

**International
Conference**

**CONCEPTS OF
HUMANS AND
NATURE BETWEEN
SPECIFICITY AND
UNIVERSALITY**

**Mainz
15 – 17 July 2019**

**FRÜHE KONZEPTE
VON MENSCH
UND NATUR**

Graduiertenkolleg 1876

DFG

**JOHANNES GUTENBERG
UNIVERSITÄT MAINZ**





Concepts of Humans and Nature between Specificity and Universality

Venues:

15 – 17 July 2019

Faculty of Natural Science
Senatssaal (Room 07-232)
Johann Joachim-Becher-Weg 21
55128 Mainz

15 July 2019, Keynote Lecture

Atrium Maximum
Johann-Joachim-Becher-Weg 3 – 9
55128 Mainz

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Panel organisers:

Panel 1: S. Gerhards, N. Gräßler, A. Milenkovic, S. Speck
Panel 2: L. Borghetti, S. Hofert, M. Kjorvezirovska, M.-C. v. Lehsten, K. Zartner
Panel 3: R. Pabst, O. Polozhentseva

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Conference website:

<https://www.blogs.uni-mainz.de/fb07-grk-man-nature/international-conference-2019/>

Concepts of Humans and Nature between Specificity and Universality



The Research Training Group 1876 "Early Concepts of Humans and Nature: Universal, Specific, Interchanged" welcomes you to its International Conference "Concepts of Humans and Nature between Specificity and Universality" at the Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz (Germany).

Within the framework of the international conference, the RTG investigates the question of possibly universal basic patterns of concepts of humans and nature as well as with their specific implementations in early societies. We would like to foster a discussion on whether and how the body or, more generally, our physically grounded experience might be involved in understanding, shaping and even creating concepts within the domains of humans and nature. Thereby we aim to explore the universal or contextual nature of those concepts. More specifically, questions we would like to address include:

- To what extent can diverse conceptual constructions and theoretical systems, for instance about the cosmos or the human body, be traced back to elementary, physically grounded experiences and actions, in order that a universal substratum may be assumed?
- To what extent are concepts of humans and nature, both concrete and abstract, influenced by our bodily and physically grounded experience? In turn, to what extent do already established concepts influence the social assessment and representation of given phenomena?
- To what extent could the representation of certain objects, the formation of certain notions and the creation of more abstract concepts and conceptual theories be, in each case study, contextually defined, re-shaped and exploited?
- How do phenomena, human understanding of phenomena and creative imagination interplay in the formation and development of concepts of humans and nature?
- How close is the connection between physically grounded actions on the one hand and cognitive processes on the other?

We would like to foster a discussion on these questions in an international and interdisciplinary environment, within three panels, which are in line with research projects our RTG is currently working on. Our graduates will be the organisers of those panels:

1. Zones, Parts, Functions – The relationship between body experience and body concepts
2. Conceptualizing Sky and Heaven – Human interactions with meteorological and cosmic phenomena
3. Investigating Concepts of the Dead Body



Programme

Monday, 15 July 2019

Welcome and Introduction

8:40 *Registration*

9:10 **Stefan Müller-Stach**

Welcome by the Vice President for Research and Early Career Academics of the Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz

9:15 **Tanja Pommerening**

Welcome and Introduction to the Research Training Group

9:25 **Chiara Ferella and Ulrike Steinert**

Introduction to the International Conference

Panel 1: Zones, Parts, Functions: The Relationship between Body Experience and Body Concepts

Panel Organisers:

Simone Gerhards, Nadine Gräßler, Aleksandar Milenkovic and Sonja Speck

Chair: Sonja Speck

9:40 **Simone Gerhards and Nadine Gräßler (Mainz)**

From Embodied Experience to Body Concepts

10:20 **Rosemary A. Joyce (Berkeley, California)**

Being and Meaning in Prehispanic Central America

11:00 *Coffee Break*

Chair: Simone Gerhards

11:30 **Rune Nyord (Atlanta, Georgia)**

Bodies of Stone and Wood: Concepts and experiences of statues as substitute bodies in ancient Egypt



12:10 **Yudit K. Greenberg (Winter Park, Florida)**

The Lovers' Bodies in the Gitagovinda and Shir Ha-shirim (Song of Songs): A comparative reading of Hindu and Jewish sacred texts

12:50 *Lunch*

Chair: Alexander Pruß

14:20 **Reuven Kiperwasser (Jerusalem)**

Order of Universe and (Dis)Orders of Body

15:00 **Han Nijdam (Leeuwarden)**

Body Schemas in Medieval Frisian Law Texts

15:40 *Coffee Break*

Chair: Nadine Gräßler

16:10 **Shahrzad Irannejad and Aleksandar Milenkovic (Mainz)**

From Localization of Functions to Embodiment of Concepts

16:50 *Panel Discussion*

17:20 *Coffee Break*

Keynote

Chair: Jochen Althoff

18:00 **Barbara Tversky (Stanford, California)**

Putting the Mind in the World

19:00 *Reception*

Tuesday, 16 July 2019



Panel 2: Conceptualizing Sky and Heaven: Human Interactions with Meteorological and Cosmic Phenomena

Panel Organisers: Laura Borghetti, Sandra Hofert, Mirna Kjorveziroska, Marie-Charlotte von Lehsten and Katharina Zartner

Chair: Annemarie Ambühl

9:30 Laura Borghetti, Sandra Hofert, Mirna Kjorveziroska, Marie-Charlotte von Lehsten and Katharina Zartner (Mainz)

Skies and Heavens: An interdisciplinary perspective

10:10 Edward Wright (Phoenix, Arizona)

Cosmos and Afterlife: The impact of advances in cosmology on the religious imagination in ancient Israel and early Judaism

10:50 Coffee Break

Chair: Katharina Zartner

11:20 Marvin Schreiber (Berlin)

Relationship, Correspondence, and Construction of the Cosmic Structures of Heaven and Earth in First Millennium BCE Mesopotamia

12:00 Tom H. Davies (Princeton, New Jersey)

Three First-Millennium BC Theories of the Solar Journey

12:40 Lunch

Chair: Marie-Charlotte von Lehsten

14:10 Daniel W. Graham (Provo, Utah)

