, September 14th, 2016

Welcome and Introduction

- 2:15 p.m. – 2:25 p.m. **Wolfgang Hofmeister**
Welcome by the Vice President for Research of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz
- Heide Frielinghaus**
Welcome by the Vice Dean of the Faculty of History and Cultural Studies of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz
- 2:25 p.m. – 2:40 p.m. **Tanja Pommerening and Jochen Althoff**
Welcome and Introduction to the Research Training Group “Early Concepts of Man and Nature: Universal, Local, Borrowed”
- 2:40 p.m. – 2:55 p.m. **Johannes Pahlitzsch**
Introduction to the International Conference

Panel A: Methodological and Theoretical Aspects

Chair: **Stephanie Mühlenfeld**

- 2:55 p.m. – 3:35 p.m. **Lennart Lehmhaus (Berlin / Jewish Studies)**
Talmudic Bodies and Nature – Constructing and Authorizing Knowledge in Late Antique Jewish Traditions
- 3:35 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. Coffee break
- 4:15 p.m. – 4:55 p.m. **Jeffrey L. Cooley (Boston / Theology)**
Epistemology in the Biblical Tradition: Judean Knowledge-Building, Scribal Craftsmanship, and Scribal Culture
- 4:55 p.m. – 5:35 p.m. **Susanne Beck (Tübingen / Egyptology)**
Transfer of Knowledge: From Mesopotamia to Egypt
- 5:35 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. Short break

Keynote

Chair: **Tanja Pommerening**

6:15 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. **Roy Ellen (Kent / Anthropology)**
Transmitting Symbolic Concepts from the Perspective of Cultural Cognition: the Acquisition and Transfer of Folk-Biological Knowledge

7:45 p.m. Reception

Thursday, September 15th, 2016

Panel B: Of Man and Moon – Knowledge and Cultural Meaning of the Moon

Chair: **Simone Gerhards / Nadine Gräßler**

9:30 a.m. – 10:05 a.m. **Tim Brandes (Mainz / Assyriology)**
*“He Assigned Him as the Jewel of the Night”
– The Knowledge of the Moon in Mesopotamian Texts of the Late 2nd and 1st Millennium B.C.*

10:05 a.m. – 10:40 a.m. **Victoria Altmann-Wendling (Mainz / Egyptology)**
Shapeshifter – Knowledge of the Moon in Graeco-Roman Egypt

10:40 a.m. – 11:10 a.m. Coffee break

11:10 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. **Liba Taub (Cambridge / Classical Philology)**
Plutarch’s Concept of the Moon in his ‘De facie in orbe lunae’ against the Background of his Predecessors

11:45 a.m. – 12:20 p.m. **José Miguel Puebla Morón (Madrid / History)**
Iconography of the Moon in the Coinage of Greek Sicily

12:20 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Lunch break

1:45 p.m. – 2:20 p.m. **Allard Mees (Mainz / Archaeology)**
Early Celtic Time Cycles: Adaption and Creation

2:20 p.m. – 2:55 p.m. **Alberto Bardi (München / Byzantine Studies)**
Reception and Rejection of Foreign Astronomical Knowledge in Byzantium

2:55 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Final Discussion Panel B

3:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Coffee break

Panel C: The End of the World in Fire – Imaginations from Antiquity to the Middle Ages

Chair: **Katharina Hillenbrand**

3:45 p.m. – 4:20 p.m. **Götz König (Berlin / Iranian Studies)**
The Idea of an Apocalyptic Fire According to the Middle Iranian Sources and the Question of an Old Iranian Heritage

4:20 p.m. – 4:55 p.m. **Knut Usener (Wuppertal / Classical Philology)**
Burning for a Fresh Start

4:55 p.m. – 5:10 p.m. Short break

5:10 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. **Dominic Bärsch (Mainz / Classical Philology)**
Poets, Prophets and Philosophers – Otto von Freising's End of the World

5:45 p.m. – 6:20 p.m. **Jens Peter Schjødt (Aarhus / Religious Studies)**
Some Reflections on the Ragnarok Myth in Scandinavia

6:20 p.m. – 6:40 p.m. Final Discussion Panel C

6:40 p.m. Dinner

Friday, September 16th, 2016

Panel D: Pejorative Description and Distinction Based on Human Perceptions of Animals

Chair: **Dominik Berrens / Sonja Gerke**

9:00 a.m. – 9:35 a.m. **Prof. Cristiana Franco (Siena / Anthropology & Classics)**
According to the Rung. Towards an Intersectional Analysis of Animal Representations

9:35 a.m. – 10:10 a.m. **Dr. Idan Breier (Tel Aviv / Jewish History)**
Shaming by Naming: "Dog" as a Derogatory Term for Human Beings in Ancient Near Eastern Sources

