

Frames and Framing in Antiquity

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The online conference focused on the applicability of frames and framing theories to ancient studies. Frames and framing have entered the public discourse already before covid-19 but have only recently become a hotly debated issue due to the styling of news, for instance in social media that partly replace other possibilities of social communication. Based on models from the field of sociology, psychology, and communication studies, „frames“ describe how people understand, react to, and are influenced by situations and activities (frame analysis). The phenomenon of „framing“ assesses how individuals or institutions might use, modify, or challenge existing frameworks by creating new frames, or add new slots and fillers to common frames. Thus, the concept of framing is arguably a useful tool for a broad range of disciplines. Yet, the model's full potential for ancient studies is yet to be exploited as it is still not comprehensively tested against the various ancient sources. Thus, the conference attempted to fill this obvious gap by assessing the theoretical background as well as by discussing the applicability of such models to the methodological toolset of source analysis and interpretation.

In her opening remarks, ELISABETH GÜNTHER (Göttingen) explored the different frame and framing models in sociology, linguistics, and communication studies, and discussed the potential use for ancient studies. She analyzed an owl of Athena in armor on an Athenian mug and showed which frames and levels of understanding might have been relevant for an Athenian user of the vessel, and

how this might have caused a comic effect of the drawing.

In the following key-note lecture, HARTMUT LEPPIN (Frankfurt am Main) examined the Greek concept of *parrhesia* („frankness“, „freedom of speech“) against the changing political, social, and cultural backgrounds throughout Greek and Roman antiquity. Being an important quality ascribed to people who were considered to possess the right to be heard in public, among them philosophers as well as historians and monks, the word framed certain expectations both in respect to the *parrhesiastés* and to the recipient of *parrhesia* and made it thus become, and mirror, a complex framework of social communication and interaction that needs to be understood for knowing what could be said, and what not, and why „frankness“ was sometimes successful, and sometimes not well received. The discussion of the two papers centered on the dynamic interaction and negotiation processes that can be described by frames, and the question of how one could engage in or avoid the attempted framing by the other party.

The dimensions of applying frames and framing to ancient sources were then discussed in five panels. In „From Theory to Practice“ SVEN GÜNTHER (Changchun) argued that Johann Gustav Droysen's *Historik*, an original contribution to the field of historiography, provides a frames and framing model *avant la lettre*. In discussing the critical handling of historical material and by a critical reflection of the viewpoint of any historian, Droysen had a clear idea of frames and partly of framing processes, though using a different terminology. However, Droysen failed to question the framing nature of his idealized and leading forces, the free will and the moral potencies, both providing the path towards an ever-growing historical understanding, a widely shared view of his times.

MARTINA SAUER (Bühl) connected theories of frames with practice and thus with the formation of frames by persons. She assumed that the design of frames starts from the effort to create social bonds that contribute significantly to the preservation of communities and their traditions (and thus also to the preservation of power), and at the same time trig-

ger processes of change in groups. Hence, she argued that the strength and success of frames ultimately lies in the fact that the social ties they create hold a promise of happiness, security, and community. Questions concentrated on the degree of objectivity a historian can achieve and the stabilizing function of frames in times where change and progress are widely shared values.

Panel II on „Greek Frames and Modern Perception“ was opened by RICCARDA SCHMID (Zurich) who talked about frames and framing in Attic rhetoric. She enquired how frames were created and used in public speeches in Athens of the 4th century BC and whether framing was a decisive factor in Attic rhetoric and had effects on Athenian society. Based on political communication studies, she showed how we can see „reactions“ to opponent’s speeches and reframing processes in Attic orators, using the example of Aeschines’ speech in the Embassy trial, a reaction to Demosthenes’ accusation.

SVEN-PHILIPP BRANDT (Erfurt) analyzed the concept of *autarkeia* in Xenophon’s *Poroi* and placed it in the context of Athenian policy measures (i. a. by Eubulus), philosophical reflections (i. a. Aristotle) and botanical instructions for individuals (Theophrastus), in order to show how it differed from traditional ideas of enclosed economy and provided the ground for a more comprehensive and sustainable socio-political and -economic framework.