Greek Cosmology

Chair: Mirna Kjorveziroska

14:50 Matthias Däumer (Wien)

The Script That Fell to Earth: Media-mythological thoughts on the 'First Book of Enoch' and Wolfram von Eschenbach's 'Parzival'



15:30 *Coffee Break (with opportunities for personal exchange with the poster presenter)*

Chair: Laura Borghetti

16:15 **Feray Coskun (Istanbul)**

Celestial Phenomena, Nature and Man in the Ottoman Cosmographies

16:55 *Panel Discussion*

20:00 *Dinner at Restaurant Proviantmagazin*

Wednesday, 17 July 2019

Panel 3: Investigating Concepts of the Dead Body

Panel Organisers: Rebekka Pabst and Oxana Polozhentseva

Chair: Ulrike Steinert

9:30 **Rebekka Pabst and Oxana Polozhentseva (Mainz)**

Dead Bodies: Conceptualizations of the corpse from ancient Egyptian and Medieval perspectives

10:10 **Wilfried Rosendahl (Mannheim)**

On the Handling of the Corpse – A cross-cultural view from the Palaeolithic to the early modern period

10:50 *Coffee Break*

Chair: Andrea Babbi

11:20 **Alondra Domínguez Ángeles and Adriana Gómez Aiza (Hidalgo, Mexico)**

Corporeal Transformation: Self-decapitation and nahualism in Mesoamerican tradition

12:00 **Annette Kehnel (Mannheim)**

They Don't Accept Death



12:40 *Lunch*

Chair: Ursula Verhoeven-van Elsbergen

14:10 **Fabian Neuwahl (Köln)**

At Last Death Filled the Sanctuaries with Lifeless Bodies...: Dead bodies in ancient plague descriptions

14:50 **Romedio Schmitz-Esser (Graz)**

The Return of the Mummy: Medieval knowledge of ancient Egyptian embalming

15:30 *Coffee Break*

Chair: Rebekka Pabst and Oxana Polozhentseva

16:00 *Panel and Conference Discussion*

Chair: Ulrike Steinert

17:00 **Tanja Pommerening**

Concluding Remarks and End of Conference

Panel 1:

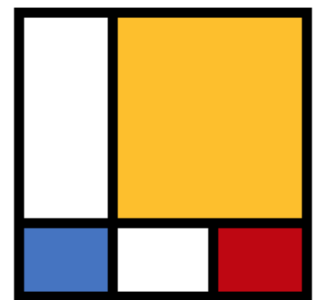
Zones, Parts, Functions: The Relationship between Body Experience and Body Concepts

Simone Gerhards and Nadine Gräßler (Mainz)

From Embodied Experience to Body Concepts

The human body and its basic functions have hardly changed for thousands of years and work almost identically in every human. Therefore, it seems not surprising that descriptions and representations of bodies often show a striking similarity in various cultures. Despite these similarities, which might be attributed to the biological basis of the human body and human cognition, body concepts that rest upon concrete human experience of bodies can also differ

among cultures and are obviously subject to culturally specific factors. This tension between universal and culture-specific patterns concerning the body and ideas surrounding it is already evident in ancient cultures and can be traced in diverse sources (e.g. texts and material culture).



This paper will present the general aim and leading questions of the panel *Zones, Parts, Functions – the Relationship between Body Experience and Body Concepts*. The first part introduces to the research field of *body concepts* and *embodiment* with a focus on current theories and methods. Conceptual metaphor theory with the study of primary metaphors/image schemas demonstrates, for example, that concepts based on universal bodily experience may exist in different cultures (e.g. body as a [CONTAINER]). In various analogies the body could serve as a model – for example to describe certain concepts in medicine or politics. Beside the universal body experience psychological and social studies furthermore highlight the importance of the social and cultural background for the formation of body concepts.

As an example, in the second part of the paper, the relationship between sleep and death will be discussed from an Egyptological point of view. This relationship may be explained by a cognitive process which is grounded on the basic physical experience that sleepers are lying down in darkness with closed eyes; however, the conceptual features differ among various cultures, even among contemporary cultures.



Rosemary A. Joyce (Berkeley, California)

Bodies: Being and Meaning in Prehispanic Central America

This presentation draws on approaches from new materialism, particularly the agential realism of Karen Barad, feminist re-reading of body phenomenology, and Peircean semiotics to re-examine the experience, representation, and interpretation of the human body in ancient cultures of Mexico and Central America. In previous work, I have shown that the human body was partible and fluid, and have drawn attention to movement as constituting bodily experience. In common with other scholars, I identify the head, hands, and feet as particularly charged body parts, and blood, breath, and bones as significant body substances demarcated by and enclosed within marked skin. In this presentation I add the ambiguity of boundaries that is created by body elaboration, including the implanting of stone objects, the manipulation of hair, and the intra-action between the recognized bodily substances and cloth, here seen as a body part and not merely an object carried inertly by a body. Consideration is given to the degree to which the implied body philosophy is local or potentially might be seen as a broader human potential.



Rune Nyord (Atlanta, Georgia)

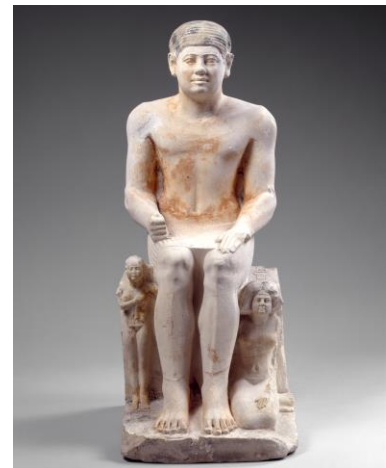
Bodies of Stone and Wood: Concepts and experiences of statues as substitute bodies in ancient Egypt



Kneeling Statue of Yuny (limestone).
Asyut, ca. 1294–1279 BCE.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, 33.2.1.

