



Call for Papers

Melammu-Workshop

**From Athens to Samarqand: Spatial Perception in Antiquity from the Eastern
Mediterranean to the Taklamakan Desert
Innsbruck (Austria), 17th – 19th of January 2024**

We are pleased to announce that the Call for Papers for the international and interdisciplinary workshop „From Athens to Samarqand. Spatial Perception in Antiquity from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Taklamakan Desert” is now open for submissions. The conference will be hosted by the Department of Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the University of Innsbruck from 17th to 19th of January 2024.

Spatial perception in antiquity is a fruitful and intriguing research area that has already received attention since the late 18th century. The development of separate disciplines dealing with different cultures and sources has, however, led to an often-isolated treatment of such topics in the specific fields of History, Philology and (Historical) Linguistics. This conference intends to provide the opportunity to overcome such isolated treatment and to strengthen the cooperation between the fields by establishing interdisciplinary discussions. The conference will cover two millennia (1st millennium BCE – 1st millennium CE) and the vast geographical area of Afro-Eurasia.

The workshop will focus on *Spatial Perception in an Imperial Historical and Linguistic Context*. The aim is to investigate the impact of Empires on the conceptualisation of various regions and its reflection in imperial language and sources. *Borderlands* as dynamic regions of constant exchange and mobility serve as suitable environments for the transmission and transformation of ideas. Connecting and challenging different prospects and approaches is one of the key goals of the conference. Our leading questions will be: How are various regions conceptualised through the lens of empire on the one hand and through the lens of imperial Borderlands on the other? How are these frameworks realised in language? What are the consequences of territorial disputes for the conceptualisation of later geographical frameworks? How do Borderlands, their boundaries and their conceptualisations change in relation to trade, mobility and complex processes of exchange?

We welcome papers dealing with the following topics:

- Borderland's view on the imperial heartland and vice versa.
- Spatial perception of territories contested by various powers.
- Frictions between traditional geographical conceptualisations of Borderlands and (the lack of) the modification of their conceptualisation in the context of territorial expansion or provincialisation.
- Spatial perception and the role of divine beings in military and border conflicts.
- The conceptualisation of natural spaces as (un)inhabited or imagined Borderlands.
- Peoples and their emic and etic conceptualisation as a "living Borderland".
- The use of "border terminology" (i.e. crossing of mountains, plains and deserts).
- Lexicological and semantical studies on imperial spatial perception.
- Linguistic impact of empires on Borderlands and beyond or vice versa.

We welcome proposals for 20-minutes papers. The abstract should not exceed 250 words and should be submitted to MWFromAthenstoSmrqnd@gmx.at by 30th of March 2023. The conference language will be English.

Early-career scholars are especially encouraged to send us their proposals.

Topics that are related to the above-mentioned research topics are welcomed.

We plan to cover travel and accommodation expenses. However, if a participant has any travel funds from the own respective project or institution, we will greatly appreciate if that could be used. If necessary (due to external factors), we reserve the option to hold the proceedings online.

Publication of the Proceedings

The proceedings of the workshop will be published in a double-blind peer-reviewed volume in cooperation with the Journal of Ancient Civilizations (JAC) (Institute for the History of Ancient Civilizations). Further details will be announced in due course by email.

Organisers

Florian Posselt, Alexander Steiner, Clemens Steinwender

Florian.Posselt@uibk.ac.at
A.Steiner@student.uibk.ac.at
Clemens.Steinwender@gmx.at

Institut für Alte Geschichte und Altorientalistik Innsbruck
Department for Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies Innsbruck
Langer Weg 11, 6020 Innsbruck, Austria
<https://www.uibk.ac.at/alte-geschichte-orient/>