

Wien, 9.5.2014

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

Der Interdisziplinäre Arbeitskreis „Digital Middle Ages“ und das Initiativkolleg „Cultural Transfers and Cross-Contacts in the Himalayan Borderlands“ erlauben sich, Sie herzlich zu folgendem Vortrag einzuladen:

Dr. Elton Barker (Open University/Milton Keynes, UK):

„ *Towards a Graph of Ancient World Geographical Knowledge* “

Ort: **Institut für Südasiens-, Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde**

Altes AKH, Hof 2, Eingang 2.7., Seminarraum 1.

Datum: **Dienstag, 10. Juni 2014**, Beginn: **18:00 c.t.**

Im Bereich der Geisteswissenschaften hat in den letzten Jahren eine immer stärkere Verknüpfung mit unterschiedlichen digitalen Technologien stattgefunden. Diese Entwicklung ist gerade jetzt deutlich in einem Boom unterschiedlicher Projekte unter dem Überbegriff der „Digital Humanities“ zu bemerken. Dabei geht es um weit mehr, als nur um die reine Anwendung von digitalen Werkzeugen oder Computerprogrammen zur geisteswissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisfindung. Die Entwicklung neuer Methoden und ihre Erprobung anhand konkreter Beispiele spielen hier eine wichtige Rolle und die Ergebnisse können einen deutlichen Mehrwert gegenüber einer separaten, klassischen Herangehensweise erbringen. Die Digitalisierung, Vernetzung und besonders die Visualisierung von geisteswissenschaftlichen Informationen, speziell in geographischer bzw. kartographischer Hinsicht sind dabei sehr wichtige Aspekte um die Daten und Erkenntnisse zu publizieren und wirksam innerhalb der „Scientific Community“ aber auch für eine breite Öffentlichkeit attraktiv zu vermitteln.

Der Althistoriker und Philologe Elton Barker hat sehr intensiv in diesen Bereichen gearbeitet und wird in seinem Vortrag zwei sehr interessante Projekte vorstellen: Im Hestia Projekt wurde erforscht und visualisiert, wie Raum in den Historien des Herodot organisiert ist. Eine wichtige Frage war dabei, welches geographische Wissen der antike Mensch von seiner Welt hatte und wie man aus schriftlichen Überlieferungen ein entsprechendes kartographisches Bild rekonstruieren kann.

Im zweiten Teil wird Dr. Barker das Pelagios Projekt vorstellen und diskutieren, welches Potential für die Geisteswissenschaften in der Verknüpfung ihrer Daten liegen kann.

Wir würden uns sehr freuen, Sie bei dieser Gelegenheit begrüßen zu dürfen. Bitte leiten Sie diese Einladung auch gerne an andere Interessierte weiter.

mit freundlichen Grüßen

In Namen des Arbeitskreises

Mag. Dr. Stefan Eichert

Für das Initiativkolleg

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Martin Gaenzsle
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Klaus-Dieter Mathes



Elton Barker is reader in Classical Studies at the Open University, Milton Keynes.

His research interests include: the agon in ancient Greek literature and thought; Greek epic rivalry and reception; ancient geographies; and digital Classics. His book, *Entering the Agon* (Oxford University Press, 2009), investigates representations of debate in epic, historiography and tragedy in terms of an interpretative framework of dissent from authority. As well as publishing widely on epic, historiography and tragedy, he has articles on the new Archilochus fragment, oracles in Herodotus and the reception of the Epic Cycle (many of which may be accessed via the Open University's Open Research Online).

Elton Barker studied Classical Civilisation (I) at the University of Leeds, obtained an MA in Greek Civilisation also at Leeds (Distinction) and then an MA in Greek and Latin at Ohio State. For his PhD (Pembroke College, Cambridge) he worked with Prof. Simon Goldhill and Prof. Paul Cartledge. He was a Junior Research Fellowship at Wolfson College, Cambridge (2002-4) and a Visiting Fellow at Venice International University (2003-4). Elton Barker has lectured at a number of universities (Bristol, Nottingham and Reading), and was a Tutor and Lecturer at Christ Church, Oxford from 2004-9, where he won awards from the University of Oxford for making an outstanding contribution to teaching (2006 and 2007). For the period of 2011-2014 he holds a Research Fellowship for experienced researchers awarded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for research at the Freie Universität Berlin and the University of Leipzig.