Egyptian images have often been regarded as a kind of substitute bodies effecting the corporeal presence of the being depicted. This raises the question of what Egyptian imaging practices can tell us about experiences and conceptions of the body as a complement to the healing texts and religious writings more usually drawn on in this connection. The paper's point of departure is the idea demonstrable in ancient Egyptian discourses about images that ancient Egyptian statues were never just passive registrations of what bodies looked like in the modern sense of a representation – a

point made especially clear by statues of gods in composite figures, often drawn from a repertoire of several possible forms of manifestation. Rather, such images were the means to provide a being with the material attributes he or she needed for a particular context of interaction, most typically the cult devoted to gods or ancestors. In this way, the statue can be thought of as a 'bundle of affects' in much the same sense as a body can (Viveiros de Castro 2015: 109). Against this background, the paper argues that Egyptian thoughts about, and practices with, statues can inform our understanding of what it meant for the Egyptians – experientially and conceptually – to have a body.



Nikare with his Wife and Daughter (limestone). Saqqara(?), ca. 2420–2389 BCE or later. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 52.19.

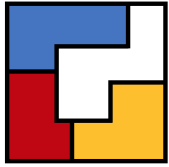


Yudit K. Greenberg (Winter Park, Florida)

*The Lovers' Bodies in the Gitagovinda and Shir Ha-shirim
(Song of Songs): A comparative reading of Hindu and
Jewish sacred texts*

In this talk I examine depictions of the lovers' bodies in two of the best poetic texts ever produced, masterpieces from the ancient Near East and the Subcontinent: the *Gītāgovinda* (Song of the Cowherd), the twelfth Century Sanskrit poem composed by the Bengali poet Jayadeva, depicting the passionate love between Lord Krishna and Radha, and *Shir Ha-Shirim* (Song of Songs), comprising one of the Hebrew Bible's twenty-four books, portraying the love between a shepherdess and a shepherd in the land of Israel. While erotic love is the leitmotif that characterizes both texts, the theological backdrops framing these texts and their reception are quite distinct. The *Gītāgovinda* is one of the most popular works in Vaiṣṇava Hinduism, a Bhakti-devotional path, embracing a number of divine manifestations, gods and goddesses, male and female gurus. The Song of Songs has been an integral part of the Jewish and Christian traditions, affirming the bond of the one God and His respective "chosen" people.

Both songs have challenged scholars within their traditions to validate their holiness in the face of their highly nuanced erotic depictions of the lovers' bodies. At the same time, there have also been a plethora of commentaries advancing their allegorical and mystical meanings, thus deflecting from the embodied experience of erotic love and erotic bodies. My interreligious reading highlights the tensions between "earthly" and "divine" love in both songs, and the constraints of the female beloved in the Song of Songs who often represents the human in search of God, in contrast with Radha in the *Gitagovinda*, who triumphantly represents the Divine Feminine.



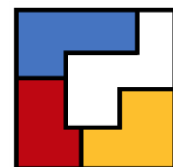
Reuven Kiperwasser (Jerusalem)

*Order of Universe
and (Dis)Orders of Body*



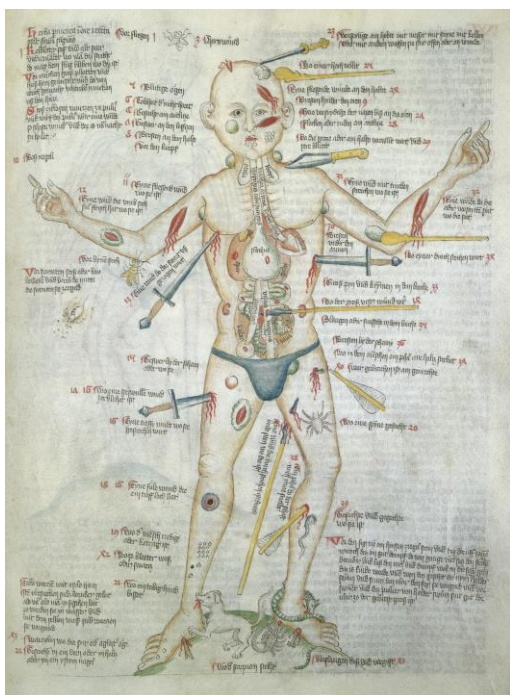
© N. Busigin

Behind rabbinic speculations about life, religious duties and the history of creation, numerous inquiries about physical phenomena can be revealed. They include questions about the conception of an organized material world which includes human beings. The natural world was perceived by the rabbis (both Palestinian and Babylonian) as a kind of living organism structured as a human body. This model is quite different from the Biblical one and emerges in numerous sermons and stories and appears to have been one of the central ideas of Rabbinic Judaism. The main aim of my research is to show how the human body, for Rabbis, was the main scale of their reasoning against which they measured perceiving the world. The body, as I will show, was the starting point in their cosmographic, hydrological and other speculations and my aim is to explore this phenomenon. The main difference in this regard between the two rabbinic cultures (Palestinian and Babylonian) is in the theological explanations about divine involvement in the functioning of the natural world. The aim of this presentation is to explore the relationship between body experience and body-oriented concepts. I am interested to show how natural phenomena were interpreted in the cultural world in which there were no articulated concepts of nature as we understand it, and, despite the existence of the term for a body, there is no full separation of body and mind. My claim is that imagined analogy between the human body and the universe led to a balance between mild anthropological dualism and some holistic concepts in rabbinic thought. By making this link I aim to explore various aspects of the rabbinic scientific approaches.



Han Nijdam (Leeuwarden)

Body Schemas in Medieval Frisian Law Texts



Wound Man, c. 1430 (Wellcome Library, London, ms. WMS49, f. 35)

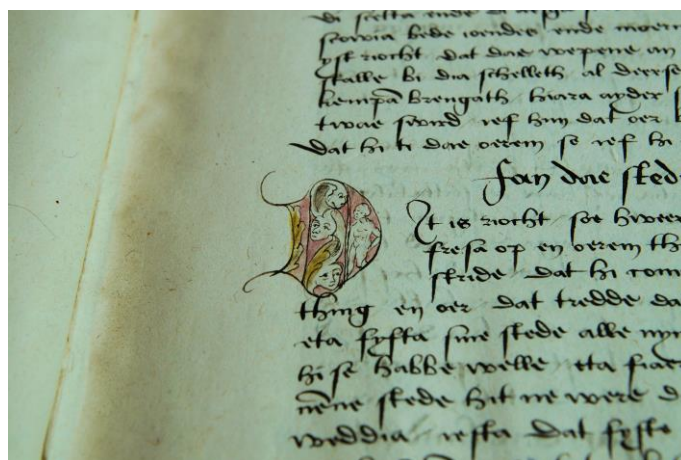
Medieval Frisia has yielded an interesting corpus of indigenous law texts. Within these, the genre of compensation tariffs or injury lists is heavily represented. The reason for this is that medieval Frisia was an honour society in which violence, revenge and feuds were always around the corner.

