October 16th–17th 2009
International Conference

Consciousness as a public sphere: Historical and epistemic conditions for the development of ancient Greek democracy

9.30 – 10.45 Greetings and Introduction
Volker Gerhardt & Colin Guthrie King (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

Section 1: The formation and conceptualization of polis and community in pre-democratic Greece
10.30 – 11.45 Christoph Ulf (Universität Innsbruck): The early polis and the conditions for polis-identity
12.00 – 13.30 Lunch
13.30 – 14.45 Johannes Haubold (Durham University): The construction of community in Homer
14.45 – 15.00 Break
15.00 – 16.15 Elizabeth Irwin (Columbia University): Sympotic poetics and the creation of an Athenian public sphere

Section 2: The Athenian public sphere
16.15 – 17.30 Josiah Ober (Stanford University): Democracy and the institutions of common political knowledge
17.30 – 18.00 Discussion

Section 2: The Athenian public sphere (cont.)
9.30 – 10.45 Marek Wecowski (University of Warsaw): Consciousness and publicity in political practice: the case of ostracism
10.45 – 12.00 Philipp Scheibbreiter (Universität Wien): Der delisch-attische Seebund und sein Einfluss auf die Athenische Öffentlichkeit – eine völkerrechtliche Perspektive
12.00 – 13.30 Lunch
14.45 – 15.00 Break

Section 3: The public sphere and democracy: two points of comparison
15.00 – 16.15 Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp (Universität Köln): „Proper place in the history of democratic values“? Die Debatte um die politische Kultur der römischen Republik
16.15 – 17.30 Wilfried Nippel (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): Democracy ancient and modern, revisited
17.30 – 18.00 Final Discussion
What were the social and historical conditions which led to the formation of democratic institutions in ancient Athens? And how were these forms of social and political organization articulated consciously in a sphere of public discourse?

These are the questions to be addressed at this conference. Scholars from the fields of Ancient History, Philosophy and Classics will contribute their answers within the theoretical framework of TOPOI project B I 1, which encourages systematic reflection upon publicity and the public sphere in ancient Greek democracy through analogies between individual and collective consciousness.

The discovery of the public realm as the final instance of authority in claims of knowledge and opinion is often attributed to the thinkers of the Enlightenment. Yet the epistemic and communicative functions of publicity are fundamental to a great variety of historical communities. They are also constitutive for individual consciousness, in which public and political conflicts and innovations are reflected.

Speakers at the conference will explore the social, cultural and political institutions of ancient poleis and Athenian democracy with regard to three thematic complexes of publicity and consciousness, which correspond to the three sections of the conference.

Section 1: The formation and conceptualization of the polis as a collective in pre-democratic Greece
Section 2: The Athenian public sphere
Section 3: The public sphere and democratic values: two points of comparison

LOCATION
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