In the field of digital Classics, Elton Barker has been Principal Investigator of three projects. With an AHRC Early Career Fellowship from 2008-2010 he developed the Hestia project, which, involving collaboration between researchers from Classics, Geography and Computing, uses the latest digital mapping tools to investigate Herodotus's representation of the ancient world. From October 2010 he has been running the Google Ancient Places (GAP) project, which, funded by a Digital Humanities Research Grant from Google, aims to discover ancient places in the Google Books corpus. From February 2011 he has been PI of Pelagios (Pelagios: Enable Linked Ancient Geodata In Open Systems), which, funded by JISC, brings together an international consortium of ancient world projects in order to link all kinds of data related to ancient places.

He is also on the digital humanities steering group at the OU and co-founder of Classics Confidential with Dr Jessica Hughes.

Towards a Graph of Ancient World Geographical Knowledge

The influence of Ptolemy's *Geographica* on spatial thinking is hard to overestimate: its rediscovery and visualization in the Renaissance directly inspired Mercator's famous world map, a projection that still dominates Western cartographic traditions to the present. Yet, Ptolemy's text, so far as we can tell, contained no map. Maps are in fact extremely rare in the Greco-Roman world and, even when they are mentioned, they are highly problematic. In his fifth-century BC *Histories*, for example, Herodotus "laughs at" the maps produced by his Ionian contemporaries that divide the world into two regions of equal size (4.36.2), and later, when a character turns up with "a bronze picture, on which the whole world was engraved" (5.49.1)—arguably the first mention of a historical 'map' in literature—Herodotus invites his readers to reflect on how the map is used to argue in favour of conquest and juxtaposes his own discursive representation of the same space (5.50-52). Literary texts, not maps, convey the geographical knowledge of the ancient world.

In this presentation I discuss two projects that together have the potential to transform our understanding of Greco-Roman space through the documents that represent it. Using ideas such as hodology (space as *hodos*, a "way" or "path": Janni 1984) and topokinesis (space, *topos*, as conveying "movement", *kinesis*: Turnbull 2007), the Hestia project (<http://hestia.open.ac.uk/>) produces a series of "X-ray" maps that indicate the underlying ways in which space is organised in Herodotus's *Histories* rather than according to topographic 'reality'. As the beginning, not end, of analysis (Moretti 1998: 7), I outline the potential of such network maps to challenge dominant views—such as the east vs. west polarity, through which the *Histories* are usually read, or the Cartesian geometry, by which we usually perceive the ancient world—as well as discuss some of the limitations to and difficulties of using visualisations such as these to unpick the complex, ambiguous data of literary texts.

Of course, literary texts represent only one type of source for rethinking ancient world space. In the second half of the presentation, I will introduce the infrastructure project Pelagios (<http://pelagios-project.blogspot.com/>), which is using a global gazetteer service (<http://pleiades.stoa.org/>) to assign all place names in digital data unique reference codes (Uniform Resource Identifiers), so that different providers can agree on what place is being referred to in any given digital resource. By means of this connectivity through common references, online documents of varied nature can be read in relation to each other—not only literary texts but also inscriptions, archaeological finds or sites, museum objects, photographs, etc.—resources that all provide context for thinking about ancient places, either as a backdrop to the information that can be extracted from literary texts or else in dialogue with them. But, as Andrew Prescott has recently written: 'Scholarship is much harder than [the ability to link]: we need to be clear about why we are linking data, what sort of data we are linking, and our aim in doing so' (<http://digitalriffs.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/the-deceptions-of-data.html>). This paper outlines some of the exciting potential for Linked Open Data practices to reveal previously unknown connections between different documents (texts, databases, maps, etc.), while also considering the tools and methods that need to be developed for aggregating, comparing and analysing heterogeneous online datasets.

Janni, P. 1984. *La Mappa e il Periplo. Cartografia antica e spazio odologico*. Marcerata.

Moretti, F. 1998: *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800–1900*. London.

Turnbull, D. 2007: 'Maps, narratives and trails: performativity, hodology and distributed knowledges in complex adaptive systems—an approach to emergent mapping'. *Geographical Research* 45, 140-49.