GUENDALINA TAIETTI (Liverpool) looked at the changing significance of ancient Macedon in the nation-making of the Hellenic state, particularly in the works of Spiridon Zambelios (1815–1881) and Konstantinos Paparrhegopoulos (1815–1891). She showed the change from the Hellenic Revolutionary movement with focus on the ancient democratic *polis* as immediate predecessor to the „Hellenic Romanticism“ after the foundation of the Greek state when uninterrupted continuity of Hellenism including Macedon was propagated. The discussion of the individual papers pointed to the different levels of understanding a text – linguistics, social interaction, communication –, the problem of the (intended or targeted) audiences, and the parallel developments that can be seen

in contemporary writings as well as their entanglement with the texts studied.

In panel III „Greek and Roman frames“, the re-framing of certain concepts between Greek and Roman societies was explored. HENDRIKUS A.M. VAN WIJLICK (Peking) investigated the concept of friendship in the late Republic and early Principate when traditional Hellenistic ἑπιφθέται were employed by kings and rulers in the East to describe interstate connections with Rome. The use of the epithet ἑμ became frequent and continued to at least the 3rd century AD. However, more personalized variations such as ἑμ or ἑμ began to appear in the Late Republic and attest to the re-framing of friendship, now with a specific Roman office-holder or, eventually, the emperor.

GUO ZILONG (Changchun) examined the account of the Delphic oracle in Phlegon of Tralles’s *Olympiads*. He argued that the oracle is framed in an attempt to bolster the Lycurgan institution of the Olympian Games. More specifically, he focused on the application of divine anger (μῆ and μῆ) in the reported oracle speech, and how this was keyed to modulate a frame that has been radically changed after warfare and plague.

XU ZHENHUANMG (Changchun) presented his results of studying the literary image of *delatores* and their „typical“ life model in the 1st and 2nd century AD. He showed that their description in literary sources is an appropriate example of frame and framing processes since their important function within the legal framework was usually concealed while they were frequently depicted as low-born, morally questionable, and dangerous figures, serving tyrant emperors and being enemies of Roman elite order and of the *res publica* as a whole. During the discussion of each paper, the difficulties of exploring contexts of the respective sources were touched upon, particularly with regard to the social and political interaction and expected behavior within the respective circles and networks.

Panel IV was on „Framing strategies in the Late Roman Republic and Early Empire“. JAN-LUKAS HORNEFF (Dresden) analyzed the *Apologia*-speech of Apuleius under the perspective of re-framing and discussed how the author tried to balance attacks by his ju-

ridical opponents by re-framing their arguments. In particular, he looked at the application of the concept of effeminizing the respective opponent and how one could react to such insinuations, to change and re-write one's own role in the „theater of justice“.

ZHANG HONGXIA (Changchun) examined Cicero's portrayal of Sassia, Cluentius' mother and one of the opponents in his speech *Pro Cluentio*. She explored how Sassia's anti-image of a caring Roman mother and chaste *matrona* is constructed at the beginning of the speech while towards the end, her claimed role of a judging *pater familias* is opposed by one noble man having the courage to speak against her whence the other *consilium* members follow. With this, Cicero himself mirrored his role in the court case in this example and attempted to stimulate reaction by his present audience, the judges, to follow him and to refute the juridical attack on his client.

FRANCESCO GINELLI (Milan) placed the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* in the ancient life writing framework in which biographical anecdotes serve for self-promotion and spreading styled images of oneself. In particular, he discussed how Augustus portrayed himself and his politics in his description of the „revenge“ taken on Caesar's murderers who styled themselves as *liberatores*, and the way Augustus described his de facto absolute power and control by recalling the idea of the „servant of the fatherland“. The respective respondents and discussants pointed to the multi-modality of the sources, including not only the textual level but also the communicative and performative interaction and engagement that can be studied in terms of space and materiality, among others.

The last panel focused on „Framing narratives in archaeology“. AMY SMITH (Reading) used cellular frame analysis to distinguish the nucleus of an activity depicted on vase paintings, and examined the context of viewing by concentric frame analysis. Hence, she read the Pan Painter's paintings and the activities / „story“ lines with regard to potential functional and historical references of the attributes employed.