- 10:10 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. **Dr. Fabio Tutrone (Palermo / Classical Philology)**
“Some of You are Dogs Who Can Both Bark and Bite”
(Pro Rosc. Amer. 57): Cicero, Lucretius, and the
Ambiguities of Roman Dogness
- 10:45 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Coffee break
- 11:15 a.m. – 11:50 a.m. **Tristan Schmidt (Mainz / Byzantine Studies)**
Beasts of Prey as a Means of Exclusion and Vilification of
Social Groups in the Byzantine Political Discourse
(12th ct.)
- 11:50 a.m. – 12:25 p.m. **Imke Fleuren (Mainz / Egyptology)**
Animal Imagery as a Means to Describe “the Other” in
Ancient Egypt
- 12:25 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Lunch break
- 1:45 p.m. – 2:20 p.m. **Sandra Kyewski (Basel / Classical Archaeology)**
Monkey Business – The Defamation of Men through
Animal-Like Faces
- 2:20 p.m. – 2:55 p.m. **Seth F. C. Richardson (Chicago / Assyriology)**
Nature Engaged and Disengaged: The Case of
Mesopotamian Literatures
- 2:55 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Final Discussion Panel D
- 3:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Concluding Discussion

Panel A: Methodological and Theoretical Aspects

Lennart Lehmhaus (Berlin / Jewish Studies)

*Talmudic Bodies and Nature – Constructing and Authorizing Knowledge
in Late Antique Jewish Traditions*

The study of Jewish knowledge culture(s) from a comparative perspective is still in its incipient stage. This paper seeks to contribute to this emerging field as well as to enter into a dialogue with neighbouring disciplines by concentrating on the multifaceted dimensions of the Jewish Talmudic discourse on secular or technical knowledge, with a special focus on medicine and the body. The main focus will be on the authors' discursive and embodied strategies of adaptation and appropriation of what has often been called in earlier research "foreign" knowledge. This paper will address simultaneously the participation of Jewish tradition in wider discourses of knowledge (medicine/science/philosophy) in different cultural contexts, varying attitudes towards different types of knowledge (e.g. empirical/revealed/embodied etc.), and the particular elements or types of a Jewish or rabbinic episteme encapsulated in those texts. Of particular interest will be how the encounter between these "old" and "new" (scientific/philosophical) ideas or concepts triggered the rabbis' increasingly challenging thoughts about, and critical attitudes towards, their own earlier traditions.

The analysis pays attention to the interplay between form and content in the complex representations of these discourses. How does the use of rhetoric strategies, literary structures, or the choice of genres in ancient "scientific texts" affect the ideas and concepts conveyed? In which ways does a specific hermeneutic (*Listenwissenschaft*/encyclopaedism/linguocentrism) not only serve as a "container", but also as a method for knowledge acquisition, so that the medium becomes part of the message? And finally, how, in these discourses, do the spheres of different authors, authorization and authority of knowledge intertwine?

The examples will help to grasp, also on a more theoretical and comparative level, the cultural specificity and *longue durée* of ancient Jewish scientific thinking and knowledge as being both a product of continuous exchanges and a self-contained intellectual construct.

Jeffrey L. Cooley (Boston / Theology)

*Epistemology in the Biblical Tradition: Judean Knowledge-Building,
Scribal Craftsmanship, and Scribal Culture*

Historically, epistemology in the Hebrew Bible has received the most attention from biblical scholars focusing on the so-called “wisdom tradition”. The biblical processes of knowing have also garnered the consideration of theologians, of course, as well as the occasional philosopher. Each of these perspectives, to be sure, possesses its own individual merits. Nonetheless, scholars have rarely concentrated on the topic of epistemology from the viewpoint of the sociology of knowledge of scholarly cultures. This is in stark contrast to the situation in the study of ancient Mesopotamia over the last decade or so. Assyriologists have increasingly argued that an approach, grounded in sociology and materiality, provides a powerful heuristic for understanding how the professional scribal circles in ancient Iraq created knowledge (most recently and cogently, van de Mieroop 2015).

Judean scribes, the very people who authored the Hebrew Bible, were contemporaries and neighbours of their Babylonian counterparts, at times even living among them. In this paper, I maintain that applying a similar perspective to the biblical authors as has been applied to Mesopotamian scribes is comparably productive. In short, the problem of epistemology within the biblical text must reflect distinctive knowledge culture of Judean scribes. In both Mesopotamian and Judean scribal circles, knowledge could be revealed by the gods and handed down with the authority of previous generations of scribes. But it could also be uncovered by learned means of documentary exegesis. Thus, writing served as a particular medium through which acceptable knowledge was not only received and distributed, but also discovered, created, and justified. I will show how recognizing this scribal epistemology allows us to fully appreciate, understand, and explain certain biblical passages (namely, etymologies) by examining a number of concrete examples from the Hebrew Bible.

