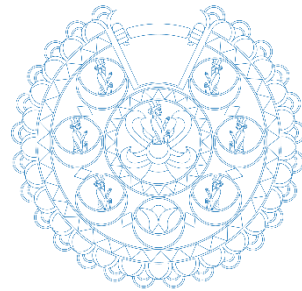


Achaemenid Workshop 2

**The Achaemenid Persian Empire and Imperial Transformations in the Ancient Near East
(7th c. BC – 2nd c. BC)**

July 3-7, 2023 | Obergurgl, Tyrol, Austria



AchWorks

ABSTRACTS AND SHORT-BIOS OF SPEAKERS

Robert Rollinger

University of Innsbruck/Wrocław

The Achaemenid-Persian Empire and Imperial Transformation

The talk sets the Achaemenid-Persian Empire in its historical contexts with a special perspective on the imperial turn. It sketches the major historical developments from Neo-Assyrian through Seleucid times and highlights the varying processes of continuities, changes and breaks.

Robert Rollinger is Professor of Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the Leopold-Franzens University of Innsbruck. His main research areas are the history of the Ancient Near East and the Achaemenid Empire, contacts between the Aegean World and the Ancient Near East, ancient historiography, and the comparative history of empires. Recent publications include *Imperien in der Weltgeschichte. Epochenübergreifende und globalhistorische Vergleiche* (co-edited; 2014), *Mesopotamia in the Ancient World. Impact, Continuities, Parallels* (co-edited; 2015), *Alexander und die großen Ströme. Die Flussüberquerungen im Lichte altorientalischer Pioniertechniken* (2013), *Short-term Empires in World History*

(co-edited; 2020), *A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire*, 2 volumes (*Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World*) (co-edited; 2021), *Empires to be Remembered* (*Studies in Universal and Cultural History*) (co-edited; 2022) or *Decline, Erosion and Implosion of Empires* (*Studies in Universal and Cultural History*) (co-edited; 2022).

Hans Neumann

University of Münster

Reichsbildungen im alten Vorderasien und das Problem der Periodisierung altorientalischer Gesellschaftsgeschichte

Der Beitrag thematisiert die politisch-staatliche und sozio-ökonomische Entwicklung des Alten Vorderasien unter dem Aspekt der Einheit von Kontinuität und Diskontinuität im Rahmen spezifischer historischer Prozesse altorientalischer Gesellschaftsentwicklung vornehmlich vom 3. bis zum 1. Jt. v. Chr. Dabei wird der Frage nachgegangen, ob bzw. in welcher Form progressive und innovative, aber auch stagnative und sogar regressiv verlaufende Entwicklungen als Teil längerfristiger politisch-gesellschaftlicher Transformationsprozesse eine unter geschichtswissenschaftlichem Aspekt vorzunehmende Periodisierung altorientalischer Gesellschaftsgeschichte rechtfertigen. Die Untersuchung berücksichtigt neben den zur Verfügung stehenden (vor allem keilschriftlichen) Schriftquellen und archäologischen Zeugnissen auch die bisherigen Diskussionen zum Problem der universalhistorischen Bewertung des Alten Orients im Rahmen globalhistorischer Fragestellungen.

Hans Neumann, geboren 1953 in Erfurt; 1971-1975 Studium der Altorientalischen Philologie und Orientarchäologie an der Universität Halle-Wittenberg; 1975-1991 wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter und Leiter einer Forschungsgruppe (Altorientalistik) am Zentralinstitut für Alte Geschichte und Archäologie (bis 1990 Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR); 1980 Promotion in Berlin (AdW); 1994-1996 wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter am Altorientalischen Seminar der Freien Universität Berlin und 1998-1999 am Seminar für Sprachen und Kulturen des Vorderen Orients (Assyriologie) der Universität Heidelberg (Assur-Projekt); 1998 Habilitation in Berlin (FU); 1999-2020 Professor für Altorientalische Philologie und Direktor des Instituts für Altorientalistik und Vorderasiatische Archäologie an der Universität Münster; 2003-2009 Vorsitzender der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft (DOG); 2003-2015 Vorstandsmitglied der International Association for Assyriology; Herausgeber der Keilschriftbibliographie (*Orientalia*) (seit 1999) und der Orientalistischen Literaturzeitung (*OLZ*) (seit 2009); Forschungsschwerpunkte: Sumerische und akkadische Keilschrifttexte des 3. und frühen 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr. Mesopotamiens; Wirtschafts-, Sozial- und Rechtsgeschichte des Alten Orients.

Miguel John Versluys

Leiden University

Containing Connectivity. Empires and Globalisation in the Axial Age

Empires continue to be associated with power and imperialism in the first place. However, as Walter Scheidel once observed: “It is unnecessary and unhelpful to examine claims and ideologies associated with imperialism and exploitation when we are interested in ultimate causation.” In my lecture, I will explore the idea that the main ‘evolutionary’ function of Empires is the containment of increasing connectivity. This thought is particularly relevant for the period 800 – 200 BCE; famously characterized as the *Achsenzeit* (Axial Age) by Karl Jaspers. There seem to be defining correlations between the subsequent waves of Globalisation that characterize this period on the one hand and imperial transformations on the other. As the first to understand itself in global, universal terms, the Achaemenid Empire plays a key role in this respect. The extraordinary heterogeneity and the essentially pluralistic outlook of Empires in this period is well known. Can we explain this by interpreting them as ‘instruments’ that emerged on the stage of world history to contain and make sense of increasing connectivity? And what could such a perspective add to a better understanding of imperial transformations in the ancient Near East during the Axial Age in particular?

The research and teaching of Professor **Miguel John Versluys** explore the cultural dynamics of the Hellenistic-Roman world (roughly 200 BCE – CE 200) from the point of view of Afro-Eurasia. He investigates these processes from local, regional and global perspectives and by means of a variety of methodologies and techniques derived from the Social Sciences & Humanities as well as the Natural Sciences. Interdisciplinarity is key to his research in all respects, as he believes that this approach is the only way to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the big and long-term picture he is interested in. His research has two distinct focus points: the interconnection of cultures and their various identities (‘Globalisation’), and the interdependence of objects and people (‘Material Culture Studies’). His ambition is to rewrite the history of Antiquity from the perspective of increasing connectivity and developments that took place in (wider) Afro-Eurasia – as part of the Global History of the ancient world – and to do so with a focus on objects and their affordances.

Karen Radner

LMU München

Assyria after the age of conquest: new approaches to crown and imperial administration in the 7th century BC

The 9th century BC sees the imperial turn of Assyria's long history, which culminates in the second part of the 8th century in the age of conquest under Tiglath-pileser III and his sons Shalmaneser V and Sargon II. Now faced with a provincial system three times the previous extent, the Assyrian crown of the 7th century BC instigates a period of experimentation in its approaches to kingship and imperial administration. Meant to consolidate the crown's power, these innovations proved hit-and-miss, and came to profoundly shape the Assyrian Empire and world history.

