
Abstract

This workshop series brings together scholars from different disciplines who study the textual, numerical, and visual representations of celestial bodies & phenomena, and imaginary inhabitants of the heavens across Eurasia and North Africa from the fourth millennium BCE to early modern times. They will discuss three major sets of research topics and their respective methodologies:

1. the materiality of the visualizations of the heavens with regard to structure, phenomena, functions, or purposes;
2. pictorial choices, their spread, and their changes across space and/or time;
3. relationships between pictorial programs, time management, and knowledge about the heavens and their appearances on instruments and in texts, rituals and representations of power, order, or fate.

The first workshop focuses on the ancient world until 700 CE discussing iconographies and their contexts from Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt, the Roman Empire, the Christian Middle East and eastern Europe, Central Asia, and East Asia. The second workshop carries the conversation to medieval western and eastern Europe, South Asia, Tibet, and China. Both workshops include sessions on the image database under construction and the digital resources currently available and those slated for future development. Two roundtables will explore directions of research to develop the project in its next phase, and how to strengthen and extend the international research network enabling it.

Organizers

Sonja Brentjes
Dagmar Schäfer
Jürgen Renn

Venue

Main Conference Room
Max Planck Institute for the History of Science,
Boltzmannstraße 22, 14195 Berlin

More About Us

The image database invites research on ways of visualizing the heavens, from deities to demons and from stars to weather phenomena. It is designed to facilitate comparative research on the formation and exchange of knowledge of the heavens in Eurasia and North Africa. The collection includes calendars, star constellations, planets, and other heavenly inhabitants or phenomena in anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, diagrammatic, or semiotic formats, as well as theoretical models and a broad range of tables.

Cover Image: 'Horoscope of Prince Iskandar.'
Credit: Wellcome Collection. CC BY.



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Visualisation of the Heavens

Workshop I
April 17-18, 2018



Visualisation of the Heavens and their
Material Cultures in Eurasia and North
Africa (4000 BCE - 1700 CE)

Department III: Artefacts, Action
and Knowledge. Histories of
Planning Research Theme.



April 17

9:45-10:00 **Registration**

10:00-10:05 Welcome, DAGMAR SCHÄFER

10:05-10:35 Introduction, SONJA BRENTJES

Session 1: The Ancient Near East, Chair:
SERAFINA CUOMO

10:35-11:20
JOHN STEELE, The Babylonian Zodiac in Image and Text: Choices, Significance and Societal Meaning.

11:20-11:35 Coffee break

11:35-12:20
MARVIN SCHREIBER, Representations of Celestial Bodies in Mesopotamian Magic, Medicine, and Rituals.

12:20-13:00 Discussion

13:00-14:00 Lunch

Session 2: Egypt and Rome, Chair: JOHN STEELE

14:00-14:45
ALEXANDRA VON LIEVEN, The Ancient Egyptian Classical Sky Picture

14:45-15:30
ILARIA BULTRIGHINI, Heavenly Time: the Visualisation of the Planets and the Astrological Planetary Week in the Greco-Roman World and the Ancient Near East

15:30-16:00 Discussion

16:00-16:30 Coffee break

16:30-16:50
FLORIAN KRÄUTLI, resourcespace and where to go

16:50-17:30
Open Floor for Discussion: Imagedatabase + Research on Visualization of the Heavens and Their Material Cultures: Perspectives and Recommendations, Discussants: DAGMAR SCHÄFER, SONJA BRENTJES, FLORIAN KRÄUTLI

19:00 Dinner

April 18

Session 3: Han China and Sasanian Iran, Chair:
ZHAO LU

10:00-10:45
DANIEL MORGAN, On Iconographic and Diagrammatic Irregularities in the Representation of Constellations in Han (206 BCE–220 CE) Tomb Art

10:45-11:00 Coffee break

11:00-11:45
ANTONIO PANAINO, The Structure of the Superimposed Heavens in the Mazdean System and its Rationale

11:45-12:15 Discussion

12:15-13:15 Lunch

Session 4: Christian Late Antiquity, Chair:
DANIEL MORGAN

13:15-14:00
FLORENTINA BADALANOVA GELLER, Apocalyptic Imagery and the Visualisation of Heavens

14:00-14:45
STEFANIE RUDOLPH, In the Search of a Syriac Sky

14:45-15:15 Discussion

15:15-15:45 Coffee break

Session 5: India on its Way to China, Chair:
FLORENTINA BADALANOVA GELLER

15:45-16:30
SATOMI HIYAMA, Indian Astral Deities in the Mural Paintings of Dunhuang Cave 285

16:30-17:00: Discussion

17:00-17:30 Summing up & publication options: Dagmar Schäfer