In many societies across the world, the institution of blood money or wergild has been invented in order to stop or prevent an ongoing chain of bloody revenge between factions and families. Once a price was put on a life or whole body, lists of the values of the various body parts often developed as a consequence.

The long Frisian compensation tariffs show in an unparalleled detail which body parts were valued in what way in medieval Frisia. Because of this abundance, they also reveal a very interesting collection of body schemas and body metaphors.

In my research, I have used insights from various disciplines, such as anthropology, cognitive sciences, and cognitive linguistics in order to analyse these texts and the schemas they yield. Some schemas turn out to be universal, some are more cultural. I will discuss the various schemas and respective contexts and interpretations.

In my proposed talk, I will also present a model of embodied honour, which explains how money and other valuables could compensate the loss of a body part or bodily function.



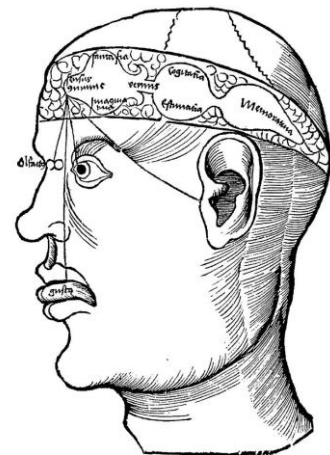
Initial from the Old Frisian Law Manuscript Jus Municipale Frisonum, c. 1530 (Tresoar, Leeuwarden, ms. R5, f. 18r)



Shahrzad Irannejad and Aleksandar Milenković (Mainz)

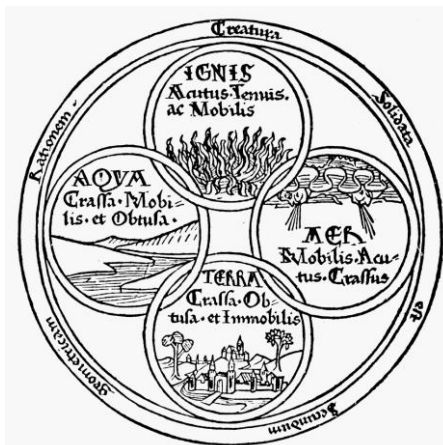
From Localization of Functions to Embodiment of Concepts

The localization of the mind and its faculties has been a controversial topic for centuries. In early Greek thought, most scholars belonged to two camps: there were those who assigned the heart as the seat of the mind, while others believed the mind to be located in the brain. In his teaching on thinking and perception, Empedocles (5th century BCE) proposes that humans think with neither of the two, but rather with their blood. The first case study aims to answer the question of relevance of certain body parts and functions for their conceptualization in Empedocles' doctrine. The function of the "organ of thinking" is examined through its dysfunction, thereby providing an experiential basis for the embodiment of an otherwise abstract faculty.



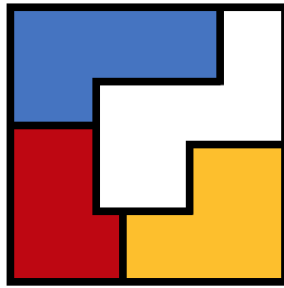
A popular portrayal of the idea of Ventricular Localization of the Inner Senses, published in Gregor Reisch's (c. 1467-1525) *Margarita philosophica*, the first notable modern encyclopedia.

Centuries after the brain secured its place as the seat of the mind, the several faculties of the mind were speculatively associated with very specific spots within the brain. The 4th century bishop of Emesa, Nemesius, provides us with the first textual



Empedocles' four elements (fire, air, water and earth), woodcut from an edition of Lucretius' *De rerum natura*, published in Brescia by Tommaso Fer-rando (1472).

evidence of this manner of localization. In an attempt to justify what he says about the localization of the mental faculties in the three ventricles of the brain, he uses the same logic readily applicable to the localization of functions in other organs of the body: if there is a disorder in an organ, the function of the corresponding faculty is affected; thus, from the observation of a [mal]function, the locus of the faculty can be traced. This second case study shows how the physically grounded experience of localized pain and damage is extrapolated to explain the manner of the embodiment of the abstract concepts of mental faculties – the least bodily of the embodied faculties.

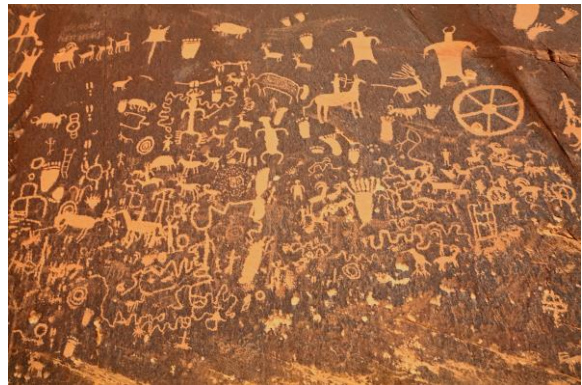
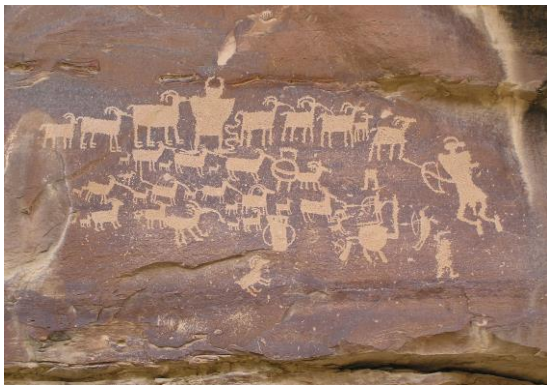


Keynote

Barbara Tversky (Stanford, California)

Putting the Mind in the World

One unique characteristic of humanity is putting the mind into the world. Cave paintings, petroglyphs, and artifacts found all over the world attest to that need. Despite differences in form and culture, those expressions of thought have similarities of content: they depict individuals, space, time/events, and number suggesting that these are thoughts that are central to human lives, a claim supported by evidence that the brain has specialized areas for computing them.