Karen Radner holds the Alexander von Humboldt Chair of the Ancient History of the Near and Middle East at LMU Munich. A specialist of the Assyrian Empire, she was awarded the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize in 2022.

Irene Madreiter

University of Innsbruck

Aspects of Leadership in Times of Hegemonic Overreach – Some Thoughts on the Transformation of the Assyrian Empire

The objectives of this presentation are twofold: Firstly, I will evaluate the theory of "imperial overstretch", established by Paul Kennedy in his 1987 book "The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers", which was also used to explain the demise of ancient empires. Soon after its publication, this concept was criticized for its low heuristic relevance (e.g. by Hayden White or Niall Ferguson). Alternatively, political scientists introduced the concept of "hegemonic overreach". According to Denis Florig, hegemonic overreach rests on willful human action and is a product of bad choices of the president (or king).

This leads to my second objective: In a case study I will apply the concept of hegemonic overreach to the fall and transformation of the Assyrian empire by asking whether ancient sources critically reflect on policy choices of the Assyrian king. This will reveal the different leadership-roles, that were attributed to the king in times of transition.

Irene Madreiter is Associate Professor for Ancient History at the department of Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. In 2020, she finished her “habilitation” about spatial concepts in cuneiform and western sources from the first millennium BCE. Her research areas include cultural transfers between the Mediterranean and the Ancient Near East, history and culture of pre-Islamic Iran, Greek historiography and gender history.

[Sebastian Fink](#)

University of Innsbruck

Imperial Possibilities and the Radius of Actions

The radius of action is the radius in which a given army can operate. This radius is defined by the speed of the army, by logistics and the length of the campaigning season. Several Assyrian kings intensively campaigned in the Levant, but did not manage to conquer the major cities. In this lecture I will discuss the Assyrian westward expansion and by taking into account the radius of action I will demonstrate that the establishment of a large standing army was the precondition for the Assyrian conquest of the Levant. This enabled the Assyrians to create an empire of unprecedented size and the organisational skills the Assyrians had to develop for this end had a deep impact on all following empires.

Sebastian Fink is an Assyriologist at Innsbruck University. He studied Assyriology and Philosophy in Innsbruck and held positions in Kassel and Helsinki. His main fields of interest are Mesopotamian literature and Mesopotamian history. He is the chair of the Melammu Project.

[Giovanni B. Lanfranchi](#)

University of Padua

The Assyrian Unification of the Ancient Near East under the Sargonid Kings: A Durable Transformation

The focus of the paper is the unification of the Ancient Near East brought about by the Assyrian sovereigns from Tiglat-pileser III to Ashurbanipal (743–631 BCE). The basic assumption is that the unceasing military, political and administrative activity of the Assyrian kings caused a radical transformation of the ethnic, national, linguistic, and political structure of the whole Near East, inducing a global change which had durable effects in the following centuries. The Assyrian kings’ activity consisted not only in their well-known military campaigns, but also in the notable mobilization of the population in the conquered countries turned into

Assyrian provinces, in the peripheral independent lands subject to tribute or to intense political pressure, and in the internal territory, in centripetal, centrifugal, and circular movement. The transformation involved also, and particularly, the institutional level. The replacement of local monarchies and governmental structures with Assyrian officials (“governors”) through various means, mainly by violence, and the attraction of peripheral *élites* into the Assyrian “imperial” structure were powerful and fatal instruments for destroying the system of local autonomies, which had developed since the end of the Late Bronze Age. In the following centuries, the “fall” of the Assyrian Empire did not provoke a return to the fragmented institutional and political landscape which preceded its expansion, but rather favoured the development of much larger entities, not necessarily homogeneous as regards language and culture, but in fact endowed with tight internal connections which preserved them for a long time. The Assyrian kings, thus, prepared the terrain for the development of major imperial structures like the Persian Empire.

From 1992 to 2015 **Giovanni B. Lanfranchi** was a Tenured Professor (“Professore Ordinario”) at the University of Padua, Department of Scienze storiche, geografiche e dell'antichità. He was teaching regular courses in “History of the Ancient Near East”, “Semitic Philology”, and “History of Hebraism”. Prof. Lanfranchi is a member of many institutions and boards e.g. the “Accademia Galileiana di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti in Padova” (Padova), the “Ateneo Veneto” (Venice), the Advisory Board of “The Melammu Project. The Heritage of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East”, or the Honorary Board of the international volume series “Classica et Orientalia” (Wiesbaden). He is co-editor of the international scientific journals “State Archives of Assyria Bulletin” (Padova) and “KASKAL. Rivista di storia, ambienti e culture del Vicino Oriente Antico” (Padova), as well as co-editor of the international volume series “History of the Ancient Near East/Monographs” (Padova) and “History of the Ancient Near East/Studies” (Padova). Moreover, Giovanni B. Lanfranchi is President of the Committee for the Publication of the Sources dealing with the History of Venice (“Comitato per la pubblicazione delle fonti relative alla storia di Venezia”) (Venice).

[Antonio Panaino](#)

University of Bologna

“The Gods Who Are,” and their Role. Iranian and Non-Iranian Religions in the Achaemenid Multiethnic Empire

The progressive formation of a large multi-ethnic ecumene within the expanding borders of the Achaemenid Empire produced an acceleration of the processes, already underway in the Near East and Central Asia, of mutual interchange, not only linguistic and cultural in the broadest sense, but also on the level of mutual religious knowledge. This process can be analyzed from at least two different, albeit converging, perspectives:

that of the Persian royal family, or families, and its clergy, but also that of the different individual communities, which were experimenting with a new type of geopolitical domination. The Achaemenid domination so assumed such an international, and unprecedented role, devoted to a permanent dominion over the subjected realms, and was not interested in a fleeting robbery of conquered goods. These two perspectives could be even multiplied, adding other socio-political and ethnic distinctions. We could look inside the framework of the Aryan ethno-linguistic communities, which experienced the domain of a single tribe, but also among the Semitic and generally non-Aryan peoples of the empire, whose direct relations were now embedded within a vertical society. Reading such a complex human and political dialectic can easily generate dangerous clichés. For instance, the formation of a Mazdean liturgy, which seems to have achieved a standardization with the acceptance of innovative calendrical parameters, must have generated important reactions among distant Zoroastrian communities. Furthermore, this innovation could not have remained without impact on relations with other communities. The present contribution will try to focus on some of these intercultural phenomena from different and diverging angles.

