

Call for Papers

The Research Training Group 1876 “Early Concepts of Man and Nature: Universal, Local, Borrowed” is calling for papers for its

International Conference

Finding, Inheriting or Borrowing?

Construction and Transfer of Knowledge about Man and Nature in Antiquity and the Middle Ages

to be held on 14th to 16th September 2016

at the Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz (Germany)

The overall aim of the Research Training Group (RTG) 1876 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 c. 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) Of man and moon – Knowledge and cultural meaning of the moon
- B) The end of the world in fire – Imaginations from antiquity to the middle ages
- C) Creating “volcanological” knowledge from antiquity to modern age
- D) Pejorative description and delineation based on human perceptions of animals

Besides we are looking for papers dealing more generally with our questions from a cross-cultural and theoretical perspective.

We want to invite interested scholars of the academic fields of our RTG (Egyptology, Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Near Eastern Archaeology, Classical Philology, Classical Archaeology, Medieval German Studies, Byzantine Studies, and Medical History) to apply and to deliver papers fitting to one of the four sections or to methodological and theoretical aspects. We in particular also encourage scholars of academic fields not included in the RTG but related to any other field of cultural studies (including the study of modern societies) to apply.

We ask those interested in delivering a paper to send an abstract of about 300 words along with a short academic biography to the RTG at grk1876@uni-mainz.de by Monday, 29th of February 2016. Papers should be presented in English. Travel and accommodation costs will be paid for all successful applicants.

More information about the RTG, its aims, the disciplines involved and the projects of the PhD students can be found on its website: <http://www.grk-konzepte-mensch-natur.uni-mainz.de/>.