

# GENERATING IMPACT IN TRANSNATIONAL HUMANITIES RESEARCH

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## HERA 2009-2018

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Humanities in the European Research Area

Creating opportunities for humanities-led, collaborative, transnational research that will deliver new insights relevant to major social, cultural and political challenges facing Europe and the world.

Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) is a network of national funding agencies committed to leading and developing funding opportunities for humanities researchers in Europe. Since its inception it has grown from 14 to 26 national agencies.

HERA's first thematic Joint Research Programme (JRP) was launched in 2009 (Cultural Dynamics: Inheritance and Identity; Humanities as a Source of Creativity and Innovation). This has been followed by two subsequent JRPs in 2012 (Cultural Encounters) and 2015 (Uses of the Past); a fourth starts in 2019 (Public Spaces: Culture and Integration in Europe). The HERA partners, together with the European Commission, have pooled €56 million to fund 55 transnational humanities-focused projects. These have supported 231 scholars, 206 postdoctoral researchers and 88 PhD students who have worked together with 173 associated partners, including business and industry, policy makers, museums, galleries, libraries and archives, media organisations, the education sector, journalists and writers groups, festivals and venues, military regiments, religious institutions, artist organisations and performing arts practitioners, heritage sites and historic buildings, activist groups, legal and financial institutions, professional societies, public sector institutions, voluntary and community groups, charitable organisations, and the general public.

PILLARS & CONFERENCE THEMES: Structures and Policies (Pillar 2)

KEYWORDS: Humanities; Support Structures; Stimulating Impact; Monitoring Impact; HERA.

## EMBEDDING IMPACT INTO HERA: STRUCTURES AND POLICIES

**HERA leads in the practice of knowledge-exchange, public engagement and impact for European humanities research.** HERA's unique transnational structure offers the potential to capitalise on research excellence, extensive networks, and critical mass in delivering novel, thematic, humanities-based contributions to society beyond the national level.

All HERA projects include plans for impact, knowledge exchange and identify non-academic partners. The distinctive nature of the JRP means that projects may be confronted with multiple local definitions of impact and researchers' differing familiarity with its understanding. A challenge for HERA has therefore been to establish structures and policies that are flexible enough to embrace national variation whilst encouraging and promoting impact through transnational working. **HERA embraces the diversity of impact and identifies it as a focus for exploration, research and innovation.**

**HERA gains insight data into the range, reach, depth, beneficiaries, nature and longevity of impacts** generated by HERA-funded transnational humanities research through post-project reflection, including a conference specifically dedicated to impact (Amsterdam, 2017), strategic consultations, interviews and impact reports (Brockhurst & Sofaer 2015; Whyton & Rusch 2016). Our data is both qualitative and quantitative.

**HERA proactively stimulates impact** through 'top-up' impact awards and the appointment of 2 HERA Knowledge Exchange and Impact Fellows. The Fellows are charged with supporting funded projects and developing a scheme-wide culture of impact, creating a sustainable infrastructure for impact through events and toolkits (including working with Early Career Researchers), and advocating for the humanities on national and international levels.

**HERA monitors impact** through its Knowledge Exchange Strategy Group (KESG) which oversees the strategic implementation of new structures and policies linked to impact, works closely with the Fellows and supports impact-focused events. KESG reports to the Board and Management Team, and is thus able to draw on insights about impact from national research and funding organisations across the continent. It also monitors projects' self-reporting of impact via their annual and final reports.

### References

- Brockhurst, R. & Sofaer, J. *Creativity and Craft Production in Middle and Late Bronze Age Europe: Assessing the Impact of a HERA Research Project* (HERA, 2015)  
Whyton, T. & Rusch, L. *The Dynamics of Exchange: A Review of Knowledge Exchange Activities for the HERA Cultural Encounters Joint Research Programme* (HERA, 2016)