Reference:

M. van de Mieroop, *Philosophy Before the Greeks*, Princeton University Press, 2015.

Susanne Beck (Tübingen / Egyptology)

Transfer of Knowledge: From Mesopotamia to Egypt

The 2nd millennium B.C. was a period of cross-cultural contact between Mesopotamia and Egypt in which the transfer of knowledge from the former to the latter flourished. As a case study for this transfer, the ancient Near Eastern creature Sāmānu – both a disease and a demon – and the conceptual changes it underwent on its way to Egypt will be examined. In particular, this talk will focus on the model originally created by Karsten Heppner to analyse the process of knowledge transfer within a globalized economy. This model differentiates three units (producer, transmitter and recipient) which are involved in the process. Furthermore, it distinguishes different levels for the transfer of knowledge, depending on how many subjects are integrated, and deals with the distinct forms of knowledge that can be transferred. I will show how Heppner's theory can be adapted and extended for the analysis of Sāmānu, as well as its applicability to ancient studies generally.

Keynote

Roy Ellen (Kent / Anthropology)

*Transmitting Symbolic Concepts from the Perspective of Cultural Cognition:
the Acquisition and Transfer of Folk-Biological Knowledge*

The papers prepared for this meeting concern the transmission of sets of concepts so complex and diverse that it might be thought an unlikely assemblage from which to draw productive comparative generalizations about how knowledge is acquired and transferred. However, issues relating to how knowledge moves around the anthroposphere are in theory much the same regardless of whether we are dealing with movement across the generations (temporal change) or between different groups separated geographically (spatial change), or whether it is technical or symbolic. In this presentation I use my own ethnographic data on ethnobiological knowledge to illustrate how an examination of one domain that permits “radical simplification” through the identification of elemental units can highlight some problems in current models of cultural knowledge transmission, and the extent to which it might also help us make sense of systems of complex symbolic knowledge.

Panel B: Of Man and Moon – Knowledge and Cultural Meaning of the Moon

In all epochs, the moon and its changing appearance, its temporary disappearance at new moon and the exceptional event of a lunar eclipse have had a deep impact on humankind. Every culture has created myths and legends to explain these phenomena. As a regular chronological marker, the moon structured everyday life, allowed the establishment of dates for sowing and harvesting, and thus was fundamental for developing calendars, religious festivals, and horoscopes. With a focus on the temporally and spatially co-existing cultures of ancient Egypt, Greece and the Near East, the section aims at a general presentation of the variability or possible parallelisms of interpretation and evaluation of the moon.

Tim Brandes (Mainz / Assyriology)

“He Assigned Him as the Jewel of the Night” – The Knowledge of the Moon in Mesopotamian Texts of the Late 2nd and 1st Millennium B.C.

The scholars of ancient Mesopotamia were constantly concerned with the night sky and the celestial bodies. It was in them that their gods appeared in form of the luminaries. At the same time, the gods revealed their will and their decisions through the phenomena of the night sky. Among all of these, the moon always had a special status. Different domains of knowledge were related to it.

The moon was, for example, the celestial body that was associated with the perception of time. The cycle of the phases of the moon was the fundament upon which the calendar was based. Hymns and myths confirm the association of moon and time. At the same time, letters and reports of scholars show that the moon was observed closely to determine the beginning of a month.

However, the observation of the moon served purposes beyond adjusting the calendar. Over the course of time, the ancient Near East produced an increasingly extensive literature on good and evil portents. People believed that the gods revealed their decisions through ominous signs on the earth and in the sky. The moon was part of this system: the time of its rising, its appearance and especially eclipses were carefully observed to draw conclusions about the future.

Considering the importance of the moon, it is not surprising that its observance played a significant role in astronomical texts, increasingly emerging during the 1st millennium B.C. The phenomena of the moon were noted in the so-called “astronomical diaries”. Idealised schemes of the course of the moon were elaborated. And finally, in the second half of the 1st millennium B.C., mathematical astronomy emerged and scholars began to calculate the lunar phenomena in advance.

Victoria Altmann-Wendling (Mainz / Egyptology)

Shapeshifter – Knowledge of the Moon in Graeco-Roman Egypt

Apart from the sun, the moon is the largest and brightest celestial phenomenon from a topocentric perspective. To a certain degree, Egyptological research has widely neglected the moon god, who was second to an all-dominating solar cult in ancient Egyptian religion. However, the preserved textual and iconographical sources provide a wealth of information concerning the ancient Egyptian knowledge of the moon. Its shifting shape during the month was used as a means of time indication and thus forms the basis for several calendars, although the solar Civil Calendar quite quickly replaced the Egyptian lunar calendar. Yet the phases of the moon, especially the crucial stages such as the new moon, first crescent visibility, and full moon, continued to play an important role in religious contexts, e.g. for defining festival dates and in the regulation of the priests' services.

On the one hand, information on the special significance of the moon is drawn indirectly from calendar dates, festival lists, and administrative sources. On the other hand, texts that deal with the moon from a perspective of natural history or mathematics are used. They comprise calculations of the moon's longitudes and lists of dates for conjunctions or full moons. These sources were probably also used by astrologers who interpreted lunar phenomena in order to predict the future of king and country. Egyptian astrological handbooks are similar to Mesopotamian omen literature and possibly derive from this culture.

