



Session: #222

CALL FOR PAPERS:

Lost in Translation: Transformed and forgotten knowledge

Knowledge production is a pivotal driving force of the 'human condition'. It stimulates social, cultural and economic changes. The accelerated expansion of scientific, technical, behaviour and other forms of knowledge may alter societies and environments. Knowledge, whether practical or theoretical, tacit or discursive, is in many ways the glue of human societies. Our individual survival depends on it, but in particular any society's mutual understanding rests on many overlapping "knowledges" that are transmitted within and between collective networks of practitioners. For knowledge to persist it relies on continued transmission.

But we know for certain that much past knowledge was forgotten, be it technologies, environmental know-how, healing practices, symbolic meaning etc. In many cases, technologies were replaced by other technologies, or the use of tools/things/symbols got lost. In other cases, particular events, such as accidents, environmental disasters, diseases, migration, warfare and deliberate destruction of books or removal of knowledgeable people led to knowledge being lost or suppressed.

Forgotten knowledge can be traced in many ways. Be it networks routes, means of transport, cosmology, images and symbols, cultural practice such as processing of poisonous food, crafts such as pyrotechnology, flint technology, access to resources or parts of landscape etc.

However, there are examples of knowledge not being entirely lost, but transformed as it was adjusted to new circumstances (trade routes, means of transport, construction work, skeuomorphism in artefacts); cases where knowledge previous transmitted discursively, became tacit and embedded in practical performances or routine activities (raw material procurement, food preparation); and examples of revitalisation of forgotten knowledge (crafts specialization, hunting practices).

This session will deal with the wide range of topics related to lost knowledge:

- How and under what circumstances may knowledge have been lost in the past?
- What were the consequences?
- And was it really forgotten or rather translated and latent?

Keywords: Knowledge, Forgetting (Oblivion), Transmission, Learning networks, Technology, Transformation

Session format: Regular session

Theme: 6. Material culture studies and societies

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Please submit your contribution via the EAA website:

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by **February 11th 2021**

We are looking forward to meeting you in Kiel!