

Few historical characters had such an impact on the premodern imagination as Alexander the Great. Indeed, between the fourth and sixteenth centuries, the fourth-century Greek Alexander Romance was probably the world's most widely read secular text. Translated into a myriad of different languages, including the majority of the European vernaculars, this text—and the many adaptations it spawned—enjoyed an unrivalled popularity for more than a thousand years. But even before the Greek Alexander Romance was written, Alexander had long been transformed into the hero of countless legends, bridging the divide between history and fiction, inhabiting and often conflating such diverse generic and conceptual spaces as fairy-tale, imperialist propaganda, and religious prophecy. He appears in the Qur'an and the Shnameh, and his name was appropriated by European rulers such as the Popes, the medieval kings of Scotland, and the nineteenth-century Czars. The Alexander material thus displays a supreme degree of cultural adaptability and ideological flexibility, a capacity for realigning historical and cultural boundaries, for making the peripheral central and vice versa, but also for establishing new traditions and concomitant temporalities.

»Imperial Fictions« examines these forms of cultural and ideological adaptability with a special emphasis on the ways in which the tensions between the historical and fantastical inherent to so many Alexander narratives construct new temporalities. The workshop aims to investigate how these temporalities are exploited for the purposes of imperial self-fashioning, how they participate in ideological projects to legitimate—but also to subvert—power by exoticizing it. As the temporalities of history and romance, prophecy and fairy-tale, travelogue and chronicle clash, jostle and converge in pre-modern (but also in modern) Alexander adaptations, the Macedonian conqueror becomes a cultural crucible generating and staging as well as questioning and re-defining new temporalities in a sheer endless succession of ideological appropriations.

### Organisation

Andrew James Johnston, Wolfram Keller, and Jan-Peer Hartmann

EXC 2020 »Temporal Communities:  
Doing Literature in a Global Perspective«  
Research Area 3 »Future Perfect«

### Contact

Wolfram Keller: wolfram.keller@fu-berlin.de

### Venue

Collaborative Research Centre  
»Episteme in Motion«  
Schwendenerstrasse 8  
14195 Berlin

[www.temporal-communities.de](http://www.temporal-communities.de)

EXC 2020 »Temporal Communities:  
Doing Literature in a Global Perspective«



International  
Workshop

25–27 May 2023

## Imperial Fictions

The Cultural  
Entanglements and  
Multiple Temporal-  
ities of Alexander's  
Afterlives



Sonderforschungsbereich 980  
**EPISTEME IN  
BEWEGUNG**

Freie Universität  Berlin

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**Thursday, 25 May 2023**

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**2:00 p.m.–2:30 p.m.**

**Opening Remarks / Introduction**

Jan-Peer Hartmann, Andrew James Johnston, Wolfram Keller  
(Freie Universität Berlin/EXC 2020)

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**2:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.**

**The Malay Alexander and Universal Time**

Su Fang Ng (Virginia Tech)

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**3:30 p.m.–4:00 p.m.** *Coffee*

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**4:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.**

**A Concourse of Secrets: Alexander and the  
*Kitâb Sîr-al-Asrâr***

Christine Chism (UCLA)

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**6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.**

→ different venue: Hörsaal 2, Habelschwerdter Allee 45,  
14195 Berlin

**Alexander in the Textual Traditions of *Kalîla wa-Dimna***

Beatrice Gründler (Freie Universität Berlin/EXC 2020)

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**Friday, 26 May 2023**

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**10:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.**

David Ashurst (Durham University)

**Imperial Rhetoric in the Old Norse *Alexanders Saga*,  
Its Foreignness and Purposes**

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**11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.**

**Time and Empire in *Kyng Alisaunder***

Wolfram Keller (Freie Universität Berlin/EXC 2020)

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**12:00 p.m.–2:00 p.m.** *Lunch*

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**2:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.**

**The Emotional Landscapes of Scottish Alexander Romances**

Joanna Martin (University of Nottingham)

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**3:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.**

**Porus and the Limits of Alexander's Authority**

Russell Stone (Boston University)

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**4:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.** *Coffee*

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**4:30 p.m.–5:30 p.m.**

**The Fundamentals of Alexander the Great's Empire in  
French Medieval Narratives**

Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas (Université de Lille)

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**5:30 p.m.–6:30 p.m.**

**Fictional Temporalities: Alexander the Great in Twelfth-  
Century Texts and their MSS**

Venetia Bridges (Durham University)

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**7:30 p.m.** *Conference Dinner*

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**Saturday, 27 May 2023**

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**10:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.**

**Alexander and the Surviving Image: The Politics of  
Repetition in Paris, BnF, fr. 24364 (*Roman de toute  
chevalerie*)**

Henry Ravenhall (Cambridge University)

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**11:00 p.m.–12:00 p.m.**

**Alexander Through the Kaleidoscopic Looking Glass  
in the Middle Ages: The Manuscripts of the *Roman  
d'Alexandre en prose***

Maud Pérez-Simon (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle)

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**12:00 p.m.–1:00 p.m.** *Lunch*

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**1:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.**

**Wondrous Horrors: Gog, Magog, and Eschatological  
Boundaries in the Medieval Alexander Legend**

Giulia Gilmore (Durham University)

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**2:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.**

**Alexander and the Monsters: *Beowulf*, the Nowell Codex,  
and the *Wonders of the East***

Andrew James Johnston (Freie Universität Berlin/EXC 2020)

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