

Ancient Knowledge in the Modern University
Strategic partnership Princeton University – Humboldt University Berlin
Stage II proposal

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Summary

We seek funding for an initial year of two meetings/workshops intended to prepare a longer term collaborative Princeton/Humboldt program of research and graduate training activities devoted to the topic ‘Ancient Knowledge in the Modern University’. This program will study the ways in which, from the early modern period to the twentieth century onwards, ancient fields and practices of science and knowledge inherited from the Graeco-Roman world changed from being formative constituents of their respective disciplines to becoming objects of historical and philological enquiry. The program will pay particular attention to the role of the modern Universities in these processes, to the ways in which these changes were reflected in University curricula and to the challenges arising from these changes for the organization and positioning of the Humanities in relation to other disciplines and fields of enquiry today. Building on the existing expertise and research interests at both institutions, we aim to develop an innovative and interdisciplinary program that will involve the collaboration and exchange of graduate students, junior and established faculty from a range of academic and cultural fields related to the study of the Classics and their reception.

1. The Concept

Many modern academic disciplines and practices trace their heritage to ancient sources and authorities. In mathematics, for instance, Euclid continued to be part of the university curriculum in maths right up into the 19th Century; in medicine, the works of Hippocrates and Galen were an integral part of medical education and medical practice; in philosophy, Aristotle's syllogistic was for many centuries the starting point for the study of logic; and in history, Herodotus and Thucydides were considered the canonical examples of historiography. From the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, commentaries on these texts normally treated them as authorities, to be made useful in the present. Yet scientists with humanist training—John Caius and Johannes Kepler, for example—and humanists with scientific interests—Joseph Scaliger and Pierre Gassendi—also subjected parts of the canonical texts, piecemeal, to intensive historical and philological scrutiny. In the 18th and 19th century, the trickle of historical analysis grew into a flood. These classical sources ceased to be regarded as constitutive components of the disciplines they belonged to and became solely the objects of historical and philological study; and the classical genre of exegesis of authoritative texts, the commentary, changed from being a didactic instrument of elucidation of the fundamental principles of the discipline to becoming a hermeneutic exercise in establishing the historically contextualized meaning of the text. This change coincided with the establishment of the academic discipline of the »Altertumswissenschaften«, the comprehensive historical study of the Graeco-Roman world.

These processes coincided with the founding of the modern research University in the 19th Century and the gradual establishment of disciplinary boundaries that still demarcate areas of historical research. Classical scholarship, especially as it was practiced in its German context, assumed a position of "academic hegemony", both in relation to other disciplines based on textual evidence, and in relation to the systems of higher education of other nations.

Our proposed program will, first of all, study these processes of formation and transformation in their historical context. How did these changes come about, who initiated them, what institutions were involved and how exactly were they involved? Were

all fields of knowledge equally affected, or was the authoritative status of the Classics different in, for example, medicine or mathematics? Were there local or national differences, and if so, what local factors played a role? And how did these changes affect the study of the Classics in different university and national contexts?

Yet the question of ancient knowledge in the modern University opens up urgent questions for present academic practice and University education in a global context. For it concerns not only specific ways of organizing knowledge within definite institutional frameworks, but also their international and transnational components: how exactly has scholarly knowledge migrated, and how has the transfer of ancient knowledge shaped our own forms of scholarly knowing both across time *and* space? In a time of the globalization of scholarship and of interrogating the status of the Humanities and their relationship with other sciences, academic practices and fields of knowledge, our project will address such questions through their important historical dimension, additionally drawing insights precisely from the opportunity to bring together self-reflective scholars from several academic and disciplinary traditions.

Knowledge of antiquity and the assumptions about knowledge in the modern Humanities more generally were and still are linked in a complex genealogy and web of actual scholarly practices that were developed in response to ancient sources. The present program thus seeks also to contribute to examining our current status as disciplinary researchers. Crucially, it does so by bringing together constituencies from more than one national academic framework, not afraid of interrogating and unsettling unspoken assumptions about our ways of knowing, assumptions whose historical foundations are the program's conceptual focus and motor. The challenge to come to grips with disciplinarity as a practical, pedagogical and historically contextualized issue has been exercising scholars in the Humanities and scholars of the ancient world in the academic worlds on both sides of the Atlantic. Questions of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity are especially pertinent at a time when the map of what Classics is and can be is a topic of discussion, and some anxiety, within the field. The question of the position of the study of ancient science, medicine, technology, philosophy, mathematics or physics within Classical Studies offers promising opportunities for reflection on these issues, since it inevitably invites dialogue and collaboration with colleagues from the History of Science and Knowledge, a field where very similar issues are currently being debated. The proposed program also comes very

timely now that Reception Studies, or the study of the fate of antiquity after antiquity, is becoming ever more established as an integral, constituent part of the discipline of Classics rather than as an appendix.

