

RAI 69

Abstracts



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All sessions in P I will be streamed

Link to livestream:

<https://video.helsinki.fi/unitube/live-stream.html?room=l46>

Keynote Lectures

Claudia Glatz

Social Materials and Archaeological Politics: Towards New Narratives

Time: Monday 10:15–11:00

Venue: Porthania P I

Faced with an uncertain climatic future, and grappling with questions about what forms and scales of socio-political organisation might allow humanity to face the challenges that lie ahead, past people and how they coalesced and conducted their politics have come back into disciplinary, and to an extent also public, focus. But aside from rejecting traditional cultural evolutionary frameworks to conceptualise and study how communities come together, resolve the challenges of co-existence, collaboration, and conflict, where are we really at with this? In this lecture I will take stock of the archaeological study of people, politics, and polities in Southwest Asia and elsewhere, asking what the challenges are that we are facing, and sketching out our blind spots. Drawing on case studies from Southwest Asia, I will endeavour to define where a cutting edge might lie, and explore what bottom-up, practice-centred archaeological narratives may contribute towards re-imagining socio-political pasts, and perhaps also futures.

Seth Richardson

“One City Does Not Greet Another”: Constructed Persons, Incomplete States, and the Motor of the Politics

Time: Monday 11:30–12:15

Venue: Porthania P I

Concepts of identity have proven elusive in reconstructing the relations of individuals to collectives in Mesopotamian culture. Whether one wants to define what it means to be a state subject, a social being, or a member of a class or community of religious belief, the conditions of belonging known to us are necessary but not sufficient. That is, we can see many of the descriptive circumstances of membership in our evidence, but little gives us a sense of exclusive, definitional criteria. I will set aside the search for expansive and categorical social identities in favor of exploring how state projects of personhood came to fashion specific boundaries on aspects of individual identity. These rule-making systems—about what made people count and how—were intended to structure normative expectations about responsibilities, behavior, and belonging. The emphasis was not on the “rules” part, but the “system” part: we are not looking at individuals in state societies, but the discursive premises of individual-making. The modesty of the boundaries set by these state projects (and their policing) tells us how much these efforts relied on suggestion rather than imposed conformity. The goals of group-making in this world of incomplete states were

much more modest than the ones we are used to in modernity, and the adoption of the proffered social and political identities by individuals was correspondingly limited. Despite the abstractions of the foregoing description (generically abstract!), this talk will be grounded in specific examples of the ways in which collectives imagined the individual (rather than the other way around), how these notions perennially fell short, and the continuing triumphs of hope over experience that made these dialectics the political motor of the polities.

Kristin Kleber

Identity Politics in the First Millennium BC

Time: Monday 12:15–13:00

Venue: Porthania P I

When I somewhat provocatively called the title of this lecture "Identity Politics in the First Millennium BC", I was not aiming at the modern phenomenon of the political struggle for recognition of various groups. Although Bernd Stegemann, in his essay (Identitätspolitik. Berlin 2023, p. 12) described "identity politics" as the "oldest form of politics, as it binds the individual interest to a group identity", we can find examples of the negative effects, for example in the form of war propaganda, especially in nation states. Nation states did not exist in antiquity, but we can recognise attitudes and policies towards ethnic groups in ancient Near Eastern history. In my lecture I will give an overview of the representation of identity concepts and the handling of ethnicity in the three empires of the early and middle first millennium, starting with the Neo-Assyrian, through the Neo-Babylonian to the first Persian empire. The Cyrus Cylinder has been falsely described in many popular accounts as the first "charter of human rights" or as an "edict of tolerance". For a long time, the Achaemenids were considered more tolerant than their predecessors in the Near East, as they seemingly celebrated the multinational character of their empire in their inscriptions.

Workshops

Ancient Identities under Empire

Time: Monday July 8 – Tuesday July 9

Venue: Porthania PIII

Organiser

Joanna Töyräänvuori

Speakers

Joanna Töyräänvuori, Lynn-Salammbô Zimmerman, Sara Manasterska, Sara Kipfer, Nathan Steinmeyer, Cloe Curcio, Erin Darby, Marco Ramazzotti, Costanza Coppini, Judith Thomalsky, Kepa Martinez Garcia, Sören Krömer, Mohammad Raza Haider

Abstract

Questions of social identity and identity formation have sparked intense scholarly interest in the study of the ancient world in recent years. Research has especially focused on the topics of gender and ethnic identity. With the ever-increasing source material and recent advances in the methodological tools used by Near Eastern historians, the study of ancient identities is at an apt moment for examining the clarity and coherence of concepts, terms, and approaches. Given the complexity of the issues, this task requires a theory-driven and interdisciplinary conversation. The organizers invite papers reflecting on particular aspects of social identity in the ancient world (Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Anatolia, the Levant, ancient Israel, and others) that take into account their specificities, ambiguities, and inter-relations. We especially encourage papers exploring identity based on habitus-formation, local and regional identities, gender, and the stratification of ancient societies, i.e., questions of class and socio-economic status, and/or how such specific aspects of identity relate to other elements of identity, e.g.,:

- **Habitus Formation.** Even without an explicit concept of identity, patterns of association and belonging are played out in the daily lives of individuals. These patterns in turn shape the available options for others in the society. How can archaeology or texts allow us to reconstruct ways in which empires perpetuated or altered the habitus in their empires, and what effects for group associations can we see?
- **Local and Regional Identities.** People both interacted on a very local scale while some traveled remarkable distances. How do patterns of mobility, settlement, trade, or landscape shape the ways groups and group-identity formed or altered?

- Gender. A key element of lived experience was of course gender, but the ways in which it shaped group identity formations remain opaque. Family, tribe, and patronage relations could depend on gender roles, in turn determining social group membership.
- Social Stratification. It is certain the ancient world was structured via social dependencies, but at what level were identities shaped by these chains? If we cannot find class consciousness, can we define patterns of belonging based on socio-economic status?

We particularly seek contributions that illuminate the shifting of these types of social identities under 1st millennium BCE ancient empires.

The Ancient Western Asian Image: a Weapon and Victim

Time: Monday July 8

Venue: Porthania PIV, Suomen Laki -sali

Organisers

Imane Achouche, Eleanor Bennett & Samuel Reinikainen

Speakers

Laith M. Hussein, Samuel Reinikainen, Adrienn Orosz, Imane Achouche, Julian Chike, Natalie M. May

Abstract

The powers imbued in ancient Western Asian imagery inversely meant that iconoclasm was a real threat. Just as the creation of images was a powerful act, so was their careful manipulation and destruction by contemporary and later peoples. When faced with a damaged artefact, there are a number of questions to ask: whether the damage was accidental or intentional, how it was caused, who caused it, and what motivated it (*damnatio memoriae*, deactivation, looting, etc.). However, the answers require a substantial and multidisciplinary approach, which is sometimes overlooked in current discussions of iconoclasm. The rationalisation behind iconoclasm as a hypothesis has sometimes been made by default. Sometimes this is due to a lack of access to key data, or because there was no precise protocol for analysing the traces, or simply because iconoclastic practice has an alluring quality as a conclusion.

This workshop will provide a valuable interdisciplinary space for discussion regarding iconoclasm. Assyriologists, archaeologists, museum curators, and art historians all have their own ways of interpreting acts of iconoclasm, according to the specificities of their disciplines. By providing a space for these researchers to discuss methodological issues, we will be able to propose ways research into iconoclasm can go beyond its current limitations.

We particularly welcome papers tackling the following questions:

- The motivations and objectives of those performing iconoclasm.
- The overall context of iconoclastic acts – where they tied to particular conflicts, or were the objects considered representative of specific cultural phenomena?
- The implementation of iconoclasm and practicalities of the action.

- Relation of iconoclasm to other practices, such as deportation or burial.
- Constraints of current methods and suggestions of how to go beyond them.

In addition to the wide methodological scope, we also recognise that objects manipulated by iconoclastic acts can have very long object biographies that can span millennia (as has been seen by the destruction carried out by terrorist groups in recent years). To that end, we do not limit the workshop to discussions only of ancient acts of iconoclasm. We welcome papers regarding any iconoclasm on ancient Western Asian objects, from the ancient world through the medieval period and up to the modern era.

The workshop will result in a valuable conference proceedings volume that will be a reference point for methodological discussions of how to interrogate ancient acts of iconoclasm.

Intertextuality in Cuneiform Literature and Beyond

Time: Monday July 8—Tuesday July 9

Venue: Porthania P 673

Organisers

Nikita Artemov, Johannes Bach & Selena Wisnom

Speakers

Selena Wisnom, Johannes Bach, Yu Song, Sophus Helle, Marc Flores, Bernardo Ballesteros, Anthony SooHoo, Jonathan Stökl, Nikita Artemov, Luke Mcdermott, Martin Lang, Gustavo Fernandes Pedroso, Giorgio Paolo Campi, Yael Leokumovich

Abstract

Encouraged by the contributions and discussions during the session on intertextuality at the RAI 68 in Leiden which showed a growing interest in the subject, especially among young scholars, another workshop on the same topic is planned for the RAI 69 in Helsinki (8-12 July 2024).