The sources that are concerned with rather practical purposes are complemented by the far more abundant religious texts and representations, which are particularly extensive and rich in detail during the Graeco-Roman Period. These texts also provide knowledge of the moon: firstly in terms of the religious interpretation and assessment of the celestial body, secondly with quite accurate descriptions of the time sequences and phenomena during the course of the lunation. Furthermore, the late date of the sources examined allows for reflections on possible exchange, transfer or adoption of lunar knowledge in a phase of Egyptian history that was characterised by foreign domination and a multicultural society.

Liba Taub (Cambridge / Classical Philology)

*Plutarch's Concept of the Moon in his 'De facie in orbe lunae' against
the Background of his Predecessors*

In his *De facie in orbe lunae* (*On the Face on the Moon*), Plutarch offers a variety of views about the role of the Moon in the cosmos, and its relationship to humankind. The work is presented as a report of a discussion with numerous participants, who consider natural philosophical questions relating to the appearance of the Moon, its size and material constitution. We are assured that ideas concerning the face of the Moon “which are current and on the lips of everyone” will be shared. In addition, exotic stories (*mythoi*) about the Moon are also recounted, touching on the question of whether it is inhabited, its relationship to the soul, and its association with various gods and goddesses; these stories were told by a stranger to the Carthaginian Sulla, who relates them to the group. As the ideas are voiced by this named interlocutor – some of whose philosophical orientation, place of origin and/or profession is named – we have hints about the sources of the concepts and stories presented in the work. This paper will aim to explore the various sources of knowledge and cultural meaning associated with the Moon in Plutarch's *De Facie*.

José Miguel Puebla Morón (Madrid / History)

Iconography of the Moon in the Coinage of Greek Sicily

The figure of the moon in the Greek coinage of Sicily was depicted in the mintings from four towns in the isle – Thermae Himerenses, Rhegium, Syracuse and Tauromenium – by two main ways of representation: firstly, as a crescent, which is its principal iconographic representation, related to other iconographic types like the bull and the lyre, as well as goddesses like Artemis and Hera, and secondly the combination between the moon and the figure of the sun, creating the representation of an eclipse in a coin from Syracuse.

The field of identification of the divinities associated with the figure of the moon always responds to its connection with epithets related to its power and celestial control as “mistress of sky”, which can be observed in gods like Hera, as spouse of Zeus, Lord of the sky, Artemis, in connection with Selene, spouse of Helios, god of the sun, and the main goddess of the Punic pantheon, Tanit, spouse of Baal and mistress of the sky and stars according to Punic references.

With this analysis of the presence of the moon in the coinage of Greek Sicily I expect to study the connections through these goddesses identified by this iconographic element, as in the cases of Artemis or Hera. Furthermore, I would like to study how this type not only belonged to the Greek religion inside the imaginary of the isle, but also how we can also see it next to representations of the main goddess from the Punic pantheon, Tanit, in the coinage minted by Carthage and in other kinds of medium, such as the steles of Motya, establishing relations of syncretism or religious convergence through this iconographic element, which affected the moment of representing Tanit by the use of iconographic elements belonging to the fields of Greek goddesses, whose main common point was their association with the figure of the moon as mistress of the sky.

Allard Mees (Mainz / Archaeology)

Early Celtic Time Cycles: Adaption and Creation

Archaeoastronomy leads us directly to the ideas and concepts in antiquity with which time and space were structured around the human being. Knowledge of the principle rules within time and space has always led to the construction of solar and lunar calendars, already implying knowledge that sun and moon follow different time and space patterns. Whereas the sun has fixed points at the horizon with its midsummer and midwinter points, the lunar standstill points at the horizon are much more volatile, albeit only at first sight.

Within a rhythm of 19 years (precisely: 18.62 years), the moon rises at the most southern point on the horizon: the major southern lunar standstill. A closer look at this phenomenon informs us that the major lunar standstills always correlate every 19th year with the lunar eclipse in the month of the spring equinox. For every observer, this was easily recognizable as a fixed rhythm. The concept of the position of the lunar standstill was already known in early Mesopotamia and in the course of time, cultural concepts were attached to it.

The study of princely burial tumuli of the early Celtic (Hallstatt) period and other archaeological remains has shown that they are normally orientated towards the directions of the lunar standstills. Within the burial tumuli, large rows of piles also point towards the lunar standstills. In addition, the burial directions are focused towards the lunar standstills. These archaeological remains suggest that primarily the major lunar standstill was of huge importance within Celtic culture.

Already Caesar and other ancient authors reported about the overwhelming significance of the Moon with the Celts. This is already visible in the monumental burials of the early Celts in the 7th century B.C. In the 2nd century A.D., there is still indisputable evidence for the presence of a mainly lunar-orientated Celtic culture in the calendars of Coligny.

Despite the independent Celtic calendar, take-over, adaption and absorption of Mediterranean calendar aspects can be demonstrated. Examined in closer detail, it becomes clear that the archaeological remains of the lunar standstill orientations within the Celtic burial mounds should be seen within a very specific concept of the hereafter, which was adapted from the Mediterranean cultures.