Antonio Panaino (Laurea in Milan State University; PhD. at the “Orientale”, Naples) is Full Professor of Iranian Studies at the “Alma Mater Studiorum, University of Bologna”. Dean of the “Faculty for the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage” (6 years) in the Ravenna Branch of the University of Bologna, Prof. Panaino was Secretary and President of the Societas Iranologica Europaea. Prize Ghirshman (Académie de France) and Sackler Scholar (Tel Aviv), member of the Chronoi Project (Berlin). In 2011 he got the *Laurea ad honorem* of the New Bulgarian University, Sofia. Prof. Panaino has been Director of the Italian Scientific Mission in Tajikistan and Chairman of the Italian Association for the Study of the Caucasus and Central Asia (ASIAC). His main research interests concern Avestan, Old Persian, Pahlavi and generally Mazdean literatures; history of Iran and of the religions attested within the framework of the Pre-Islamic Iranian area; the mutual influences between Greece and Persia, Byzantium and the Sasanian Empire, with special interest for the subject of sacred royalty; Cosmology, uranography, Astronomy and Astrology and Calendars in the ancient world with a particular focus on the Iranian area.

Walter Kuntner and Sandra Heinsch

University of Innsbruck

The End of Urartu as an Archaeological Phenomenon of Cultural Continuity

The end of Urartu is often seen synonymous with the end of the most important ruling dynasty, the Lords of Tushpa. These ‘ends’ are associated with nothing less than the culmination of a cultural development that had characterized the vast mountainous regions northeast of Assyria since the 13th century B.C., but came

to a sudden, violent end with the invasion of nomadic horsemen. On the one hand, this picture offers a satisfactory explanation for the horizons of destruction that characterize many Urartian centres; on the other hand, it serves to obscure our ignorance of the period that followed, which feeds all the more eagerly the expectation that a new flowering only became possible under the Achaemenids.

Recent archaeological research, particularly in Armenia, has shown that this model is at odds with the observed continuity in the development of material culture from the 7th to the 5th century BCE, and that this so-called transitional period instead comprises a culturally distinct period characterized in Armenia by a new political self-confidence.

The lecture argues that a reorientation of the discourse to include this local phenomenon can lead to a deeper understanding of the significance of Urartu and Achaemenid Persia in the South Caucasus and ultimately allow conclusions to be drawn about their structure and functioning.

Walter Kuntner is a postdoctoral researcher at the Leopold-Franzens University of Innsbruck. His research area focuses on the archaeology of Southern Caucasus and Mesopotamia in the 1st Millennium BCE.

Together with **Sandra Heinsch**, Associate Professor of Near Eastern Archaeology at the Leopold-Franzens University of Innsbruck, they conduct excavations as part of an archaeological field school program, most recently in Karmir Blur, Armenia. The research focus aims to investigate the interaction of the Urartian kingdom with local entities on the basis of material culture development.

[Ali Mousavi](#)

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

The Achaemenids between Tradition and Innovation: An Archaeological Perspective

In the late decades of the sixth century B.C., the founding fathers of the Achaemenid Persian Empire conceived and created exceptional centers of power. New styles of monumental architecture and sculpture were introduced to express the Empire's mastery of the ancient world. Within a span of less than 30 years this new Persian art achieved its most dynamic and genuine expression in the cities of Pasargadae, Persepolis, and Susa. Two major factors, individual and collective, played a significant role in the creation of this first and largest empire of the ancient world. On the individual level, it took the strong presence of charismatic rulers like Cyrus and Darius who brought the political unification of an immense area from the Aegean to the Indus. As for the collective level, the participation of a large number of nations was essential in providing technological and artistic tools for the creation of monumental centers, networks of communication, administrative apparatus, and an economic system of production and distribution. The present paper explores the continuity and change in this period as seen from an archaeological point of view.

Ali Mousavi studied in Lyon, France, and took his B.A. in Art History, and his M.A. in Archaeology from the University of Lyon, France. He obtained his Ph.D. in Near Eastern archaeology from the University of California, Berkeley. He excavated in France, Turkey, and Iran, and contributed to the nomination of a number of archaeological sites and monuments on the World Heritage List of UNESCO. He is the author of a book on the site of Persepolis (*Persepolis: Discovery and Afterlife of a World Wonder*), and co-editor of two books: *Ancient Iran from the Air*, and *Excavating an Empire*. He has published on various aspects of Iranian art and archaeology, and holds a particular interest in the archaeology of Iranian Empires, from the Achaemenids to the Sasanians, and the history of archaeology in Iran and the Near East. He teaches art and archaeology of ancient Iran at UCLA. He is also the director of the Archaeological Gazetteer of Iran project.

[Adriano V. Rossi](#)

“L’Orientale” University of Naples

The Notion of ‘Border’, the Achaemenid Empire and its Borderlands

The presentation moves from the words with which the royal discourse alludes to the extension of the Achaemenid domains (e.g. in DPh/OP 3-8: *ima xšaçaṃ taya adam dārayāmi, hacā Sakaibiš tayai para Sugdam amata yātā ā Kūšā, hacā Hindau amata yātā ā Spardā* “This is the kingship which I hold – from the Saka who are beyond Sogdiana, from there as far as Kush, from Hind, from there as far as Sparda”), trying to reconstruct how, in the whole of the documentation of the Achaemenid era, the notions relating to the ‘border regions’ may have been conceived and expressed.

Adriano V. Rossi is Professor Emeritus of Iranian philology at L’Orientale University, Naples, where he was Rector from 1992 to 1998. His main subjects (with more than 250 publications) are Iranian linguistics/philology and dialectology. Since 2002 he has been Director of the international project DARIOSH (Digital edition of the Achaemenid royal inscriptions) and since 2016 President of ISMEO-Rome.

[Melanie Groß](#)

Leiden University

From Assyria to Persia – putting state officials in context

The aim of this talk is the reconsideration and in-depth analysis of a key office in first millennium BCE Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia. Associated with several different designations – AGRIG, *abarakku*, *maš/sennu*,

ganzabaru as well as *rab kāširi* – this office – often referred to as “treasurer” – seems not only multifarious considering its many titles, but also considering its manifold functions and development over time. We will look into this office beginning with the Neo-Assyrian period (with a quick look back into the second millennium BCE), continuing with the Neo-Babylonian period and ending with the Persian period. Sources which help to identify and define the office include state correspondence, everyday documents (legal records, administrative documents), and unique records such as the so-called “Hofkalender” of Nebuchadnezzar II. The office of the “treasurer” was a key office in 1st millennium BCE Mesopotamia and is one of the best documented examples of what such state offices entailed as well as how ambivalent and tangible – or not – they were. By focusing on one particular office, we can discover more about 1st millennium BCE officialdom and its evolution in general. It will come down to the question of how much change versus continuity occurred in the course of time and through altering power relations.