A National Historic Site near the needles area of Canyonlands NP in SE Utah.

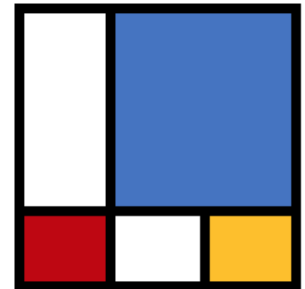
Panel 2:

Conceptualizing Sky and Heaven: Human Interactions with Meteorological and Cosmic Phenomena

Laura Borghetti, Sandra Hofert, Mirna Kjorveziroska, Marie-Charlotte von Lehsten and Katharina Zartner (Mainz)

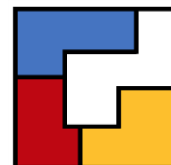
Skies and Heavens: An interdisciplinary perspective

Marcus T. Cicero, Roman statesman and orator, once wrote to his friend Atticus: *Digito se caelum putent attingere*, namely “they would believe to reach the sky with a finger”. With his words, he aimed at describing the feeling of such an intense joy that would enable someone to even touch the sky with their own hands. Cicero’s metaphor suggests how wondrous and mysterious, as well as unreachable, the sky must have appeared to the people of his time.



The persistent observation of the sky in many pre-modern cultures has resulted in multiple ways of interpreting it and its meteorological and cosmic phenomena. Various attempts of scientific depictions and analyses, along with the creation of fictional scenarios and complex theological systems, show how humans have perceived and reproduced the sky and its phenomena in their literary and artistic creation.

The aim of this contribution is to reflect upon fundamental topics connected to the human perception of the sky and of its phenomena, such as different models of the cosmos, the interactions of humans with the sky and its *relata* and the spatial conception of the celestial region. The distinctive feature of this paper is the interdisciplinary approach. By presenting the different points of view of the Ancient Near-Eastern, Ancient Greek, Byzantine and Medieval German cultures, we will investigate singularities, as well as shared views and concepts, about the sky and its meteorological, cosmic and topological dynamics.



Edward Wright (Phoenix, Arizona)

Cosmos and Afterlife:

The impact of advances in cosmology on the religious imagination in ancient Israel and early Judaism

Ancient Israelites and Judeans were keenly attuned to their place in the cosmos, and they imagined it by analogically projecting their life onto the celestial realms. The evidence for this can be found in the Bible, ancient Near Eastern literature, and ancient inscriptions. The realm overhead was the realm of the gods, or for some, the realm of the only god, Yahweh. The gods

lived as royalty lived – ruling from heaven on thrones in lavish palaces and surrounded by advisors and servants. After Alexander the Great’s Hellenization of the Near East, these people engaged with Greek science and philosophy and began to reimagine both the cosmos and the afterlife in hellenistic terms, supplanting the ancient Near Eastern models of the cosmos and afterlife with hellenistic models. The evidence for these early Jewish innovations is found in late biblical, deuterocanonical, and non-canonical Greco-Roman era Jewish texts. These texts attest familiarity with what is known as the Ptolemaic model of the cosmos with the spherical earth orbited by planets in nestled spheres. These texts also demonstrate how the traditional ancient Near Eastern ideas about a dreary netherworldly afterlife gave way to a new hope for an afterlife in a celestial realm. This phase in the evolution of human afterlife beliefs sheds valuable light on the transforming impact that advances in science can have on belief systems.



The Apotheosis of Hercules , by François Lemoyne or Le Moine (1688 – 1737) Chateau de Versailles - Salon d'Hercule Versailles, Île-de-France



Marvin Schreiber (Berlin)

Relationship, Correspondence, and Construction of the Cosmic Structures of Heaven and Earth in First Millennium BCE Mesopotamia



Kudurru-Stein mit babylonischen Göttersymbolen

The paper aims to explore the connection of cosmic structures (constellations, etc.) as well as other celestial bodies (Sun, Moon, planets) with certain Mesopotamian temples, their earthly counterparts, and some cultic and ritual activities in relation with these sanctuaries.

Chronologically the paper will focus on the Neo-Assyrian and the Neo/Late-Babylonian period, and the sources that will be used are cuneiform texts from these periods.

The three main parts of the presentation will be:

1) the series Inamgišhurankia (“designs of heaven and earth”), some topographical and related texts, and their relation to the astral sciences;

2) the Esagila temple in Babylon and the Ezida temple in Borsippa (the seats of Marduk and his son Nabû, which

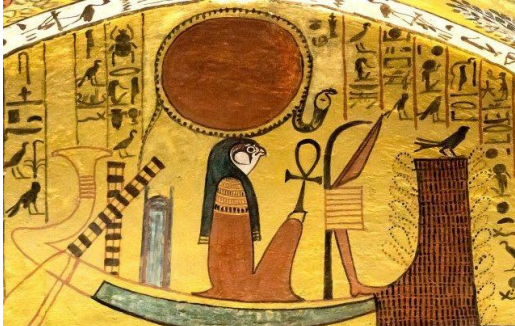
were both at the head of the pantheon in the late period), the cultic unity of both temples, their astral counterparts, and the connection of some of their ritual activities to celestial phenomena (lunar phases, day-night rhythm);

3) the drawing of the cosmic structures, the “designs of heaven and earth”, the plans and constructions of the temples that are mirroring them, the ‘sacred’ measurements that were used, and the terminology of field measurement, land survey and agriculture which the cuneiform texts use to describe these.

On the whole the paper will present an overview of two of the most important Babylonian sanctuaries and the different ways and forms in which they were related to the heavens and certain celestial phenomena.



Mystisch-explanatorischer Text aus der Assurbanipal-Bibliothek über die 'Götterzahlen' (K 170)



The solar barque. Detail from the tomb of Sennedjem at Deir el-Medina (TT1, 19th Dynasty).