Alberto Bardi (München / Byzantine Studies)

Reception and Rejection of Foreign Astronomical Knowledge in Byzantium

In 13th- and 14th-century Byzantium, foreign astronomical knowledge, especially that pertaining to Persian tradition, drew the attention of Byzantine scholars, impelling them to travel to Persia, to learn the principles of the discipline at the source. From the beginning of the 14th century, Persian astronomical texts were translated into Greek. The process of legitimization of this inflowing knowledge was carried out in Byzantium through philosophical and theological argumentation, and by resorting to the principle of authority, as it were by summoning the undisputed masters of the discipline to justify “unorthodox” speculation on celestial phenomena and the like. Literary anecdotes were also elaborated in this process of legitimization: for example, tales of Byzantine scholars travelling to Persia in order to study astronomy with the most renowned masters of the time; or again, genealogies of scholars, traced back to the founding fathers of the discipline. The new knowledge allowed Byzantine scholars, through new calculation methods differing from traditional Greek ones, to study and better interpret current celestial phenomena.

In this paper I would like to provide some evidence on how 13th- and 14th-century Byzantine astronomical knowledge was indebted to the Persian tradition. In Greek translations from Persian astronomical texts, the reference point for the astronomical measurements is still the ancient Persian capital; the astronomical hand tables provide values based on Persian years and months; the astronomical terms were still written in the Persian form transliterated into Greek.

Although some theories of the new astronomy were accepted and were eventually taught in courses at the patriarchal school of Constantinople, some theories stemming from Persian astronomy were, nonetheless, officially banned in Byzantium by political authorities. I will explain the reasons why, and how the process of introducing the heritage of Persian astronomy to Byzantium led to simultaneous reactions of reception and reject.

Panel C: The End of the World in Fire – Imaginations from Antiquity to the Middle Ages

Many written sources of past cultures describe concepts of the end of the world. Among these concepts is the very common idea that the world will perish by fire. Variants of this idea are widespread in ancient writings of the Mediterranean and the Orient, as well as in the cultures of the middle Ages. Ancient Greek and Latin authors, as well as medieval ones, assert the validity of these concepts through citation of earlier authorities on the matter. In a comparative overview of Iranian, Greco-Roman, Norse and Medieval Latin sources, the questions will be discussed of which components of the concepts are essential and how the particular ideas of the global conflagration are supported. Consequently, this approach will reveal traditions, parallels, possible borrowings and differences between these various cultures and periods.

Götz König (Berlin / Iranian Studies)

*The Idea of an Apocalyptic Fire According to the Middle Iranian Sources and
the Question of an Old Iranian Heritage*

The idea of an end of the world in fire appears in various Middle Iranian sources. It is generally assumed that this idea originates in a cosmogonic concept and scheme that was developed in the 1st millennium B.C.E. In light of our new understanding of the Avestan texts, this assumption needs to be reviewed.

Knut Usener (Wuppertal / Classical Philology)

Burning for a Fresh Start

Heraclitus thought that our Cosmos was not the product of any deity. In his opinion, this Cosmos has always existed and will never end. In the same breath, Heraclitus continues to say that this Cosmos is “an everliving fire kindling in measures and going out in measures” (Kirk, Raven & Schofield ²1983, 198 (No. 217)). Stoic philosophers and other writers influenced by Stoic philosophy were later to follow and more or less modify this idea of a Cosmos, which, although eternal, is renewed by fire periodically.

In my contribution, I will show some of the different paths this idea of cosmic fire, birth and death has taken in pagan and in early Christian writings. Why have Christian writers dealt with this very pagan pattern of thought and to what extent could they adapt it to their view of the world? Are there other philosophical, mythological, or religious parallels trying to explain the end of the world, which will perhaps never be a definite end of everything in this Cosmos? Which ideas of the “end of the world” were prevalent in different cultures such as the world of the Old Testament, the Greek and Graeco-Roman world and the early Christian era? Do the different ideas of the “end of the world” reflect a general or archetypical pattern, which may be seen as common to pagan and Christian worldviews?

Reference:

G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven, M. Schofield, M. (eds.), *The Presocratic Philosophers. A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, Cambridge University Press, ²1983, 198 (No. 217).

Dominic Bärsch (Mainz / Classical Philology)

Poets, Prophets and Philosophers – Otto von Freising's End of the World

Otto von Freising is one of the foremost historiographers of the 12th century. In his *Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus*, he describes the imminent end of the world, which will be completely destroyed by a global conflagration. In the following, this historical work is to be taken as an example that represents a concept of doomsday. To assert the concept, he of course quotes passages from the Old and New Testament, such as the Second Letter of Peter and the Apocalypse of Daniel. Furthermore, he alludes to pagan concepts of ἐκπύρωσις: the destruction of the world through fire. These are represented in numerous writings of ancient authors, especially – but not exclusively – in Stoic ones. This talk will focus on the mechanics Otto has chosen to make the idea of a global fire authoritative. Moreover, it is of interest which writings he quotes, what the original context of the quoted passages is, and how he assembles them to a new nexus.