2. Why Princeton and Humboldt, why now?

The History of Scholarship as a critical genealogy of cherished humanistic practices is an ideal crossover area to sharpen our focus as modern research scholars of culture (ancient or modern) at a time of increasing internationalization and globalization. Faculty of all levels of seniority, early career scholars and graduate students at both the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and at Princeton present the transnational expertise and intellectual energy, especially at this point in time, to bring together the history of ancient knowledge in the modern University and to move forward the discussion over the state of disciplines and scholarly practices.

The time for such a project is right, in terms of structural conditions and in terms of people. Both Princeton University and the Humboldt University currently have substantial critical mass of accomplished graduate students and faculty of all levels of seniority with shared interests and great eagerness (on which more below). Our proposed events will bring those energies together and the suggestions for programming have met with great enthusiasm among the various constituencies.

On a structural level, both institutions can build on already existing partnerships and networks in the relevant fields. Some of our partners at the Humboldt University have for the last few years been part of a lively Ancient Philosophy and Science Network (APSN) that involves the universities of Berlin, Chicago, Princeton, Cambridge, and Leuven, a network that has now reached the end of its programmed cycle. In Berlin, likewise, there are links to the successful *Sonderforschungsbereich* (SFB) 644, »Transformations of Antiquity«, which is currently in its final funding cycle. The project will thus draw on a range of structures that have so far worked in relative isolation from each other, making that link an important part of the program for next year. At Princeton, Brooke Holmes and Constanze Güthenke in the Classics Department are currently building an international collaborative research network on »Postclassicism«, a network that to date does not involve

a German institution (yet would welcome such an opportunity), and that, while deliberately broad, does at this point not have a strong emphasis on ancient science and knowledge in antiquity, nor, for that matter, on the early modern period and its transition to the modern research university, areas that would be very welcome.

The time for preparing new constellations of international collaboration is particularly rife in Berlin. Since 2009, the greater community of ancient studies in both major universities and within several non-university institutions has coalesced in the Cluster of Excellence TOPOI. This major research project will end in 2017, to be outlived by a structure – the Berliner Antike-Kolleg – which is to serve as a conduit for the Berlin institutions of research in ancient studies to continue and expand their cooperation with other partners. Within this framework, the close cooperation between scholars at Princeton and the Humboldt could lead to collaboration in major research grant activities which may be expected in the years leading up to 2017. Such collaboration makes excellent strategic sense for both parties: Princeton can gain access to several important institutions in Berlin, including the museums, the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, and the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science; the Humboldt stands to increase international contacts in both teaching and research with a leading research institution in the US, at the same time accenting its own profile and position within the Berliner Antike-Kolleg through cooperation with Princeton, a kindred global research leader in ancient studies and in the reception of antiquity.

Finally, significant steps have recently been taken to introduce collaboration between partners at Humboldt and Princeton in a broader academic context. The Kosmos Summer University and international conference »Globalized Classics« planned for two weeks in Berlin in August/September 2015, organized by the August-Boeckh-Antikezentrum and including the sponsors of this application, has recently been approved for funding of 183.000 €. Funds for this project include three fellowships for visits of several months and funded participation in a team-taught intensive graduate summer course in six parallel sections with up to 60 participants in all. A daily, joint-session panel on the transmission of ancient knowledge to and from the non-Western world is also planned. These activities are to culminate in an international conference, September 3–4, 2015, uniting specialists from around the world, but also featuring presentations by early career scholars whose work will be developed in the course of the summer university. This event presents a major opportunity for members of the Humboldt and Princeton to collaborate in both teaching

and research, and to tie both into a much larger framework of both people and ideas. It also presents a significant opportunity in terms of organization and conceptual cooperation. The activities and events named below have been designed with a view to building a foundation for this and future collaboration. They are well-defined in terms of topic, but the particular problems have deliberately been left relatively open, so as to encourage a very broad discussion on fundamental questions in areas such as the theory of historiography of science, or the study of post-classical transmission. It is our hope that, through these meetings on core questions of the study of antiquity, many seeds of future collaboration can be sown.