Melanie Groß graduated from Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology in 2009 at Innsbruck University and since 2014 holds a PhD in Assyriology from the University of Vienna. She is an Assyriologist focusing on the socio-economic history of the first millennium BCE Mesopotamia. Her studies are especially devoted to the Neo-Assyrian palace institution on which she published a monograph in 2020. Currently she is working on a monograph about trading families in Late Babylonian Sippar.

[Marissa Stevens](#)

University of California, Los Angeles

Persian Influences on Egyptian Perspectives: Demonstrating Authority through Nuance

One key to the success of the Achaemenid empire was the subtle art of controlling local narratives, beliefs, and perspectives within the lands of its imperial expansion. In some cases, this control walked a fine line between appeasement and manipulation, where traditions were viewed by local populations as being upheld and honored, but also “Persianized” to the point of being relevant to, and for the benefit of the Persian leadership. At Hibis, the incredible subtlety of this imperial approach is made clear by one small phrase – *aS m XAs.wt imnti.t* – as preserved on the exterior north wall of the temple in the Kharga Oasis. This seemingly mundane phrase, translated as “cedar from the western foreign lands,” was part of a dedicatory inscription of Darius describing the materials used to construct the temple and exalt the deities in whose honor it was built. This phrase, though simple, contains a great degree of nuance and showcases both continuity and discontinuity of tradition and innovation. With cedar (and all quality wood) imported to Egypt from the Levant, the use of the word “western” is curious and deliberate; so also is the term “foreign lands.” The Levant is not to the west of Egypt, but of Persia proper. It is also no longer a “foreign land,” but part of the

same Achaemenid empire as Egypt. This phrase thus presents a discontinuity of directionality and perspective in an Egyptian context, despite being situated in a context of otherizing terminology traditionally used by the Egyptians. It is this tension, and the possible resolution(s) of this tension, that will be explored in this presentation.

Marissa Stevens is the Assistant Director of the Pourdavoud Center for the Study of the Iranian World. Trained as an Egyptologist who studies the materiality, social history, and texts of the Third Intermediate Period and Late Period, she earned her Ph.D. at the University of California, Los Angeles in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures. Combining art historical and linguistic approaches, her research interests focus on how objects can solidify, maintain, and perpetuate social identity, especially in times of crisis when more traditional means of self-identification are absent.

Bernhard Schneider

UKSW Warsaw

The Nippur Region: From the “Heartland of the Cities” to a Rural Imperial Landscape?

The region around Nippur was literally clustered with urban settlements until about the end of the first half of the 2nd Millennium BC, followed by a supposed depopulation at the turn to the 1st century BC. This development was not reversed until about the Neo-Babylonian period. Already Robert McCormick Adams pointed out that only during the latter period a reversing process began which culminated in a revitalization of the irrigation system during the Achaemenid period. The exceptionally good textual record is based mainly on the chance find of the so-called Murašû archive (454-405 BC) which derives from a single room of a private house at Nippur. It provides us with a vast amount of information concerning different groups of foreign origins, settled in a rural environment in the hinterland of the city. Here, the still understudied archaeological evidence within the study area during the Achaemenid period will be re-analyzed. Furthermore, an outlook on the upcoming project *RuBab* will be given.

Bernhard Schneider earned his PhD at the University of Innsbruck with a diachronic study of the main Sumerian sanctuary of Enlil at Nippur. He is currently holding a Post-Doc position in the project “*MeMaRe: Mesopotamian Material Religion: Shifting Landscapes of Human-Divine Networks in Ancient Mesopotamia*” at the UKSW Warsaw (NCN, OPUS 21). From 2024 onwards, he will be the PI of the project *RuBab – Rural Southern Babylonian Sites During the Early “Age of Empire” (ca. 720-150 BC)*, based at the University of Wrocław (MSCA Cofund with NCN, POLONEZ BIS 2).

Matthew Canepa

University of California, Irvine (UCI)

Achaemenid Luxury Material and Commensal Politics and their Legacy and Reinvention after Alexander

This paper considers the historiography and methods of interpretation of the role that Achaemenid luxury material played in the creation and expansion of the Achaemenid Empire. It considers material practical, continuities and conceptual continuities after Alexander under Greco-Macedonian and Iranian successors, including the Seleucids, Greco-Bactrians, and Parthians.

Matthew P. Canepa is Professor and Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Presidential Chair in Art History and Archaeology of Ancient Iran at the University of California, Irvine, where he directs the graduate program in Ancient Iran and the Premodern Persian World. He is the author of the award-winning books, *The Iranian Expanse: Transforming Royal Identity through Architecture, Landscape and the Built Environment* and *The Two Eyes of the Earth: Art and Ritual of Kingship between Rome and Sasanian Iran*, both published by UC Press. His latest volume is entitled *Persian Cultures of Power and the Entanglement of the Afro-Eurasian World* (Getty Research Institute Publications).

Wu Xin

Fudan University

Origin of Fire Temples and the Achaemenid Domination in Central Asia

This paper investigates the early development of the Zoroastrian fire temples in Central Asia. Utilizing the latest archaeological discoveries in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the paper argues that Central Asia witnessed the initial development of fire temples. Such development likely started before the Achaemenid period; and the Persian domination over the region may have increased the pace towards the institutionalization of fire temples. The paper delves into the construction history of the religious structure at Kyzyltepa, which is perhaps one of the earliest examples of fire temples, to reveal the process through which fire temples were established. By placing the temple in its historical and political context, the paper suggests that the Achaemenid imperial participation may have played an important role in the origin and early development of the Zoroastrian fire temples.

Wu Xin is a professor in the Department of History at Fudan University in Shanghai, who received her PhD in the Department of the History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania in 2005. With a background in Central

Asian art, history, and archaeology, Wu Xin's research interests include the interactions and connectivity between Iran and the East, covering topics such as warfare, nomads, administrative and religious practices of the Achaemenid Empire. Since 2010, she has been co-directing, with Leonid Sverchkov, a joint archaeological project at Kyzyltepa, an Achaemenid to Hellenistic period site in southern Uzbekistan. Wu Xin is currently working on a monograph entitled "Persia and the East".

Kristin Joachimsen

MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society (Oslo)

The Persian king and his Jewish queen as represented from a Jewish subaltern point of view in the book of Esther (MT)

This contribution addresses issues related to how the book of Esther is applied in ancient historiography. Due to the fictional character of the book, it is hard to find points of reference to narrow down the dating and location. Still, these issues have been related to the question of whether a particular historical event lies behind the story. Besides, linguistic criteria and usage of conventional literary motifs have been considered, e.g., how the book conveys Greek perceptions of the Persian world. In this presentation, I will analyze a recent trend in situating the book of Esther (MT) within Hasmonean ideology (e.g., Eckhardt 2017, Bezold 2021), in which Esther 8-10 is regarded as heavily edited in light of the Maccabean revolt (Macchi 2016). There might be some risks of a one-dimensionality in pursuing precise identification of the Hellenistic influence, as there might be both Persian and Greek influence under both Persian and Hellenistic rule. A broader Mesopotamian context, as well as previous Hebrew traditions, should also be considered when discussing the context of the book of Esther. The genre of "court tale," widely attested in antiquity, is defined as a narrative about a character in the royal court who gains access to the king and is successful because of their skills or wisdom. The protagonists typically convey an "in-between" role, as they are both influential in the insider governing group and considered outsiders and subalterns. In this regard, the book of Esther mimics the Persian court, underscoring its subversive message via exaggerations and irony.

