

International Graduate School

Resonant Self–World Relations

in Ancient and Modern

Socio-Religious Practices

**Conference of the International Graduate School Graz/Erfurt**

**“Resonant self-world relationships in socio-religious practices in Antiquity and Modernity”**

**in collaboration with University of Liverpool and UrbNet, University of Aarhus**

**24-26 February 2021, Eisenach, Germany, Haus Hainstein**

**Measuring the World against the Body:**

**Materialities and Meanings of Magnification and Miniaturisation in Religious Communication in Antiquity and Modernity**

**Call for papers**

Even if human agents are not the measure of all things, their bodies and their bodily dimensions often are. Whether life-, over-, or under-sized, the human body and its parts and dimensions impacts on the ways we conceive of, interact with and relate to nature and the ways in which we construct and re-construct the man-made environment, that is to say how we relate to the world. Up- or down-scaling, monumentalisation or miniaturisation as strategies in anthropogenic “products” employed in religious rituals allow for increases in attractiveness, astonishment or deterrence, for reaching further out of or deeper into the world. As Hartmut Rosa puts it aptly (2019, 47): “Any elementary analysis of the ways in which human beings come to relate to the world, experience and perceive it, act and orient themselves within it, cannot but begin with the body”. This starting point will be developed by adding the notion of scale in this conference.

Taking its cue from Rosa’s new sociological theory of resonant self-world relations and its extra emphasis on our bodily relationships, this conference aims to engage closely, and from a number of different disciplinary angles, with the agents and forces that drive phenomena of magnification and miniaturisation in antiquity and modernity. Against a background of recent studies in the fields of embodiment and lived religion (e.g. McQuire 1998; Morgan 2010; Raja and Rüpke 2015; Rüpke 2018), materiality, memory studies (Meskell 2008; Boivin 2008; Drazin – Küchler 2015; Küchler 2019), and cultural perception of the body (Mol 2002; Rebay-Salisbury et al. 2010), but also research addressing the problem of scale (e.g. Krämer 2009, McMahon 2013, Roberts 2016), we invite:

* contributions that focus on magnified (e.g. over-sized inscriptions, architectural elements, statues, buildings) or miniaturised artefacts (e.g. coins, imagery, miniaturised religious gifts or other miniaturised elements in religious contexts, amulets, anatomical votives);
* contributions on the semantics of monumentalisation and miniaturisation on the microscopic (e.g. ekphrastic narratives, summary descriptions, schema of synecdoche, *pars pro toto* dedications and rituals) and/or macrocosmic level (e.g. colonisation, globalisation, parochialism, social alienation and xenophobia, individualisation, etc.).

Together, we aim to discuss how the perception and meaning of undersized or oversized forms and structures is shaped and changed synchronically and diachronically by our inquiry into the human body and its size as a measure of our resonant and muted relations to the world in the context of ritual practices.

**Central questions considered in this colloquium include, but are not limited to the following**:

\* What are the essentials of magnification or miniaturisation? Namely, what elements get eliminated, are kept or even emphasised during these processes to keep the end-product recognisable?

\* How does size relate to shape and material, or - extended to meanings - how are materials and the objects made of them ‘charged’ by the respective scale?

\* How do such under- or over life-sized modes of representation or dimensions influence the short-term experiences or long-term habitualisations of human agents?

\* What are the wider socio-political ramifications of architectural minimising or maximising processes?

\* What is the impact of these processes on human perception and understanding?

We inviteproposals of about 200 words to be submitted by **30th of September**. The papers (drafts) should be pre-circulated two weeks in advance of the conference in order to allow for a maximum of discussion. During the conference, they should only be summarised in a few minutes. The discussion will be started by a commentator. We aim to publish the contributions of 6,000 to 8,000 words after peer-review in a prominent and open-access form.

*Organisation*

The conference room and accommodation will be provided in the Haus Hainstein on the outskirts of Eisenach (ICE train station), just opposite the historical Wartburg. All travel expenses will be refunded according to the Thüringer Reisekostengesetz (economy flight/train 2nd class). The number of participants is restricted and the venue allows the observation of all hygiene and spacing regulations regarding the situation arising from Covid-19. The organisers will monitor the situation and integrate/substitute digital communication if necessary. Arrival is foreseen for the afternoon/evening of the 23rd February, departure on the 26th at lunch time. As the Covid-19 situation in February remains unforeseeable and the conference will be subject to final approval by the university, we ask you to buy refundable tickets only, as we cannot refund travel that has not taken place. If single journeys or the whole conference have to be cancelled, we will hold the meeting in online form on the very dates.

Please direct any technical inquiries to: diana.pavel@uni-erfurt.de

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