3. Activities and Events

We foresee two workshop events for the year of funding, one each to be held in Princeton and Berlin. In Fall 2014, we will hold a graduate-led workshop on *Translation and transmission of ancient knowledge* in Princeton, understanding the translation of knowledge in its temporal, linguistic, cultural, but also trans-disciplinary and trans-national range. This workshop will be developed with the close involvement of graduate students of the Princeton Department of Classics (who are already developing informal networks), in consultation with other departments and faculty. The aim is to create an interdisciplinary and international forum to treat the theory and practice of ancient translation and transmission, broadly conceived, including: scholarly and popular translations of ancient literature; translation technique in the fields of ancient science, medicine, and philosophy; transmission within the ancient world and between ancient and later cultures; translation and transmission across media; and other modes of transmission of ancient knowledge.

By holding this workshop in conjunction with the Humboldt University, we will be able to bring together students who specialize in the distinct fields of translation theory, reception studies, and history of science, medicine, and philosophy, to discuss important questions about the inter-linguistic and inter-cultural transfer of knowledge. The question of translation will also allow us to address important pedagogical concerns for the modern university, and bringing together students from Princeton, Humboldt and elsewhere will enable us to consider the role of translations in our own national and institutional educational practices. This last point is of particular relevance with a view to the future

careers of our graduate students as educators, at home and in an increasingly international and global context.

Our second event, on *Ancient knowledge in the modern university*, held in Berlin in the spring of 2015, will be a workshop devoted to the very concept of the proposed program. It will involve methodological reflection on the aims, research questions and methodology of the program; it will explore and aim to define a number of specific topics and episodes to be investigated as part of the research program; and it will involve two case studies of particular examples of ancient fields of knowledge in their transformation from being formative constituents of their disciplines to becoming objects of historical and philological enquiry. The workshop will bring together constituencies from different units between and within the participating institutions and address questions of methodological overlap and future avenues of research and collaboration. This is an opportunity to have scholars and graduate students of various backgrounds and levels of seniority address big questions, in a non-hierarchical setting that is small and intimate enough to explore differences in methodological approach (with their disciplinary as well as national components), in extended conversation (emphatically also involving graduate students) that is otherwise rarely on offer. Members of the SFB 644 »Transformations of Antiquity« have already signalled their interest to participate in such a workshop, intellectually and financially. Likewise, we are keen to involve the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (MPIWG) and its director Lorraine Daston in such a conversation. The MPIWG has been trendsetting when it comes to a broader history of science, scholarship and knowledge, and also specifically with regard to new formats of collaboration, discussion and publication, in short with regard to expertise and imagination from which we would hope to benefit.

One part of this event will be dedicated to the methodology of studying the transmission and reception of ancient knowledge in modern contexts. A second part will be dedicated to particular case studies testing and deepening the theoretical questions addressed in the first. A key methodological question in the study of the reception and transmission of antiquity after antiquity concerns the degree to which ancient culture is formed through post-classical contexts of reception. Whereas one approach to this question emphasizes the specific conditions of post-classical reception, even to the degree that the concept of »reception« itself is questioned (thus a tendency within SFB 644), other scholars focus upon a »steady-state« model of reception in which ancient knowledge is in fact saved through

processes of transmission, albeit in altered form. An interesting case in point is provided by the Hippocratic corpus, which in its current form is the product of a process of selection that took place in the Renaissance. This construct of the Renaissance entered the body of modern academic literature – like many others – by way of an edition prepared in the 19th Century, in this case: at the hands of the physician Émile Littré. The Hippocratic corpus that is the object of scholarship of ancient medicine today is thus the product of at least a double transformation. Understanding this fact and its ramifications is of primary importance for contemporary scholars who would use this corpus to understand ancient medicine in its time and place.

4. People

In Princeton, there is a significant number of faculty whose research expertise contributes to the program and who have signalled their enthusiasm for such a project to go forward, both next year and in the longer term.