Kristin Joachimsen is Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, MF – Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society. She is the author of *Identities in Transition: The Pursuit of Isa. 52:13-53:12* (Brill, 2011), as well as a whole range of articles on postcolonial and gender perspectives on literature on the Hebrew Bible located in Persian period. Her current project is on perceptions and receptions of Persia in the Hebrew Bible and in biblical scholarship.

Krzysztof Nawotka

University of Wrocław

Burning Enemy Temples in Asia Minor in the Age of Persian Wars

Within his accounts of Greco-Persian hostilities in Asia Minor Herodotos relates burning of a number of temples, among them two major ones, of Kubaba in Sardis and of Apollo in Didyma. Burning of the temple in Sardis reportedly became justification for Persian acts of revenge in Greece in 480 BCE. Since Milesians played the pivotal role in the Ionian rebellion burning of the temple in Didyma could be construed as the first act of the Persian revenge. There are two lines of historiographical tradition on burning of Didyma: this of Herodotos attributing it to Darius and that known from Kallisthenes and Pausanias attributing it to Xerxes. The second tradition most probably draws on Ktesias. The account of Herodotos on the fate of Miletos in 494 BCE is less reliable than generally assumed. Ktesias' version of events in Didyma is better. It is anchored in the well-attested tradition of the pro-Persian attitude of Branchidai, the guardians of Didyma whose removal to Central Asia was not banishment but rather protective resettlement. Archaeological evidence suggest that Didyma was despoiled but not burned to the ground, unlike temples in the urban core of Miletos. The epigraphic curve for Miletos and Didyma shows the first quarter of the 5th c. BCE as the period of some inscribing, as opposite to the second quarter of the 5th c. This lends indirect support to the late date of the events in Didyma: removal of all valuables and statues under Xerxes, evacuation of Branchidai to Sogdiana, cessation of cult and oracular activity in the temple of Apollo. The whole issue of deliberate burning of enemy temples in Asia in the age of the Persian wars is overblown: the temple in Sardis was burnt by accident, the temple in Didyma was not burnt at all. It is a part of the Herodotean ideology rather than of the factual account of wars between the Greeks and Persians.

Krzysztof Nawotka is professor of Ancient History at the University of Wrocław, Poland. He received his PhD in Classics from The Ohio State University in 1991 and his habilitation from the University of Wrocław in 1999. From 2015 he has been a member of the Academia Europaea, from 2021 a member of the Kommission Transformationsprozesse und Imperium in den Antiken Welten Afro-Eurasiens, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. His most important books are: *The Western Pontic Cities: History and Political Organization* (A.M. Hakkert 1997); *Alexander the Great* (CSP 2010); *Boule and Demos in Miletus and its Pontic Colonies* (Harrassowitz 2014); *The Alexander Romance by Ps.-Callisthenes: A Historical Commentary* (Brill 2017). His most recent edited volume is *Epigraphic Culture in the Eastern Mediterranean in Antiquity* (Routledge 2020).

Hilmar Klinkott

University of Kiel

Satrapal Power and Royal Policy – The Transformation of inner political Forces in the Achaemenid Empire

After a first phase of dynamic expansion the Great Kings changed into a kind of ‘diplomatic policy’, particularly known from the western edge of the Achaemenid empire. Since Xerxes I they tried to use new methods for foreign policy, inter-state connections and indirect influence. This assumes a new understanding of the empire (with acceptance of fixed? borders) and of the royal ideology and representation. In consequence, the satraps gained importance as political representatives of the royal interests. Therefore, their function of their position seems to change from an originally focus on the administration of the regional, inner-Achaemenid conditions to a ‘diplomatic key figure’ at the border zone of the empire. But their new political, military and economic competences also strengthened their position towards the Great King. So, the increase of satrapal power seems to change the relationship to the Great King and the inner-political conditions. Obviously, the results are a tension of particularism at end of the 5th and in the 4th century BC and – in reaction to it – a regulation and modification of satrapal power by the Great King. This development, in which the imperium/the imperial territory shifted its importance in relation to the center, illustrates and characterizes the process of transformation to a ‘long-term empire’ the Achaemenid Great Kings were faced to manage.

Hilmar Klinkott studied Ancient History, (Classical) Archaeology and Latin at the Ruprecht Carls University Heidelberg. As fellow of the DFG Graduate School (Graduiertenkolleg) “Anatolien und seine Nachbarn” at Tübingen University he wrote his PhD supervised by Prof. Frank Kolb (Tübingen) and Prof. Josef Wiesehöfer (Kiel) published in 2005 (“H. Klinkott, *Der Satrap. Ein achaimenidischer Amtsträger und seine Handlungsspielräume (Oikumene 1)*, Frankfurt a. Main 2005”). From 2002 he was Assistant Professor (Wissenschaftlicher Assistent) at the Seminar für Alte Geschichte/Tübingen, where he finished his habilitation (“*Zwischen Macht und Massenwahn. Zur politischen Bedeutung des Akklamationswesens im Westen des Römischen Reichs vom 3. Jahrhundert v.Chr. bis 96 n.Chr.*”) in 2009. From 2012 until 2015 he was “Akademischer Rat” at the Seminar für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik of the Ruprecht Karls-Universität Heidelberg. Since October 2016 he is appointed Full Professor at the Institut für Klassische Altertumskunde of the Christian Albrechts University. Hilmar Klinkott is the author of the article on “Satrapies of the Persian Empire in Asia Minor” in the Oxford History of the Ancient Near East V, and a recent book on Xerxes in Greece. For publication list see: <https://www.klassalt.uni-kiel.de/de/abteilungen/alte-geschichte/personen/klinkott>

Dominik Markl

University of Innsbruck

Transformations from Neo-Babylonian to Achaemenid Imperial Theologies and the Rise of Judean Monotheism

The short century from Nebuchadnezzar II to Darius I was marked by multiple transformations of imperial theologies. While Nebuchadnezzar II strengthened the traditional Marduk cult in Babylonia by rebuilding Esagila and Etemenanki, and Nabonidus attempted to de-emphasize Marduk theology by promoting the moon god Sîn as head of the Babylonian pantheon, Cyrus the Great reinstated Marduk worship in Babylon and even imported Marduk symbolism to the Persian mainland. Under Darius I, in contrast, monumental propaganda inscriptions presented Ahuramazda as the unrivalled protector deity of the empire. These developments form the backdrop of the emergence of Judean monotheism in the strict sense of the term as seen, especially, in the biblical texts of Deuteronomy and Deutero-Isaiah. It will be argued that Judean theologians closely observed the transformations in imperial theologies who adopted some of their motifs and rejected others to elevate their own deity as the sole God of the universe. Judean theology thus provides indirect evidence for a critical discourse fuelled by broader imperial transformations that formed the context for the emergence of monotheism and, subsequently, three world religions.