Jens Peter Schjødt (Aarhus / Religious Studies)

Some Reflections on the Ragnarok Myth in Scandinavia

Ragnarøk or Ragnarøkkr are two designations for the end of the world in the religion of pre-Christian Scandinavia. The first one means “the end (or the fate) of the gods” and the second one “the darkness of the gods”. Most probably, Ragnarøk is the older term, whereas Ragnarøkkr is only testified from the Christian High Middle Ages. In this lecture, I shall begin by discussing the various sources that we have for the concepts of the end of the world in pre-Christian Scandinavia; secondly, the source situation, which has caused much discussion of whether the eschatological ideas are of Christian or pagan origin, will be analysed; in this connection also the concepts of “loans” and “influences” will be discussed, including the very notion of fire as a means to destroy the world. Part of this discussion will be whether the eschatological ideas that we find particularly in the eastern Mediterranean area in the centuries around the beginning of our era is the *fons et origo* of such ideas about a world destruction by fire, or whether these ideas may have originated somewhere else. Thirdly, and connected to this theme, will also be some reflections on whether the ideas of world destruction are typical for religions of the kind that the American sociologist Robert Bellah called “axial”, or whether it is conceivable that ideas about an end of the world were also part of what in Bellah’s terminology are labelled “tribal” and “archaic” religions.

Panel D: Pejorative Description and Distinction Based on Human Perceptions of Animals

When distinct groups within or outside a society are described and characterized, our sources tend to make comparisons with, or metaphorical use of, certain images. This can lead to quite elaborate or rather stereotyped descriptions. In the view of medieval and ancient cultures, animals were connected to a wide range of moral, physical and behavioural characteristics that had been ascribed to them in a continuous historical process. Therefore, their images served as a major source for characterization. The aim of this section is to examine the mechanisms of characterization and distinction by pejorative animal imagery in different societies to discover parallels, differences, traditions and borrowings.

Prof. Cristiana Franco (Siena / Anthropology & Classics)

*According to the Rung. Towards an Intersectional Analysis of
Animal Representations*

To this day, the semantics of animal insults have proved unable to account for two facts. First, despite cultures generally assigning human to the positive and non-human to the negative side of a marked polarization, not all animal representations to be found in languages and cultures are negatively charged – some are in fact highly appreciative (e.g. the lion metaphor). Second, the choice of certain zoonyms as terms of insult is not necessarily related to a negative assessment of the respective animal species *per se* (e.g. the dog, Franco 2014).

A new approach to the issue takes a pragmatic and intersectional stance. As the ancient Graeco-Roman evidence shows, negative/positive description and distinction based on animal comparison does not relate to actual morpho-ethological characteristics of the species. Rather, they are variable in different contexts and appear determined by three main factors:

1. the rank a species was assigned to in what might be called an *extended social hierarchy* (Gregory 2007);
2. the appropriateness of the animal behaviour in that extended social environment;
3. the rank of the human who bonds with or is compared to the animal (e.g. animal metaphors for the warrior can be positive or negative, depending on the man's prestige in the writer/speaker's eyes).

In fact, this ranking of the species intersected human social hierarchy in many ways, and the intersections were part of the discourse by which adult male citizens operated their dominance over minority groups such as women, children, and slaves. Therefore, for example, horses, hounds and watch-dogs were often positively associated with men, whereas donkeys and lap-dogs had a more dubious reputation when connected with women and children. Ancient evidence shows that women and children enjoyed

intimacy with non-human animals (Lazenby 1949; Bradley 1998), displaying a closeness that male writers either criticized or made fun of. Myths and anecdotes also betray the sense of uneasiness that ancient men felt towards women and children's competence in bonding with "lower" animals such as sparrows, geese, and lap dogs. When represented as a man's companion in the private sphere of funerary epigrams, the dog (whether pet or watch-dog or hound) was instead charged with a doubtlessly positive value (Stevanato 2014-2015).

References:

- K. Bradley, "The Sentimental Education of the Roman Child: the Role of Pet-Keeping", in *Latomus* 57.3 (1998), pp. 523-557.
- C. Franco, *Shameless. The Canine and the Feminine in Ancient Greece*, Oakland, University of California Press, 2014.
- J. Gregory, "Donkeys and the Equine Hierarchy in Archaic Greek Literature", in *The Classical Journal*, 102. 3 (2007), pp. 193-212.
- F.D. Lazenby, "Greek and Roman Household Pets", in *The Classical Journal* 44.4 (1949), pp. 245-252, 299-307.
- C. Stevanato, "*lunxi semper manibus ipse meis*" *Per una zooepigrafia funeraria nel mondo romano*, Tesi di laurea, Università Ca' Foscari, a.a. 2014-2015.

Dr. Idan Breier (Tel Aviv / Jewish History)

*Shaming by Naming: "Dog" as a Derogatory Term for Human Beings
in Ancient Near Eastern Sources*

The canine was the first animal to be domesticated by humans, around 16 000 years ago, helping hunt, guard, herd sheep, and fight, as well as serving as a pet. Dogs have thus long been regarded as human beings' best friend. Their loyalty becoming a byword, they early on served as a metaphor for interpersonal and international relations. At the same time, however, they are also represented in ancient sources as dangerous and disgusting beasts, thus being despised and disdained. In this context, the knowledge humans gained from their daily experience with dogs transformed these into both good and bad images. This lecture focuses on the way in which the canine symbolizes a pathetic and despicable person.