Tom H. Davies (Princeton, New Jersey)
*Three First-Millennium BC Theories of the
Solar Journey*

This paper explores an early Greek cosmographical debate in the light of other first-millennium BC Eastern Mediterranean traditions of cosmographic inquiry. In Bronze- and Iron-Age Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Iran, thinkers developed and refined theories of

the sun's journey during the night. Over the course of the sixth century BC, these traditions were brought into explicit competition in the port city of Miletus, on the coast of Greek Ionia. The Milesian thinkers Anaximander and Anaximenes each made use of ideas seemingly drawn from other ancient cultures in their debate over the nocturnal course of the sun. I lay out the historical development of the debate at Miletus, and its relevance for how philosophical and scientific thought in the first millennium BC should be approached: as the product of dynamic and continuous exchange between many cultures engaged in the same project of theorizing the natural world.

The first section of the paper surveys some views on this issue available in the Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean, and argues that there was a rough consensus in the region. The sun was held to disappear at night into a watery and cavernous underworld, which it travels through before emerging in the east. Cosmographic debate, in Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and earlier Greek traditions, took place within this general framework.

The second section looks at the Milesian philosopher Anaximander, who broke with the consensus by claiming that the earth is suspended in the centre of a centrifocal universe. The sun, according to Anaximander, travels through empty space beneath us at night just as it travels through empty space above us during the day.

In the third section, I explore the response to Anaximander's innovation by his younger contemporary and fellow-citizen Anaximenes. Anaximenes, reverting to a vertically-stratified universe, argued that the sun does not disappear beneath the earth at all: instead, it is obscured at night because it journeys behind a massive mountain range in the far north.

Anaximenes' account draws on an existing Indo-Iranian cosmography in which the heavenly bodies orbit a great mountain, known as Harā in Iranian tradition and Meru in Indic texts. The rise of the Achaemenid Empire, and its incursion into the Greek-speaking world, therefore seems to have furnished Greek thinkers with a new set of cosmological ideas which were immediately brought into competitive relation with existing theories. Like Anaximander's innovation, Anaximenes' response is best understood as part of an ongoing debate which stretched well beyond the Greek Aegean, and which was enlivened and pushed forward.



Daniel W. Graham (Provo, Utah)

Greek Cosmology

The Greek conception of the heaven and the events that occur in it starts out looking not very different from conceptions of other cultures of the Mediterranean Basin, and perhaps not very different from conceptions in other parts of the world. But in the archaic period it quickly evolves into a speculative vision quite distinct in some respects from its roots, and then evolves still more into a kind of proto-scientific picture. I propose to sketch a view in which some simple innovations have a profound influence on the Greek conception. We can see the mythological conception most clearly in the poems of Hesiod, who presents a myth about the universe. In the *Theogony* he describes a genealogy of gods, in which divine beings with cosmic characteristics, such as Gaia (mother Earth), Ouranus (Heaven), Ocean, and Sea are begotten and in turn beget or bear other deities, ending with the Olympian gods. There are conflicts among the ruling gods, as Heaven is overthrown by Cronus, and Cronus and his supporters are overthrown by Zeus and his supporters. The cosmos is presented as a roughly spherical body with a radius of ten anvil-days, in which a flat disk-shaped earth is covered by a dome above (Heaven) and a bowl beneath (Tartarus). Heavenly bodies consist of individual deities such as Helios, the sun god driving his shining chariot, and Selene the moon goddess. Zeus is a storm-god who casts thunderbolts as missiles against his enemies. Different gods ensure the order of the world by using their powers under the direction of a triumvirate of three (mostly) benevolent gods, Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades. A new breed of intellectuals, whom we now call philosophers, offered a different conception of the earth and the heavens, beginning around 600 BCE. Thales of Miletus conceived of the world as like a raft floating on a vast sea; waves on the sea could cause the phenomenon we call an earthquake. Anaximander pictured the heavenly bodies as great wheel-like circles in which fire was enclosed by air. The earth was like a column drum, staying in place because of its balance with other bodies. Anaximenes pictured the heavens as like a “felt cap” covering the flat earth, while lower bodies, the sun and moon, were blown around in a circle above the earth by winds, like kites. In all of this the sky and the heavenly bodies are light and relatively close to the earth, and meteorological and astronomical events are continuous with each other. The heavenly bodies are natural bodies pushed by natural forces. The occurrence of a thunderbolt or an earthquake does not express the wrath of the gods or communicate divine intentions to humans. A second stage of speculation by philosophers in the early fifth century BCE changes the picture again. Now heavenly bodies are conceived as circling relatively far from earth and being separate from meteorological processes. The heavenly bodies are earthy or stony, that is: heavier than air, and kept aloft by a cosmic vortex motion. This conceptual change seems to be driven for the first time by scientific considerations. One philosopher recognizes that the moon gets its light from the sun, while another applies this insight to explain correctly both lunar and solar eclipses. These new theories entail certain phenomena which are then verified to corroborate a new cosmology. In this way a shift from the supernatural to the natural, from (divine) persons to things as explanatory concepts, and the pursuit of empirical evidence to support theories of nature seems to have a profound effect on cosmological thinking.



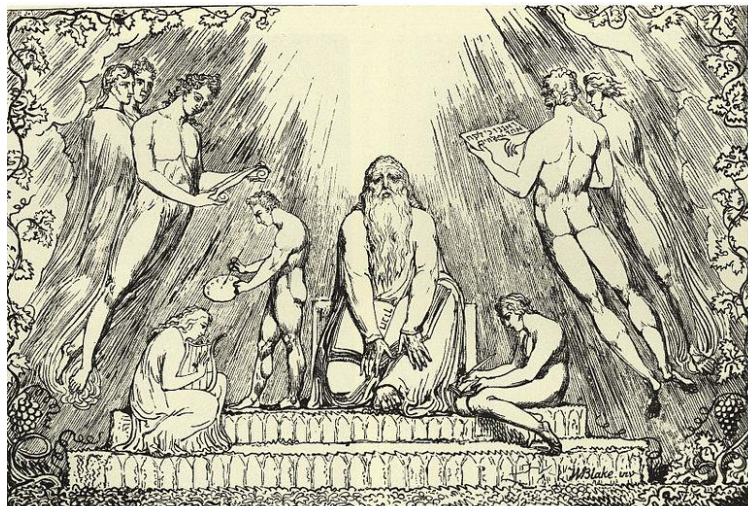
Matthias Däumer (Wien)