Dominik Markl, S.J., is professor of Old Testament studies at the University of Innsbruck. He previously taught at Georgetown University (Washington, DC), the Pontifical Biblical Institute (Rome), the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley (Santa Clara University, California), Hekima College (Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi) and Heythrop College (University of London). His research interests include the emergence of monotheism and the history of political ideas such as nationalism and imperialism and related history and discourses of mass violence. He is Old Testament editor of the journal *Biblica* and co-editor of *Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte*.

Antigoni Zournatzi

National Hellenic Research Foundation (Athens)

Changing Patterns of Organization and Control along the Western Seaboard of the Achaemenid Empire

The aim of this presentation is to juxtapose the more or less diachronically fixed formulation(s) (indebted in part to earlier Mesopotamian terminology) of Persia's western holdings in the ideological vocabulary of Achaemenid royal inscriptions to actual processes of change due to regional and superregional

developments. With reference to the latter developments, attention will focus, in particular, on the sequences of events that led to the Peace of Callias and the King's Peace and on the implications of these agreements.

Antigoni Zournatzi is Director of Research in the Section of Greek and Roman Antiquity, Institute of Historical Research, at the National Hellenic Research Foundation. Her main areas of research are the interconnections of the ancient Greek world with the Near East, cross-cultural phenomena in archaic and classical Cyprus, and the Achaemenid Empire. She has authored a monograph on Persian Rule in Cyprus (2005) and a number of articles on subjects of ancient Greek, Achaemenid, Thracian and Cypriot history, historiography, archaeology, epigraphy and numismatics. She has co-edited *Inscriptiones antiquae partis Thraciae quae ad ora maris Aegaei sita est* (2005) and *Ancient Greece and Ancient Iran: Cross-Cultural Encounters* (2008). The project Mapping Ancient Cultural Encounters: Greeks in Iran ca. 550 BC – ca. AD 650 (<http://iranohellenica.eie.gr/>), which she presently coordinates, seeks to promote an integration of varied insights into ancient Iranian-Greek interactions in Iran emanating from the study of different types of source material, sites and periods.

Gian Pietro Basello

“L’Orientale” University of Naples

Echoes of the Achaemenid Imperial Signature in the Book of Ezra

The local impact of the Achaemenid empire varies according to the environment, urban development and prior political organization of each controlled territory. Anyway, an emphasis on accounting and accountability is shared by different sources, including later and literary ones, from different cultural areas when referring to the Achaemenid empire. The paper analyses some passages of the biblical book of Ezra in this light, emphasizing the echoes of the impact and transformation brought by the Achaemenid dominion on local territories by means of its administration, using the evidence from the Takht-e Jamshid/Persepolis Fortification and Treasury documents as a term of comparison.

Gian Pietro Basello (PhD in the Ancient Near East, 2005) is Associate Professor (2020–) at “L’Orientale” University of Naples, Italy, where he has been teaching Elamite language since 2010. He has worked since 2003 on the Iranian–Italian joint Project DARIOSH (Digital Achaemenid Royal Inscription Open Schema Hypertext). His researches are also devoted to ancient calendars and systems for recording time.

Silvia Balatti

University of Kiel

Conditioning the Empires: The Troops of the Medes from the Sargonid to the Early Achaemenid Period

Ancient sources inform us that the troops of the Medes contributed to the military expansion of major Near Eastern empires. The Assyrians included Median contingents in their imperial armies. The Babylonians were supported by the Medes of Cyaxares in their capture of Assyria. The Early Persian kings also relied on Median forces to subjugate peoples and create their world empire. Beside their presumed savagery and invulnerability — largely dictated by tradition — these troops seem to have owed their strength to two main factors: 1) their large number; and 2) their ability in light cavalry assaults. Both these factors reflect characteristics of the Iranian highland societies and cultures to which they belonged. The aim of this contribution is to investigate how the Near Eastern empires employed these qualified human resources and to which extent they were politically conditioned by their presence within and beyond their borders. We particularly focus on the similarities and differences in dealing with the Median troops by the different empires.

Silvia Balatti is a historian specialized in Ancient Iran and the Ancient Near East. After receiving her PhD at Kiel University, she held a post-doctoral position in the ANR-DFG interdisciplinary project “Paleopersepolis”. She is currently a *Wissenschaftliche Assistentin* at the Institute of Classical Studies and a member of the Cluster of Excellence ROOTS at Kiel University. Her publications include the monography *Mountain Peoples in the Ancient Near East: The Case of the Zagros in the First Millennium BCE* (2017) and the edited volume *Paleopersepolis: Environment, Landscape and Society in Ancient Fars* (2021).

Kateryna Baulina

Kyiv University

Reflection of titles and statuses in the hierarchy of senior officials at the Achaemenid royal court (from Neo-Assyrian through early Hellenistic periods)

The Achaemenid empire marked the final stage in the development of the history of Ancient Near East civilizations and was formed on the foundation of the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Elamite traditions, by borrowing some aspects of the royal organizational and managerial sector. A complex bureaucratic system ruled the empire. All ways of governing the country converged to the royal palace to senior officials, whose civilian positions were intertwined with military duties.

This work investigates the considerations and comparisons between the titles and statuses of officials who held the highest ranks at the king's court. And through sources analysis, I will present my own vision about the evolution and transformation of said titles from Neo-Assyrian to the Achaemenid period and to early Hellenistic times.

Kateryna Baulina is a Ph.D. student at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (Department of Ancient History) where she also got a BA and MA. The topic of her dissertation is “Evolution of the titulary of Hephaestion as a manifestation of the syncretism of the Ancient Near Eastern political traditions in the empire of Alexander the Great”. Her research interests are Assyriology, the period of the Achaemenid empire, and the empire of Alexander the Great. Kateryna Baulina participated in such conferences as RAI Paris 2019, RAI Turin 2021, RAI Mainz 2022, Melammu Workshops, and the Ancient Near East Studies conferences at the universities of Kyiv, Helsinki, Berlin, Gdansk, and Wrocław. She independently explored collections of the Ancient Near East in the museums of Paris, Berlin, and New York, and also repeatedly visited the archaeological complexes of Persepolis, Pasargadae, and Ecbatana.

