XIV Antique Archaeology Doctoral Workshop

Studying transition periods:
origin and disappearance of a culture

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Madrid – Casa de Velázquez

Madrid, 8-12 June 2020

Coordination:
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Organization:
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Madrid, École des hautes études hispaniques et ibériques (Casa de Velázquez, Madrid)

Venues:
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, C/ Serrano 159, 28002 Madrid
Casa de Velázquez, C/ de Paul Guinard, 3, 28040 Madrid

Number of places: 16

Supervisors:
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Collaboration:
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Presentation

Culture is an ensemble of material and ideological phenomena that is passed between generations in a non-biological manner and that characterises an ethnic group, that creates a collective identity in opposition to another group, but paradoxically, it is also what links it to other identities. Beliefs, ways of life and thinking, tastes, language and writing are phenomena which, empirically and over a prolonged ‘duration,’ add up to form the characteristic and singular
base of a culture, often replacing a previous culture. During this doctoral workshop, we will question the constitution of a culture, its components, its periodization (initial, complete and late phases), its dissolution and its factors, and finally, its possible resilience.

The workshop will focus on the following thematic areas:

**Awareness of belonging and cultural construction.** We will question both the internal or exogenous definition of a culture and the feeling of belonging to a culture. To understand the transitions periods, it is necessary to materially and ideologically define each of the cultures.

**Emergence, contact and hybridisation.** Is there another alternative to the diffusionist and evolutionary approaches? Research has tended to construct pairs of opposites and to define the contact between two cultures, in terms of confrontation and cultural transfer, as a disruptive unidirectional process. In contrast, the recent approach, which favours the notion of transcultural interdependencies, tends to show that contact between two cultures temporarily generates ‘units of higher complexity.’ It is this unprecedented boiling characteristic of transition periods that will be examined.

**Factors of dissolution.** The desires for change are multiple and they can affect a minority section of a community, causing conflict over the degree and limits of evolution. Changes always involve potential conflict. We are, therefore, interested in the study of the consequences of change (winner/loser relationship, resistance to transformations, efforts made to successfully complete transformations, natural and climatic changes...).

**Sociocultural changes.** Studying periods of cultural transition, is to take an interest not only in the causes of change (natural, political-military migratory...), but also in the effects produced on a changing society that shaped new material, social or even religious landmarks. It will be possible to compare different theories that attempt to explain the causes behind the breaks, the falls and also the emergence and consolidation of cultural offerings. Can a culture be born, or conversely, disintegrate alone? Or is contact, even confrontation, with another ethnic group systematically necessary to trigger the two phenomena? Whatever the case, it seems certain that the origin, as well as the disappearance, of a culture belongs to a dynamic process, taking place over a period of time, in which human groups interact with their environment or between themselves.

**Cultural variations and global history.** On an archaeological level, cultural changes can be seen through lifestyles, production and consumption, more specifically, in ceramics or in types of money. Artistic, architectural or urban expressions, and even language and writing, are also measurable cultural markers. Could these modes and expressions have been imposed? Or is it more of an offer, of a civilizational proposition, to which it is possible not to adhere or even to oppose and resist? What is the process and who are the main players in the adoption of a new modus vivendi? These lines of inquiry return to the question of origins and to the controversial question of the indigenousness of a human group, to the shaping of its identity and to the perpetuation of its tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
Description

This thematic school looks to provoke a scientific and methodological thought process and is specifically aimed at doctoral students in ancient history, archaeology and architecture, from universities and research centres throughout Europe and Maghreb. Furthermore, benefitting from a multidisciplinary approach, it aims to create a space for exchanging experiences and analysing investigative practices in different geographical contexts.

In this way, each participant will have the opportunity to be actively involved in enriching the exchanges by presenting their doctoral research topic (in relation to the theme of the workshop), by working in a group and participating in the collective debate, with the support of confirmed, internationally recognised specialists.

The workshop will take place alternately at the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut and Casa de Velázquez; a guided visit to Toledo is planned.

The presentation of this workshop is intentionally wide in order to encourage an interdisciplinary and diachronic dialogue. Its geographical framework includes the West of the ancient world, and the chronological interval extends from the 1st millennium BC to the Islamic Middle Ages.

The purpose of this workshop is to foster a scientific and methodological reflection. It is especially dedicated to doctoral students in ancient history, archaeology and architecture, from universities and research centres in Europe and Maghreb. In addition, through a multidisciplinary approach, it intends to create an area for exchanges, experiences and analysis of the investigation practices in many different geographical contexts.

Each participant will have the opportunity to become actively involved in an enriching dialogue by presenting aspects of his/her doctoral thesis (in accordance with the theme of the workshop), involving in group activities, and participating to the collective discussion, together with experts of international renown.

The workshop will take place alternately at the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, and at Casa de Velázquez. On one day the workshop will take place in Toledo. The city offers instructive settings for transition phases of different cultures and Real Fundación de Toledo will provide an exceptional space for the event.

Practical working conditions

There are no registration fees. The candidates apply online by March 13th 2020 (midnight, Madrid time) on the following website:


The coordinators will inform applicants by e-mail on March 23nd whether or not they are accepted.

Casa de Velázquez will lodge the 16 selected participants from 7 to 11 June (5 nights), offering accommodation in a shared double room, including breakfast, lunch, visits and transport (buenobus) in Madrid, in particular between the DAI and Casa de Velázquez. Travelling expenses to Madrid and dinners remain at the expense of the participants.

Casa de Velázquez and the DAI-Madrid offer up to three 350 Euros travel stipends to students who are enrolled in a higher educational establishment of the Maghreb and solicitate it.

Languages used: Spanish, French, German, English, Portuguese and Italian.