As early as the third millennium B.C.E. in Sumerian proverb collections, the dog is portrayed as a shameless animal who refuses to internalize rules and regulations, thus representing people who do not know how to act in society. In the 14th century B.C.E. El-Amarna letters, those rebelling against the Egyptian king are depicted as ignominious dogs. When the tide starts moving in their direction, however, they turn the tables on the Egyptian officials by vilifying them in the same terms. A similar case occurs in a 7th century B.C.E. collection of letters from the Neo-Assyrian period, in which the dog serves as a metaphor for an abject person. The biblical texts yield parallel examples. The "dead dog" frequently symbolizes those considered despicable, signifying acknowledgment of the other's superiority when adduced by a person with regard to himself and worthlessness when imputed to others. Proverbs likens the fool to a dog who returns to his vomit, Qohelet asserting that a living dog is better than a dead lion.

Dr. Fabio Tutrone (Palermo / Classical Philology)

*“Some of You are Dogs Who Can Both Bark and Bite” (Pro Rosc. Amer. 57):
Cicero, Lucretius, and the Ambiguities of Roman Dogness*

In the ancient world, as in most human societies, dogs enjoyed a unique – albeit controversial – symbolic status. Recent research focusing on classical Greece has shown that the long-lasting representation of dogs as loyal, obedient and watchful beings has its roots in a tradition dating back to Homer, if not to Minoan-Mycenean times (Mainoldi 1984, Franco 2003, Kitchell 2014, 47-53). As Franco 2003 observed, however, this representation entailed an inherent ambiguity. Since, differently from other animals (and similarly to women), dogs were entrusted with culturally essential tasks and entered human society at the bottom of the hierarchy, they frequently aroused fears and suspicions. In many literary texts, both Greek and Roman, dogs were depicted as treacherous, shameless, aggressive, and parasitic, so that *kyōn* and *canis* became common terms of reproach. The present paper focuses on the mostly neglected area of Roman cultural representations, pointing out the meaningful co-existence of traditional and anti-traditional attitudes in Latin authors. As Pliny the Elder (*NH* 29.57-58) reminds us, Roman history and religion attached great importance to dogs (especially to whelps or *catuli*) as ritual instruments connected with the ideas of expiation and fertility. Yet dogs were blamed (and yearly crucified) for failing to announce the Gauls’ assault on the Capitol in 390 BC. Such an ambivalent, frequently disparaging delineation is emblematically mirrored by Cicero (*Pro Rosc. Amer.* 56-57), who recalls the Capitol episode and compares his opponents to barking and biting dogs. Significantly, the standard view of *canes* (and dog-like humans) is not endorsed by Cicero’s near-contemporary, the Epicurean Lucretius. As is well-known, in Greece and Rome, the Epicureans were polemically described as “dogs” (or “pigs”) by their critics (see e.g. Diogenes Laertius, *Vit.* 10.3; Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* 3.8). It is perhaps no accident that Lucretius – who is, more generally, a remarkable figure of the *Tierfreund* (Lanata 1994, Shelton 1996, Tutrone 2012) – provides us with consistently appreciative and sympathetic depictions of canine life (4.991-1004; 5.1063-1072; 6.1219-1224), transforming even the dogs’ proverbial wantonness into a philosophically instructive piece of evidence (4.1197-1208).

References:

- C. Franco, *Senza ritegno. Il cane e la donna nell’immaginario della Grecia antica*, Il Mulino, 2003.
- K.F. Kitchell, *Animals in the Ancient World from A to Z*, Routledge, 2014.
- G. Lanata, “Antropocentrismo e cosmocentrismo nel pensiero antico”, in S. Castignone, G. Lanata (eds.), *Filosofi e animali nel mondo antico*, Edizione ETS, 1994, 17-49.
- C. Mainoldi, *L’image du loup et du chien dans la Grèce ancienne d’Homère à Platon*, Association des publications près les Universités de Strasbourg, 1984.
- J.-A. Shelton, “Lucretius on the Use and Abuse of Animals”, in *Eranos* 94 (1996), 48-64.
- F. Tutrone, *Filosofi e animali in Roma antica: Modelli di animalità e umanità in Lucrezio e Seneca*, Edizione ETS, 2012.

Tristan Schmidt (Mainz / Byzantine Studies)

Beasts of Prey as a Means of Exclusion and Vilification of Social Groups in the Byzantine Political Discourse (12th ct.)