[Rolf Strootman](#)

University of Utrecht

Iranian Office-holders in the Macedonian Empire (Argeads, Antigonids, and Seleucids)

Alexander III famously co-opted Persian nobles for the management of his empire, and initiated a policy of intermarriage with the leading families of the former Achaemenid Empire. Alexander's 'Iranian policy' is considered a failure in conventional scholarship. But his principal successors in western Asia, first the early Antigonids and then the Seleukids, successfully continued this policy. Iran and Iranians in fact were of pivotal importance especially to Seleukid rule and military power during the third century BCE. Seleukid decline in the course of the second century BCE allowed local Iranian dynasties to reassert themselves in the peripheries of the Seleukid world.

Challenging the modernist interpretation of the so-called 'Persian Revival' of the later Hellenistic Period as a form of national resistance to foreign rule, my paper aims to trace the development of Iranian elites between the fall of the Achaemenids and rise of the Arsakids, and their political and cultural significance in the period of Macedonian domination.

Rolf Strootman teaches Ancient History and World History at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. His research focuses on empire and cultural interactions in the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Central Asia during the Persian and Hellenistic periods. He is the author of *Courts and Elites in the Hellenistic Empires*

(2014) and *The Birdcage of the Muses: Patronage of the Arts and Sciences at the Ptolemaic Imperial Court* (2016), as well as a number of edited volumes, including *Persianism in Antiquity* (2016; co-edited with M. J. Versluys) and *Empires of the Sea: Maritime Power Networks in World History* (2019; with F. van den Eijnde and R. van Wijk). He is currently preparing two volumes of the Seleukid Empire.

Charlotte Lerouge-Cohen

Université Paris Nanterre

“Philhellenes” and heirs to the Persians: the Arsacids, the Seleucids and the Greeks until the death of Mithridates I (171-138)

The paper investigates the role of the memory of the Persians in relations between the Arsacids and Seleucids in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. It discusses Seleucid representations of the Arsacids, as well as the role played by memories of Persian-Greek relations in the military campaigns of Demetrios II and Antiochos VII. It especially focuses on the relationships with the Greek cities of Babylonia. Finally, it discusses (once more) the “Philhellen” epithet which was adopted by Mithridates I on his coins.

Charlotte Lerouge-Cohen is a teacher in Greek History at Paris-Nanterre University (France). Her scientific works deal with the Greek and Latin historiography pertaining to the Parthians, with the Arsacids themselves, as well as with the Hellenistic dynasties from Anatolia who were from Iranian descent, as the Mithridatids, the Ariarathids, the Orontids of Armenia and the Commagenian kings. She wrote two books: *L'image des Parthes dans le monde gréco-romain: du début du 1er siècle av. J.-C. jusqu'à la fin du Haut-Empire romain* (2007), which deals with the Parthians' image and with the relationships which Parthians and Romans entertained; *Souvenirs du passé perse à l'époque hellénistique* (2022), where she explores the way Hellenistic dynasties tried to associate themselves with the Persian kings, and the way through which modern historians, sometimes, assigned to some dynasties (the Arsacids in particular) this desire to be linked to the Persian past.

Fabrizio Sinisi

Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut, ÖAW

Dealing with Achaemenid legacies in Parthia and Chorasmia, 3rd-1st century BC: different outcomes in different contexts?

The discussion on the Achaemenid cultural and ideological legacies in post-Achaemenid times has been traditionally focused on a “Persian” perspective, due to the influence of the paradigm of the Achaemenid connections of the Sasanians. The effect has been that the more than five centuries between the fall of the Persian Empire and the birth of the Sasanian one have been objectively neglected, partly as result and partly concurring to draw a picture built on premises that are less objective than what commonly believed, first of all being the assumption of a generalized loss of memories of the Achaemenid past among Iranians. The paper will present a non-Persian perspective on the problem mainly based on visual evidence, discussing the case of the Arsacids, which is crucial for various reasons, not least because of their proximity in time to the Achaemenids and because their dynasty was the longest-ruling in pre-Islamic Iran, in comparison with that of Chorasmia, another non-Persian Iranian region that had an Achaemenid phase but, having been not impacted by the Macedonian conquest, followed in post-Achaemenid times a different historical trajectory from that of western Iran.

Fabrizio Sinisi: Studies and PhD (2001-2004) in Rome, University “La Sapienza”, on ancient Iran. Since 2007, Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter of the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften (currently AG Numismatik, ÖAI), working in the framework of the *Sylloge Nummorum Parthicarum* project.

Patrick Sängler

University of Münster

Alexander the Great and the Emergence of Hellenistic Egypt: Some Considerations in Administrative History

The proposed title of the paper may be misleading. Given the topic of this conference, the point is obviously not to consider Alexander the Great a priori as a formative figure in the emergence of what classicists call “Hellenistic Egypt.” Rather, the issue is whether Alexander the Great and his conquest of Egypt represented a watershed for that country in every respect – which is what the term “Hellenistic Egypt” might mean in dogmatic terms. The aim of this paper is to determine, from the perspective of administrative history, whether non-Graeco-Macedonian ruling principles, institutions, offices or officials played a decisive role at

the beginning of “Hellenistic Egypt” and to what extent any inherited structures can be traced back to the former xenocracy of the Achaemenid Empire. Is administration, then, an area to which the attribute “Hellenistic” necessarily applies with or immediately after Alexander the Great, and do we need to pay attention to the Achaemenian prelude in this context? The paper can only deal with this question in an exemplary way but will try to find some answers.

Patrick Sanger (PhD 2009 Vienna, habilitation 2017 Vienna) is professor of ancient history at the Westfalische Wilhelms-Universitat Munster, Germany. His research focuses on the administrative, legal, and social history of the Hellenistic and Roman world. Currently, he is searching for new ways to narrate the history of Greco-Roman Egypt and its intertwining with papyrology.

[Sabine Muller](#)

University of Marburg

The Achaemenid Empire in Lucian – More than just an ironical (re)view of past Greek historiography?

The ancient satirical writer Lucian (2nd century AD), an erudite man with a thorough knowledge of the Greek (and Roman) literary heritage, came from Samosata in Commagene. While belonging to the circles of Samosata educated in Greek, Lucian mockingly calls himself an “Assyrian” or “barbarian”, thus ridiculing the artificial difference made in Greek literature. However, Lucian is not only an expert on the Greek literature of the past and its information or images of the Achaemenid Empire but also an intellectual aware of his Eastern origin, the socio-political and cultural structures of his environment, and the bias of Greek authors of the past writing about the Achaemenid Empire. Therefore, this paper will analyze to which extent Lucian’s writings can provide more than just ironical references to the Greek images of Persia in the historiography of the Classical and Hellenistic Age. It will be explored if Lucian offers some more information as a writer familiar with more than the Greek cultural legacy.