*The Script That Fell to Earth:
Media-mythological thoughts on the 'First Book of Enoch' and
Wolfram von Eschenbach's 'Parzival'*

The *First Book of Enoch* is currently placed between an apocryphal and canonical status. The original Aramaic text can be dated back to the 3rd century BC. Michael A. Knibb, the perhaps most important editor and translator of the *Book of Watchers*, wrote that in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages outside Ethiopia the knowledge of the book largely disappeared. I am not sure about that and want to argue in a different direction:

The first part of this Pentateuch, the *Book of Watchers* is named after the angels who according to the Torah slept with human females, thus creating heroic, but uncontrollable giants. Looking at the description of the Watchers' sin, we see that the *Book of Watchers* portrays the Angels' sin not only as being sexual but far more, their sin is analogue to that committed by Prometheus in Greek myth: they brought forbidden knowledge to their human lovers; and one part of this knowledge is of uttermost importance: the 'fire' that the Promethean Watchers brought from the stars to earth is the dangerous ability to write.

This media-mythological interpretation can be regarded as a starting point for a chain of reception, leading from Late Antiquity up to the High Middle Ages and more precisely: up to Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* with its conception of the so called 'Neutral Angels', of which the stars told a rather astonishing and highly paradox tale, closely interlinked to that of Enoch.



William Blake "Enoch" Lithograph 1806/7 (Metropolitan Museum of Art 013.146)



Feray Coskun (Istanbul)

Celestial Phenomena, Nature and Man in the Ottoman Cosmographies



Ottoman cosmographies written in the late fourteenth and the early fifteenth centuries are the earliest extant sources shedding light on the Ottoman understanding of cosmos (*'alam*) and its origins and relation to mankind. Drawing a general picture of both invisible and visible phenomena in the heavenly and terrestrial realms, these texts approach the whole existence as a reflection of God's omnipotence and view life on earth inextricably connected to divine design in heavenly realms.

This paper presents a comparison of the earliest examples of Ottoman cosmography written in Turkish in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The first is *'Aca'ibü'l-Mahlukat* by Ali bin Abdurrahman (alive, 1398), a free translation of al-Qazwinī's *'Ajā'ib al-Mahlūqat* embellished with Ali bin Abdurrahman's post-mortem mystical journeys to heavens and his resurrection after death. Bearing the same title, the second belongs to Rükneddin Ahmed. It carries influence of Persian *'Ajā'ib al-Mahlūqat* works and refers to various speculations over nature and its impact on daily life. The third is the *Dürr-i Meknun* by Ahmed Bican, an Ottoman mystic of the Bayrami order from Gelibolu. All three works include elements of the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic model (i.e. the seven climate system, the spheres of the four elements), pious speculation, anecdotes and stories from the ancient and medieval corpus. In terms of content, they tell about the origins of the universe and mankind, the distance of the stars to the earth and to



Ahmed Bican's *Acaibu'l-Mahlukat*.
Istanbul University Collection of Rare Manuscripts
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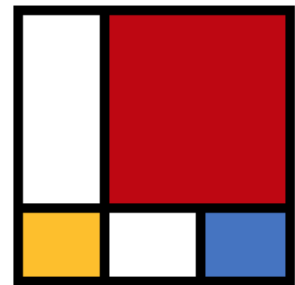
each other, the peculiarities of the planets (whether they are inanimate or animate or their correspondence to human affairs), the origins of earthquakes or meteorological events. For example, the *Dürr-i Meknun* traces the origins of the universe back to a green emerald that turned into water upon God's gaze. It puts forward that all heavenly realms are surrounded by a gigantic snake praising God in different languages and that the sky takes its color from the legendary Mountain Qaf, made of a blue meteor encircling the earth. Depicted in gigantic dimensions and filled with wondrous entities, the celestial realms in these texts represent the ultimate reality connected to divine will. Furthermore, they also function as the mechanisms of divine favor or punishment befalling humans as a consequence of their own actions. This paper elaborates this interesting relationship between heavens, man and nature by exploring those three narratives from the early Ottoman world.

Panel 3: ***Investigating concepts of dead body***

Rebekka Pabst and Oxana Polozhentseva (Mainz)
*Dead Bodies: Conceptualizations of the corpse from
ancient Egyptian and Medieval perspectives*

In modern societies, death is usually associated with the decay of the body and, ultimately, the complete disappearance of the lifeless shell. However, this perception does not have to concur with concepts of earlier cultures.

It is known, for example, that in ancient Egypt mummification was practiced to stop the decay process. By preserving the corpse, the souls of the deceased were able to return to the body. Therefore, one could understand the corpse as a simple vessel. However, the mortal shell was by no means considered “lifeless” as written sources like the ancient Egyptian funerary texts show. For instance, those sources mention that the souls of the deceased return to the “dead body” in order to revive it. Furthermore, it was believed that the body of the deceased could regain its abilities and senses in the course of complex rituals. Through these rituals, the once lifeless shell was re-transformed into a fully functional body.



Human mortality, as a complex phenomenon, also raises interest amongst those who study German Medieval texts, since cases of death are discussed in a variety of genres and text types of the Middle Ages, such as religious, epic, narrative literature, and specialized non-fiction texts, e.g. law and medical texts. The representations of dead bodies and their semantic verbalization from the medieval sources offer a broad spectrum of conceptualizations: a dead body could be described, for instance, as a rotting shell, as nameless remains or as an odorous relic.

Such examples show that a “dead body” can be linked with quite different culturally specific conceptions which are based on more universal ideas. In our talk, we will compare examples of such conceptualizations from our current dissertation projects.



Wilfried Rosendahl (Mannheim)

On the Handling of the Corpse –

A cross-cultural view from the Palaeolithic to the early modern period

Assured evidence of a special cultural treatment and / or manipulation of the dead human body already exist for the Middle Paleolithic, depending on the author even for the Lower Paleolithic. As part of the lecture, different practices in dealing with the corpse are presented by the example of various finds and records from different times, regions and world cultures. The spectrum ranges from burials, cremations and arial buri-

als (with and without grave goods) to ritual decarnalization, ritual cannibalism, ritual partial decomposition, cranial depositions, cult of ancestor skulls, as well as to the mummification of

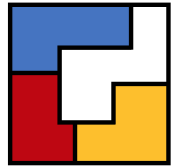


Overmodeled ancestor's skull from the latmul group from Papua New Guinea.
Foto: © W. Rosendahl, rem.