Among Princeton faculty, Anthony Grafton is a historian of scholarship and of knowledge especially of the Renaissance and Early Modern period. Constanze Güthenke is a classicist and comparatist with a focus on the cultural history of classical scholarship in the nineteenth century (Grafton and Güthenke have also co-taught a graduate seminar on the classical tradition from the Renaissance to Romanticism). Brooke Holmes, likewise trained in Classics and Comparative Literature, is an expert on ancient scientific knowledge, medicine, philosophy, and questions of representations. Christian Wildberg (Classics and Ancient Philosophy) has a research focus especially on the relationship between classical and postclassical philosophy, including neoplatonism, and their historiography. Michael Gordin (History and History of Science) has strong on-going interests in the role of translation in the history of modern science and their languages. Angela Creager and Katja Günther work on 20th century history of science, medicine and psychiatry.

As for the graduate students at Princeton, there are a steady number of students in the History Department working on the history of scholarship and of classical knowledge in particular (one of whom is currently spending research time in Berlin). The Classics Department has a strong cohort on the ground, who combine interests in ancient science

and philosophy, as well as the shape of their discipline and of the history of philological practice with a view to recent theoretical thinking across the Humanities. It is worth mentioning that we have also seen a consistent trend in applications from prospective graduate students with such interests. Some of the faculty mentioned above are of German background, many have spent time in German academic institutions, and an impressive number of our graduate students have good German and the explicit wish to engage with their German peers. While Classics and History, at least in our proposed area of inquiry, have not had students participating in the very new dual PhD program so far, we believe that exchange and longer-term collaborative projects beyond a first year of funding would be a very welcome opportunity to explore that structure, given the strong international interests and backgrounds of our cohorts.

The faculty of the Humboldt-Universität includes a number of people with complementary interests relevant to the current proposal. Philip van der Eijk is a Classicist and historian of ancient philosophy and science, particularly ancient medicine, who is also actively involved in research on processes of canonization and the functions of ancient commentary; several members of his Alexander von Humboldt research group, e.g. Roberto Lo Presti and Chiara Thumiger, have research interests in the reception of ancient sciences in the early modern period. He collaborates closely with colleagues from the Berlin's Medical Faculty the Charité, from the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science. Markus Asper (Classics) works on ancient scientific literature and the formation of authority within the scientific genres. Colin Guthrie King (Philosophy and Classics) is a historian of philosophy specializing in ancient logic, theory of argumentation and Aristotle, but also with interests in the theory of historiography and the history of interpretive ideas with regard to ancient philosophical texts. Christoph Marksches (Theology) is a theologian and historian of early Christianity who works on the transmission and translation of ancient religious knowledge in both ancient and modern contexts. Gerd Grasshoff (History of Science) has worked extensively on the ancient exact sciences and their reception in the early modern period. Stephen Menn (Philosophy) is an expert in ancient, Arabic and early modern philosophy and science.

The Humboldt-Universität further has an extensive community of graduate students in Classics and History of Science, most of whom are included in the structured doctoral programs provided by the Berlin Graduate School of Ancient Studies (part of the Berliner

Antike-Kolleg). This Graduate School, closely linked to (and partly funded by) the Excellence Cluster TOPOI, also benefits from the contributions of non-University partners such as the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science. Two programs are of particular relevance here: History of Ancient Science, and the Graduate Program in Ancient Philosophy (which also initiated the Ancient Philosophy and Science network already mentioned). Philip van der Eijk's research group includes a number of graduate students and junior postdocs working on ancient medicine and its reception; and there are further plans (with colleagues in Philosophy and History of Science) for the development of a Research Training Group devoted to the topic Philosophy, Science and the Sciences in Greek, Roman and Arabic Thought. Furthermore, graduate students and early career scholars from the SFB »Transformationen der Antike«, which provides a wide array of topics, including a philological one on the translation of ancient authors (SFB 644 B 07) and the transformation of ancient historiography and science in the Renaissance (SFB 644 A 04), are already engaged in studies directly relevant to our topic. Finally, a remarkable interdisciplinary group of advanced pre-doctoral and early doctoral candidates at the Humboldt University has emerged from special field seminars of the August-Boeckh-Antikezentrum in Paris and Rome: the »Studierenden-Kolleg für Antike und Rezeption der Antike«. This group of highly motivated and self-directed students from the Humboldt already organizes a series of meetings each semester in which students present ongoing research projects in ancient studies and the reception of antiquity. Their regular seminars present a flexible format in which visitors from Princeton would be warmly welcome, for example through the organisation of a *journée d'étude* bringing together students and faculty from both universities.