

In studying the evolution of knowledge, historians have traditionally focused on processes of transmission and succession of knowledge, memory being a central category for the explanation of these processes.

But what about the failures, the knowledge that was forgotten? How can we define knowledge as forgotten and what does the process of forgetting mean? And can forgetting be understood and told as such, as an active mechanism which is not necessarily the 'other side' of memory?

In order to understand why and how knowledge traveled, we must also understand why and how knowledge was lost, suppressed, misunderstood, rejected, or simply forgotten.

Attempting to address these and related questions, the conference will be organized around four sessions, each focusing on one aspect of forgotten knowledge. Each session is jointly organized by colleagues from the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science and at least one Dutch institution, structured around input talks with a follow up discussion.

Forgetting Knowledge

February 28 - March 2, 2018



Main Conference Room
Max Planck Institute for the History of Science
Boltzmannstraße 22 D-14195 Berlin

Please register if you would like to attend:
oparnes@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de

Working Group Workshop
organized by:

Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (Berlin)

in cooperation with:

The Descartes Center (Utrecht University)

The Vossius Center (University of Amsterdam)

Huygens ING (Amsterdam)

Day 1, Wednesday, February 28, 2018

15:30 Welcome

Jürgen Renn (Managing Director, MPIWG)
Ohad Parnes (MPIWG)

16:00 Working Group: Materialization of Forgetting

Chair: ELAINE LEONG (MPIWG)

MARIA AVXENTEVSKAYA (MPIWG)
'The Forgetting that Preserves: Oblivion in Operating Early Modern 'Things Themselves'

ERIC JORINK (Huygens ING)
How to Build an Ark? Reconstructing Noah's Forgotten Knowledge in the 17th Century Dutch Republic

17:30 Coffee Break

17:50 Working Group: Materialization of Forgetting

Chair: SEBASTIAN FELTEN (MPIWG)

HANSUN HSIUNG (MPIWG)
Squiggles: The Legibility of the Printed Past

Comment by ALBERTO CEVOLINI (University of Modena)

Day 2, Thursday, March 1, 2018

10:15 Working Group: Dimensions of Forgetting Knowledge

Chair: MATTEO VALLERIANI (MPIWG)

CHARLES VAN DEN HEUVEL (Huygens ING/University of Amsterdam)
Simon Stevins (1548-1620) Age of the Sages. Restoring Forgotten Knowledge with a Quest for Pure Languages

11:00 Coffee Break

11:20 Working Group: Dimensions of Forgetting Knowledge

TOBIAS WINNERLING (Heinrich Heine University)
Structural Forgetting as a Function of Information Circulation. Some Examples from 18th-Century Academia

OMER MICHAELIS (Tel Aviv University)
Rhetoric of Forgetfulness and its Function in Medieval Judaism

Comment by RENATE DÜRR (Tübingen University)

13:00 Lunch Break

14:00 Keynote
ANN STOLER (The New School, New York City)
Steps Towards an Ecology of Dis-regard

15:30 Coffee Break

16:00 Working Group: Dynamics of Forgetting

Chair: JULIA KURSELL (Vossius Center/University of Amsterdam)

IRENE VAN RENSWOUDE (Huygens ING/Utrecht University)
Damnatio Memoriae: Doomed to Failure?
The Possibilities and Impossibilities of Intentional Forgetting

WILKO HARDENBERG (MPIWG)
Conservation Amnesia or: How Early Nature Protection Plans got Forgotten

DJOEKE VAN NETTEN (Vossius Center/University of Amsterdam)
Lost on the Map. Knowledge that Would Later be Forgotten on Early Modern (World) Maps

Comment by ANN STOLER

Day 3, Friday, March 2, 2018

09:30 Working Group: Epistemologies of Forgetting

Chair: VIKTORIA TKACZYK (MPIWG)

PAUL ZICHE (Descartes Center/Utrecht University)
The Fascination of Forgotten Knowledge: Forgottleness as an Epistemic Quality Indicator

DANIEL COHNITZ (Utrecht University)
Forgetting from an Epistemological Point of View

11:10 Coffee Break

11:30 Working Group: Epistemologies of Forgetting

Chair: RENS BOD (Vossius Center/University of Amsterdam)

KATJA KRAUSE (MPIWG)
REMEMBERING FORGETTING: A SKETCH OF ITS HISTORY IN PHILOSOPHY

OHAD PARNES (MPIWG)
Forgetting in Modern Science

13:10 Lunch

14:00 Final Discussion (internal)

15:00 End