

Greek Past and Roman Present - Discourses of the Past in the Roman Cities of Imperial Greece

Initiative: Postdoctoral Fellowships in den Geisteswissenschaften an Universitäten und Forschungsinstituten

in Deutschland und den USA

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The project addresses the various strategies developed mainly by the local elites of the cities of Corinth, Philippi and Nicopolis in Roman Imperial times (1st - 3rd c. CE) to (re)construct the actual or alleged past of their communities and to move these constructs into contemporary debates. It aims to identify the main agents of these processes, to analyze their potential motives and to assess the impact of the political, social and cultural context on their decisions and actions. In order to achieve this, the project employs a historical discourse analysis and focuses on the principles and mechanisms that guided the selection of particular elements from the vast pool of historical memory under specific circumstances. Common to all three case studies is the decidedly Roman shape of their sociopolitical structures. These factors constituted very specific conditions for the process of constructing and exploiting the past in these cities, conditions that differed decisively from those in towns like Athens, Sparta or Argos, where the pre-Roman structures persisted in a more unaltered way. In order to facilitate a comparative approach, three fields on which discourses of the past could become manifest in these cities will be taken into consideration: the layout of urban topography and architecture, the form and functional principles of public institutions as well as the development of collective rituals and cults. The analysis will bring together source material from all available genres, including literary texts, archaeological evidence and especially inscriptions and coins to outline the multiple dimensions of discourses on the past in the three towns and to situate them in a wider historical context. The project provides essential insights into the interaction of local and imperial level beyond the individual case studies and sheds new light on the functioning of the Imperium Romanum.

Projektbeteiligte

Dr. Wolfgang Havener

Universität Heidelberg

Philosophische Fakultät

Seminar für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik

Heidelberg