Sabine Muller studied Ancient, Medieval, Early Modern and Modern History and Art History. She is professor of Ancient History at Marburg University. The main interests of her research are the Teispid and Achaemenid Empire, Argead and Hellenistic Macedonia, Macedonian women, Lucian, and the late Roman Republic.

Julian Degen

University of Trier

Narrating Imperial Success from the Achaemenid Period to the Late Roman Republic

In the Achaemenid period a set of imperial narratives and tropes were created and disseminated, serving the intention of the Great Kings to legitimize their rule over a multicultural empire. These narratives may have rooted deep in the imperial tradition of the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empire, but the Achaemenids rather modified than simply adapted them. These narratives helped the Iranian rulers to create a royal persona in which the subjects of either cultural background could view them as legitimate rulers. In the course of the transformation of the Achaemenid Empire in the world of Hellenism, Alexander and his successors had to deal with the Achaemenid concept of monarchy. The latter may have undergone modifications, but the narratives have not lost their original character. Interestingly, the narratives of the Achaemenid period were still important to powerful imperial agents in the post-Hellenistic period. This applies to the political atmosphere of the Roman Republic in particular. Even in the afterglow of Hellenism imperial agents used narratives of the Achaemenid period, albeit modified in a process of filtering and adaption, in order to stage their political success.

Julian Degen holds a PhD in Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies which he received from the University of Innsbruck. He was a research-fellow and academic teacher at the universities of Innsbruck, Hildesheim, Kiel and Trier. His research interests are Greek historiography, Alexander the Great, the Achaemenids, ancient Geography and the economy of the Roman Empire on which he published widely. At the moment he is working on his habilitation-project which is dedicated to the maritime economies in the Mediterranean World of Strabo's Geographica.

Florian Posselt

Universität Innsbruck

Topography and Ethnography in the Neo-Assyrian Royal Inscriptions

The goal of this talk is to analyze processes of development in the genre of neo-assyrian royal inscriptions, especially at the time of the Sargonid dynasty. Any established literary genre has its guidelines and topoi that are fixed and determined. Simultaneously, however, so long as these literary genres are practiced they are subject to change and development. The focus of this lecture will be on topographical and ethnographical markers and phrases that had not been a part of the traditional Assyrian royal inscriptions. They start to

appear on a larger scale during the 8th and 7th century BC and seem to be linked to the 'imperialization' of neo-assyrian rule, brought upon by the experiences of expansion and administration of new territories and peoples. The use of these topographical and ethnographical phrases references the contemporary political changes, though still being embedded into and adapted to the traditional functions of the royal inscriptions. As such, the introduction of these topographical and ethnographical references into the genre of neo-assyrian royal inscriptions precedes and anticipates a similar use in the later Achaemenid royal inscriptions.

Florian Posselt is a PhD student at the Department of Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the University of Innsbruck. He completed his Bachelor's and Master's studies in Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies from 2015 to 2021 with his thesis on 'Die Anzahl der Erdteile in der Archaik' (the number of continents in the Greek archaic period). Since 2021 he has been working on his dissertation thesis 'Die Entstehung der Erdteile' (the origin of continents) under the supervision of Prof. Robert Rollinger (Innsbruck) and Prof. Johannes Haubold (Princeton).

[Valentina Cambuzzi](#)

Universität Innsbruck

Of Generals and Satraps: Discontinuity between Achaemenid and Seleukid Roles (?)

The satrap ranks among the best-known Achaemenid offices in the Greek historiographical description. With the victory of Alexander the Great, the roles of the general and the satrap become distinct, giving rise to a discontinuity compared to the Achaemenid administration. Akkadian sources relating to the turbulent period from the death of the Macedonian until the settlement of the Seleukids demonstrate a number of changes including the separation of the roles of the general and the satrap, which proved fundamental to the management of the Babylonian territory during the Babylonian War, as it is mentioned in Greek sources like Diodorus. After the war, Mesopotamian sources indicate a continuation of the distinction between the two offices. One of the most known cases is the episode described in the astronomical diary ADART1 -273B in which the two characters are referred to separately and, apparently, with different management functions. This work focuses on recording and observing the occurrences of the offices of the satrap and the general (referred to as "of Akkad") in Akkadian documents in the period between the conquest by Alexander and the reign of Antiochus III. Thanks to a philological analysis, the purpose is to confirm the distinction between the two roles in terms of different management areas in the new imperial administration as a result of the new needs that emerged during Alexander's conquest and the Diadochs Wars.

Valentina Cambuzzi is a PhD student at the University of Innsbruck. Her research interests concern the Seleukid Empire and the development of its imperial identity. She is interested in the representation of kingship in Mesopotamia in the 1st millennium BC and is expanding her interest into royal identity in ancient Macedonia and Greece. At the moment, she is focusing on the role of Antigonus Monophthalmus in the definition of Seleukid identity as a negative reference.

Nina Mazhjo

University of Wrocław

Hail to Mithridates! The Pontic King Blessed by the Achaemenid Deity

The use of the theonym “Miθra” as a component of theophoric names was prevalent among the nobles and royal families of the Achaemenid politico-cultural diaspora. About the mid-fourth century to mid-first century BCE, eleven kings of Pontus adopted Mithridates as their royal theophoric, while in Iran, it would begin to appear later during the time of the Parthians.

The anthroponym Mithridates connotes a person given (blessed) by the Iranian yazata of oath and contract known as Miθra – a deity whose name first appeared on the royal inscriptions of Artaxerxes II, the Achaemenid king. The Greek historiography and related literature also reveal more than a passing acquaintance with the god and his theonym in the Hellenistic era. Accordingly, some scholars suggest that the widespread use of the theonym Miθra indicates an established cult dedicated to the yazata outside of the Zoroastrian pantheon under the Achaemenids. Others condemn this view, arguing it demonstrates little certainty of an independent Iranian cult inside and outside the deity’s homeland.

This paper is an endeavor to examine the appropriation of the theophoric name Mithridates as an ongoing political strategy and a mode of Persianism in the Iranian cultural diaspora during the Hellenistic epoch. It proposes that the use of the anthroponym Mithridates was a deliberate political choice made by the Pontic kings to stress their self-identification as well as their perceived lineage back to the Achaemenids, which later imprinted the religiopolitical strategies of neighboring kingdoms such as Commagene.

Nina Mazhjo is a research associate in the NAWA project at Wrocław University and an affiliate assistant professor at Concordia University. She completed her Ph.D. in the History of Religion from Concordia University in 2019, researching the cultural transmission of Mithras from Iran to the Hellenistic and Roman world. Nina’s research interests include foreign cults of the Roman Empire (especially Mithraism), imperialism, and identity in the ancient world. She is currently working on her first monograph entitled “*The Occidental Gaze of Roman Mithras*,” which will be out in the Ancient Iran Series, a pre-reviewed book series published by Brill.