Excavation at the early Neolithic site of Herxheim (Palatinate). The skull shows different traces of ritual decarnalization. Foto: © W. Rosendahl, rem.

the whole body or of body parts via different artificial and intentional methods. The different practices cannot be attributed to specific time periods or cultures. They are much more recurring behaviors that point to a time- and culture-independent basic repertoire of human considerations for dealing with the corpse. The lecture focuses on anthropological evidence and includes partly the treatment of the body of opponents by victors after militant or military conflicts.



Alondra Domínguez Ángeles and Adriana Gómez Aiza (Hidalgo, Mexico)

*Corporeal Transformation:
Self-decapitation and nahualism in Mesoamerican tradition*

Dismembered bodies, skull trophies, decapitating axes, dancers handling their own heads, self-decapitation, are all frequent representations of religious slaughter in Mesoamerican codices and archaeological remains. Although these seem to be closely related with human sacrifice, a careful insight shows that some depictions are indeed shamanic and alter-ego transformations (nahualism). That is, a symbolic rather than actual death; particularly in self-decapitation. The latter is unfeasible in real life, it can only happen in the infra-world, the *anecumenic* sphere where dead rulers and shamans travel to depose themselves of their corporeal substance, so that they can transpose their dismembered being into their alter-ego body. Self-decapitation is thus strongly tied to the notion of ritual death, and renunciation of the self. It shares a common grounding with human sacrifice in so far as both sacralise the nature of a destroyed corporeality in order to liberate specific anaemic entities: either a particular part of the body is offered (not life but the heart that holds a certain entity, i.e. the Nahuatl *yolotl*, constitutes the offering) or an identity is forsaken in order to embody a predator animal or meteorological phenomenon (projection of a shaman's own anaemic entity, i.e. the Nahuatl *ihiyotl*).



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The notion of nahualism, however, does not have a straightforward and singular definition: it was linked to lineage and the legitimacy of the ruling elite during the Classic; it was associated with military control in the post-Classic, and from the Conquest to this day it has been interpreted as a form of indigenous cultural resistance. Neither does the idea of death have a single interpretation among pre-Hispanic cultural regions as to what happened to anaemic entities after death. All depended on the type of casualty, the subject who died and the anaemic entity involved. In this paper we try to tackle all these questions readdressing the concept of the human body by Mesoamerican traditions and pay attention to the influence of Occidental Christian thought in accounting for the phenomena of human sacrifice among Maya and Nahuatl cultures.



Annette Kehnel (Mannheim)

They Don't Accept Death



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A tradition amongst the Ngonde in the North of Malawi has it, that there is no such thing as natural death. Whenever someone dies, no matter how old he or she was, it is always the consequence of some form of action exercised on the body of the deceased. The agent of this power might be a person, alive or dead, an object or even just words, pronounced or written down by someone. At the first instance such a tradition seems entirely counterfactual to a Western European mind. However, at a second glance one might recognize an extreme version of the logic of cause and effect here. The paper traces different sources and tries to contextualize this rather irritating concept of death.



Detail from red-figure stemless kylix by the Penthesilea Painter, ca. 460 B.C. Exterior, Side A: Eos pursuing Tithonos. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 96.18.76. Purchase by subscription, 1896.



Fabian Neuwahl (Köln)

*At Last Death Filled the Sanctuaries with Lifeless Bodies...:
Dead bodies in ancient plague descriptions*

In classical antiquity the bodies of the deceased occupy a special position in the culture-specific framework of human existence. That a dead body is not 'simply dead', one can already recognize in the fight for Patroclus' corpse in Homer's *Ilias*. Dead bodies therefore stay part of intended social interactions, for example concerning the funeral ceremony. The execution of funeral rites befitting one's social status does not only serve a social role transfer (from the 'just alive' to the 'dead') or ostentatious purposes (e.g. through pompous ceremonies) but also a proper appreciation of the deceased.

My lecture's aim is to investigate contexts of literary fiction, in which an appreciation of the person is no longer intended or straightforwardly impossible: plague descriptions in Roman poetry. Although these descriptions depend to a large extent on the historian Thucydides (with regard to vocabulary, motives etc.), they enable us to examine to what degree the social interaction with corpses could have been influenced by existential crises – at least according to the fictional frameworks.

In their narration the poets consciously use the tension between the desire to appreciate the dead person and the experience of collective death transforming individual corpses into nameless piles. This anonymity is cause and result of an abrupt alienation from the dead body which actually contradicts the Romans' perception of the world.



Michiel Sweerts: Plague in an Ancient City, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (AC 1997.10.1)

Consequently, the special drama of plague descriptions is a result of breaking with the social concept of an adequate contact with the deceased. An examination of these descriptions in relation to the conference seems fruitful to the extent that ancient people, forced by the unavoidable forces of nature, had to watch the process of specific corpses being absorbed in collective death. During this process the concept 'corpse' changes and with it the patterns of interaction. Therefore, we can speak of a temporary change of the concept due to the existential crisis of the plague.



Romedio Schmitz-Esser (Graz)

The Return of the Mummy: Medieval knowledge of ancient Egyptian embalming

When we think of “mummies” today, we immediately associate the concept with ancient Egypt. Picturesque pyramids and pharaohs on their eternal journey in the afterlife come to mind. But mummification is a widespread phenomenon, embraced by many cultures across the globe.

Nevertheless, embalmment in the European Middle Ages has only recently become a research field in its own right, combining efforts in archaeology, anthropology and history. In the course of this new awakening of interest in medieval conservation methods for dead humans, a lacuna in research has surfaced. Various sources from the epoch suggest that the high and late medieval European elite knew about the methods of embalmment of the ancient Egyptians. So far, this has only been studied in regard to the medical use of “mumia”, but there is still a lack of understanding of the quality and quantity of knowledge about the specific methods of ancient embalming in medieval society. This paper tries to clarify the picture by combining current knowledge about archaeology, written records, and the reception of authors from antiquity like Herodotus in the millennium that followed the downfall of the Greek and Roman civilisations. In doing so, it opens up a new set of questions for future research.



Notes

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