



Call for Participation, Papers & Posters

THEORIZING RESILIENCE & VULNERABILITY IN ANCIENT STUDIES

26th–28th May 2020 | International Workshop | Mainz

Organization:

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Resilience and vulnerability are not only transdisciplinary concepts – they are pillars of a changed way of thinking. This applies to both scientific and political schools of thought. It is characterized by the fact that it is no longer necessary to explain change in a world that is imagined to be stable, be it today or in the past. Rather, the world is conceived as fundamentally unstable, permanently changing and influenced by crises as well as catastrophes, so that its persistence is in need of explanation. A consciousness has grown that the challenges of the present cannot be understood in isolation from those of the past – and vice versa. From this emerges the fruitful possibility of engaging with and reviewing today's concepts in dealing with the past.

The concepts of resilience and vulnerability – which are often understood in a wide and simplified interpretation as the ability of subjects and collectives to successfully deal with change or to be vulnerable to it – are surprisingly ambivalent. This applies both to their definition in terms of content and their relationship to one another. Thus it is noticeable that a substantial part of the research literature that has been produced on this subject is working on a conceptual fixation or critique, while proposals for operationalizations are rather rare. At the same time, the use of resilience and vulnerability polarizes through their political and present-related components. While on the one hand some authors assign these concepts to the neo-liberal-economic discourse and therefore reject them, others see them as a »promising beauty« (Rungius & Weller 2016, <<https://resilienz.hypotheses.org/611>>), that serves to make the world a better place and ourselves more resilient people. These political and normative reflections and conflicting positions must also be taken into account for use in and by Ancient Studies.

Within the framework of the workshop, we would like to discuss the following theoretical consequences and challenges, and in doing so highlight the role of Ancient Studies in the transdisciplinary field of research on resilience and vulnerability:

1) How are resilience and vulnerability defined and conceptualized in the different disciplines and research fields? Are they complementary concepts? Or is a change in attention from vulnerability to resilience also associated with a change in the research agenda? Which other concepts such as sustainability, mental and physical health/illness, social (dis)order are combined, integrated, perhaps even replaced or suppressed?

2) In most cases, resilience and vulnerability refer to the present and future of investigated contexts. Ancient studies, however, takes a reconstructive approach to the past. How can we deal with this time paradox? Does research on resilience and vulnerability allow statements to be made that are predictive of both future and past situations? How would the conceptualization and operationalization of the two terms be changed for the latter?

3) Which questions are connected with resilience and vulnerability in the Ancient Studies up to now, but also in the near future? Which questions can be asked and answered and which not? What role do Ancient Studies play in the transdisciplinary field of research on resilience and vulnerability? And how does dealing with this pair of terms limit the epistemological perspective?

4) What presuppositions and methodological settings do the concepts of resilience and vulnerability require in Ancient Studies? Is a return to systems theoretical approaches in the form of adaptive cycles helpful or are there alternatives?

5) Which units, contexts, entities and structures can be profitably investigated with

resilience and vulnerability in the Ancient Studies? Does it make sense to distinguish on a theoretical level between social, psychological, ecological, cultural etc. resilience and vulnerability? Or does it only address levels of investigation?

6) Linked to this: On which scales is it possible to theorize the two key concepts in the Ancient Studies? Should resilient or vulnerable contexts be conceptualized and conceptualizable on the micro-level as well as in a supra-regional or global context? How can the scales be brought together? Usually the socio-ecological concept of panarchy is used for this purpose, but are there other concepts such as flat ontology?

We want to bundle and discuss these and other questions in an interdisciplinary and international workshop. The specialisation in Ancient Studies should not be understood as an exclusion, but rather as a focus of interest. In particular, we hope to bridge the gap between theorization and operationalization.

This workshop is aimed at interested scholars from all disciplines and especially at bachelor, master and doctoral students as well as post docs who are seeking an exploratory and theoretical discussion of resilience and vulnerability. The workshop languages are English and German. There are no participation fees.

The workshop starts with a public keynote lecture followed by a panel discussion. The next day, concrete research approaches and projects will be discussed with short lectures and a poster session. On the following day, various questions will be further explored in an open-space format.

Short talks and poster proposals or similar in the form of short project outlines/abstracts (max. 150–200 words) can also be submitted until 31st March 2020. The prerequisite for participation is the reading and preparation of the texts collected in a workshop reader and sent out in advance. For organisational reasons the number of participants must be limited to 40, the number of short lectures and posters or similar to 10. We are looking forward to many registrations and interesting project and idea sketches from the different subjects in order to ensure a broad intra- and interdisciplinary exchange, but also to gain insight into different research questions and to offer the possibility of mutual stimulation.

Preliminary Program:

26th May 2020
 05:00 pm
 Keynote Lecture:
Stefani Crabtree
 (Dep. of Anthropology, Pennsylvania State University, USA)

06:00 pm
 Panel Discussion

07:30 pm
 Get Together

27th May 2020
 Short Lectures & Poster Session

28th May 2020
 World-Café & Focus Groups

Registration & Abstracts:

until **31st March 2020** to
travas2020@posteo.de



Partners



Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz
 Leibniz-Forschungsinstitut für Archäologie

LR Mainz
 Leibniz-Institut für Resilienzforschung

Leibniz
 Leibniz Gemeinschaft

Swiss TAG
 Swiss Theoretical Archaeology Group

JGU

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