BEN WHITE (Nottingham) approached the topic of *porticus* with the social frame anal-

ysis method of Erving Goffman. These architectural settings, themselves frames, defined and ordered the experiences and socio-political practices contained within. Thus, *porticus* did not only mirror the „Roman way of living“ but provided the affordance and contributed to the involvement of Romans and non-Romans alike, and could eventually also serve as factor of „culturalization“. Questions concerning the affordances of both, vases as objects within different forms of social interactions and the *porticus* as ritualized but also daily space of Roman citizens (and non-Romans alike) stimulated the discussion about framing processes of our available sources.

All the papers were circulated in advance among the panelists and registered audience and were accompanied by prepared responses from other conference participants, followed by general discussion. The final discussion valued frames and framing as methodological tools and heuristic approaches, since they offer the possibility to make ancient communication, discourse, and negotiation processes as well as practices more visible than traditional analyses. In particular, the discussants pointed out that ancient sources should not only be regarded as passive media but as active partners in various frame and framing processes. Selected papers of the conference will be published in the double-blind peer-reviewed *Journal of Ancient Civilizations* (JAC). In order to further explore entanglements, communicative dynamics, and affordances of frames and framing by linking different sources, their materiality, and contexts, a follow-up conference „Frames and Framing in Antiquity II: Sources in Contexts – Materiality, Affordances, Entanglements, and Communicative Dynamics“, is planned to be held in October 2021.

Conference overview:

Elisabeth Günther (Institute for Digital Humanities, University of Göttingen): How to understand an owl in armor: frames and framings in ancient studies

Hartmut Leppin (University of Frankfurt am Main): *Parthesia* and the framing of expectations in the social worlds of antiquity

Panel I: From Theory to Practice

Sven Günther (IHAC, NENU, Changchun) : Frames and framing theory *avant la lettre*? Johann Gustav Droysen's *Historik* and the future of ancient studies

Martina Sauer (Institute of Image and Cultural Philosophy, Bülh): Promise of happiness, security and community – frames and framing in a new light

Panel II: Greek Frames and Modern Perception

Riccarda Schmid (University of Zurich): Frames and framing in Attic rhetoric

Sven-Philipp Brandt (Special Collection „Amploniana“, University of Erfurt): Sustainability as a framework? The concept of *εὐχρησμία* in late classical Athens

Guendalina Taietti (University of Liverpool): Framing the Macedonians, becoming Greek: on the importance of Ancient Macedon in the nation-making of the Hellenic state

Panel III: Greek and Roman Frames

Hendrikus A.M. van Wijlick (Peking University): Re-framing friendship in the late Republic and early Principate: the personification of *εὐφροσύνη*

Guo Zilong (IHAC, NENU, Changchun): Framing the Delphic oracle, institutionalizing the Olympian Games: a case study on Phlegon of Tralles's *Olympiads* (FGrH 257 F 1)

Xu Zhenhuang (IHAC, NENU, Changchun): Framing accusations against prosecutors: multi-level images of *delatores* in the 1st and 2nd century AD

Panel IV: Framing Strategies in the Late Roman Republic and Early Empire

Jan Lukas Horneff (Technical University Dresden): How to treat *cunnilingus* – Framing in Apuleius' *Apologia*

Zhang Hongxia (IHAC, NENU, Changchun): From Chinese perspective: frame and framing theory, Cicero's *Pro Cluentio*, and Chinese modes of perception

Francesco Ginelli (Università degli Studi di Verona) : “... *rem publicam a dominatione*

factionis oppressam in libertatem vindicavi“. Frame analysis, ancient life writing, and political propaganda

Panel V: Framing Narratives in Archaeology

Amy Smith (Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology / Department of Classics, Reading): Unpeeling the Pan Painter's pictures

Ben White (University of Nottingham): Porticus, keys, and brackets: towards a Goffmanian framework for exploring the colonnades of ancient Rome

Final Discussion

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