

The aim of the project is to explore Hellenistic historical works, i.e. those written between the death of Alexander the Great and the defeat of the Ptolemaic Kingdom (323-31 BC), in search for the mentality of their audiences. The basic questions posed by the project read: what can historical narratives tell us about the mentality - or mentalities - of their audiences? Do the Hellenistic developments in form and content of historiography actually reflect structural changes in views of the worlds of the readers? If yes, in what way?

The project approaches historical narratives as not mere expressions of individual views of the authors, but rather as a reflection of certain groups' (certain audiences') understanding of the world. In the project's perspective, historical narrative is a sample of discursive practice through which a group of identification, i.e. a given audience, gets a comprehensive view of history, of itself and the world in general, and in a way confirms its worldview. The study focuses on works termed *Histories/Hellenica*. Such narratives have in common their general purpose, claim to truth, and the emphasis put on contemporary history. They smoothly connect and relate the past with the present, and claim that they recount what really happened in the world. Hence, those works have the greatest potential to reaffirm the worldview and, as a consequence, the collective identity of the group/audience to which they were addressed.

It has been a widely held view in scholarship that the (often exaggerated) destruction of political autonomy of the Greek polis after the Macedonian conquests caused that the reader became, as John Marincola has once put it, "less and less a participant and more and more an observer" of reality, which in historiography is echoed in the occurrence of notions such as *tyche* ("fate", "chance"). However, the question of political participation in the Hellenistic age has been substantially revised, and a reconsideration of this paradigm is needed. Further, our overall understanding of the audiences for historical works calls for improvement, and the project argues that to make a real step forward it seems inevitable to try and integrate insights and findings concerning audiences from other fields (especially, psychological studies on the role of the intended audience in the composing process). Moreover, approaching the mentality of the audiences calls for a sound grasp of what mentality is. Although the term "mentality" frequently occurs in studies on antiquity, no organised interpretative framework has been offered to date, not to mention one applied to the study of the audiences of Hellenistic historical works. The project uses the model of worldview (Germ. *Weltanschauung*) as its key device, to achieve a breakthrough in the subject.

Over the recent years a number of publications have tried alternative approaches to Greek historical writing, for instance exploring new perspectives offered by connections with sociology and anthropology. But those innovative studies are concerned either with the works from the Classical period, or with Hellenistic local histories. We lack similar developments in the field of the Hellenistic contemporary histories, and this project aims to fill that gap. To tackle the posed research questions, the project draws from the developments in the closely associated areas, and at the same time puts forward a new conceptual apparatus, deriving mainly from philosophical anthropology and social/cognitive psychology.

The proposed research is thus likely to break new ground in the field. While there is a great amount of literature on Hellenistic historians' views on history, on questions of genre, and the like problems, little work has been done to date on the broader context of the recipients', or audiences' mentality. Moreover, there are misconceptions and contradictory opinions about Hellenistic mentality in general which need to be verified. It seems to be far from established whether we can observe substantial or rather superficial changes in mentality in that period. Finally, the anticipated findings should make an important contribution to our understanding of Hellenistic historiography itself.