The presentation focuses on pejorative animal imagery used in 12th-century Byzantine court literature. For this purpose, statements from encomiastic texts, chronicles and historiography will be analysed. Images of savage, threatening wild beasts in particular served to characterize, exclude and vilify social groups and single persons regarded as foreign and dangerous by the authors. The implied foreignness comprised ethnic and geographical aspects; furthermore, it referred to persons acting in a manner contradictory to common norms and values, like heretics or 'bad' emperors. In particular, the discourse on barbarians, rooted in ancient ethnography, was rather influential in this context. Its implications concerning, for instance, dichotomies like reason and instinct or savage nature and civilization were transferred into the political sphere. Here, this imagery interacted with other literary models, like the taming emperor or the imperial good shepherd protecting his flock.

In the second part, a special motive of pejorative animal imagery will be analysed in more detail: the barking of dogs, symbolizing religious apostasy. While the dog was connoted rather positively in several discourses, as for instance the discourse on hunting, which was popular among Byzantine aristocracy, the image of the dog could as well be used in pejorative ways. Here, aspects such as madness, impurity and a connection to demonic forces come into effect. This example clearly shows in which way certain negative aspects of an image, which actually possesses several layers of positive and negative meanings, could be activated and connected to certain persons or social groups – in this case heretics und infidels – , while other aspects are played down or even ignored completely.

Imke Fleuren (Mainz / Egyptology)

Animal Imagery as a Means to Describe “the Other” in Ancient Egypt

The aim of this paper is to look at and discuss the use of animals as figurative expressions in order to illustrate a perceived “otherness” of certain people or regions.

On the one hand, “the other” could refer to foreign countries or regions, or people deriving from these areas. On the other hand, certain persons or social groups within a society could likewise be considered other or different. The main focus will lie on the instances where animal imagery is used to describe and depict these “other” regions, persons or groups with a negative connotation.

The various animals that are mentioned in such a context, as well as the reason(s) for their inclusion, will be elaborated on. In this respect, one can think about the visual appearance, qualities or behaviour of a specific animal, but also its habitat or region of origin.

Building further upon the habitat and origin of a specific animal, I will also briefly discuss the topic by using non-indigenous animals as a point of departure. Mention will be made of which aspects and characteristics of these animals are highlighted when used as figurative expressions to describe persons or social groups. Consequently, this will demonstrate whether, and to what extent, the choice of a specific animal is based on a perceived “otherness”, either in a positive or negative sense.

Sandra Kyewski (Basel / Classical Archaeology)

Monkey Business – The Defamation of Men through Animal-Like Faces

“Also it may be that the one which is like the better type shows a degrading likeness, whereas the one which is like the worse type improves upon it: witness the likeness of a horse to a donkey, and that of a monkey to a man.” – Aristotle

This quote shows in a very concise way the perception of animals in antiquity. The relationship between men and animals was well-known by the Greeks and Romans, but this implies on the other hand the knowledge of the differences between men and animals: the animal resembles men, but in a “worse” and low-grade form. No animal may illustrate this difference better than the monkey – physiognomically closest to man, but an imperfect counterpart and caricature of man per se.

In antiquity, monkeys were associated with characteristics such as foolishness and overestimation of their own capabilities, but also to maliciousness and cheating. Just because of their talent for imitating someone, they constitute such a veritable projection screen for a deformed mirror image of men and their inadequacies. In this context, it is not surprising that monkeys are often used to create a ridiculous and pejorative image of a man or woman – as a caricature or just by using physiognomic characteristics. Here, the transition from exaggerated human facial features to real animal faces is often blurred. Ancient artists tried to push persons who were degraded by having an abnormal animalistic appearance in a non-human area, to the edge of the community and to exclude them from society. This form of defamation could concern not only foreign groups outside of society, but even individuals *inside* an apparently accepted group. The questions then arise as to who is concerned by such a caricaturing image and to whom these images were addressed.

Seth F. C. Richardson (Chicago / Assyriology)

Nature Engaged and Disengaged: The Case of Mesopotamian Literatures

In Sumerian literature, animals, objects, and plants speak, act, advise, and emote – especially as wise, authoritative interlocutors, but also as capable of man’s foibles (greed, lust, stupidity). The denizens of the natural world were endowed with the capabilities and consciousness of humans – often to metaphorize them, but also as interlocutors, teachers, and critics: foxes, frogs, and rivers spoke to gods, dogs went to parties, and goats might bargain with lions. In Akkadian literature, however, animals and objects were largely mute, passive, even pejoratized, set apart from the social world of man, even when significance was conferred upon them in omens and medical literature. A different conception of nature prevailed. This was as much a generic condition as a worldview: the forms of literature in which Sumerian nature played out – debates, proverbs, aetiologies – did not have as large a presence in Akkadian, where epics and expressive works made little space for flora and fauna. Still, what made it acceptable – and then suddenly not acceptable – to mobilize plants, animals, and environments as symbolic in these very different ways? The excision of these features from Akkadian literature points to a shift in signification (rather than merely in symbols) in which the natural world was no longer an important part of the creation and communication of divine or cultural knowledge. This must have important repercussions in the framing of Mesopotamian concepts of personhood and *Menschlichkeit*. This paper will compare the modes in which nature engaged with divine and human society – and within itself – to evaluate the very different concepts of knowledge which informed these literatures.

