

A Second Gaze. Intertextuality and Transient Meaning in Roman Texts and Objects

International Conference, November 13–14, 2023, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz

Texts and images encapsulate ideas, crystallized within a specific moment, and imbued with particular intentions. When etched into stone, molded in clay, or inscribed upon parchment, they transcend the confines of time and space. Upon exposure to a second glance, they invite reinterpretation and reutilization. In this process, their original meaning may be retained or deliberately hinted at. Conversely, they may lose their initial significance, finding themselves within entirely different contexts, thereby adopting unforeseen and novel connotations.

In the simultaneous consideration of an artifact's primary and secondary use, some might perceive ambiguities of forms, topoi, etc., or perhaps discern an undercurrent of irony. In more disruptive object histories or textual traditions, we might be prone to consider them as 'flotsam', adrift from distant epochs and shores. To what extent are such assumptions and their implications for reception history justified? To what extent do they apply to both written and visual media?

Questions of intertextuality have been raised frequently and forcefully in classical philology in recent years. Archaeology, too, is increasingly asking about ambiguities, the reuse of images and their migration as a cross-cultural phenomenon. What lessons might be learned from the mutual exchange of insights between these two disciplines? What new questions arise from an interdisciplinary approach?

The aim of this conference is to bring together scholars from Latin philology and Roman archaeology alike to discuss the phenomenon of secondary meanings. While we are generally interested in case studies, in addition, possible questions to be addressed include, but are not limited to, the following:

- What is reuse? What forms are there and how can they be detected?
- When talking about reuse/borrowing/theft, do we necessarily need to consider intention, and if so, how?
- What interest do readers/viewers have in retrieval?
- Can one speak of reuse and a second gaze across different media, and if so, how?
- What is the impact of digitization on the things we take a second look at, or the way we experience that second look?

We invite researchers to submit abstracts of approximately 300 words by email (mgrawehr@uni-mainz.de; mkersten@uni-mainz.de) no later than September 20, 2023. Presentations are accepted in German, English, French, or Italian. Speakers will be allotted 30 minutes.

Travel expenses and accommodation in Mainz will be covered. The organizers plan to publish the proceedings of the conference.

Organization: Matthias Grawehr and Markus Kersten