Intertextuality provides a meaningful tool for understanding cuneiform literary traditions, as it is directly related to questions of poetics, text transmission, scribal education, cultural identity, literary history, trans-generic influences, and cross-cultural interactions. Our long-term objective is to promote appreciation of literary studies and literary theory within Assyriology by establishing intertextuality studies as a distinct yet integratory field of research. As such, we aim both at enhancing communication processes amongst scholars of cuneiform literature, and at long-term establishments of inter- and transdisciplinary engagements with other fields of Ancient literary cultures including Anatolia, the Levante, Egypt, (Pre-)Classical Greece, and further. The considerable uptick of studies devoted to intertextuality and literature in recent years shows a demand for concerted efforts to study poetics in Assyriology, and this workshop will contribute to that endeavour.

Intertextual research includes a considerable comparative component. By thoroughly researching and discussing the literature of the cuneiform world, we not only aim at opening up the sometimes quite hermetic corpus of Sumerian and Akkadian literature to colleagues not directly working with literary texts and students but also at preparing gateways into the literary world of Ancient Mesopotamian for disciples of other fields of literary studies. One of the main goals of this workshop is to advance our understanding of ancient Mesopotamian poetics in their diachronic context. In a world where no Aristotle existed to write

down a treatise on the laws of poetry, an intertextual-structural approach to poetics and literary history is the tool of choice. Furthermore, intertextuality provides a proper deep-reading strategy that has great potential to advance our knowledge of the texts' meanings, and thus generate a better understanding of the literary world of Mesopotamia.

Aiming to trace intertextual poetics both across the times and cultures of the Ancient Near East, in this year's workshop contributions will range from the 3rd to the late 1st millennium, and discuss predominantly Sumerian and Akkadian Literature, including some forays into the field of intermedial studies as well. These talks will provide ample opportunity to discuss the poetics of writing cultures that had left no meta-accounts on their literary customs and traditions, and thus contribute to our enhanced understanding of Mesopotamian poetry and literary artisanry.

Early Emesal Texts

Time: Monday July 8

Venue: Porthania P674

Organisers

Sebastian Fink, Aleksi Sahala & Krister Lindén

Speakers

Martin Lang, Victoria Birkner, Sebastian Fink, Aleksi Sahala, Noah Kröll

Abstract

One of the great remaining mysteries in the study of the Sumerian language is the nature and origin of its only known variety, Emesal, which made a somewhat counterintuitive appearance in ancient Mesopotamian texts only after the extinction of Sumerian as a vernacular around 2000 BCE. Although it is well known that Emesal words mostly occur in liturgical texts and the context of “love and death”, it is not yet fully understood how Emesal was transmitted and recorded and how the tradition of writing Emesal was established in the early second millennium.

In this workshop, the focus is set on the earliest known Emesal texts, like city laments, lamentations, and myths from the early second millennium. We also welcome contributions on third-millennium texts that were sometimes considered candidates for early attestations of Emesal, like the Curse of Agade, or an investigation of syllabic writings that could potentially bear evidence of Emesal.

The goal of the workshop is to improve our understanding of the origins of Emesal compositions, the language variant itself, and how and why the scribes began to use Emesal in texts. To reach this aim we suggest focusing on one specific early Emesal-composition, to analyze the Emesal-vocabulary, the frequency of Emesal-words, different writings of Emesal words, the context of the Emesal passages and Emesal-Emegir variants in different manuscripts. We encourage the participants to check the dating and localization of important manuscripts to improve our understanding of the development of early Emesal writing.

The Circulation and Adaption of Knowledge in the Ancient Near East

Time: Tuesday July 9 – Wednesday July 10

Venue: Porthania PIII

Organisers

Shana Zaia & Shiyanthi Thavapalan

Speakers

Robert Middeke-Conlin, Shiyanthi Thavapalan, Joshua Britton, Charlotte Fernandes, Ludovica Bertolini, Samantha Rainford, Mathieu Ossendrijver & Caroline Waerzeggers, Alessia Pilloni, Mary Frazer, Netanel Anor, Parsa Daneshmand, Catherine Mittermayer

Abstract

The purpose of this workshop is to explore how knowledge was circulated, adapted, and adopted in the ancient Near East. We are interested in all forms of technologies, skills, and ideas and in both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. Our aim is to better elucidate the media and means by which knowledge was transmitted and received intra- or inter-generationally, how it was shaped by social and political factors, and to what extent it was propelled by top-down versus bottom-up initiatives. Possible topics include whether and how innovations were “anchored” to existing traditions, the role of competition in technological development, and how and why some knowledge was discontinued, resisted, or revived.

Land Management Practices: Migration and Empire

Time: Tuesday July 9

Venue: Porthania P674,

Livestream: <https://video.helsinki.fi/unitube/live-stream.html?room=l23>

Organiser

Adrianne Spunaugle

Speakers

Adrianne Spunaugle, Carolina López-Ruiz, Doğa Karakaya & Laurel Poolman, Georg Cyrus, Elyn Gorris

Abstract

This workshop seeks to reframe how we perceive migrant and mobile elements of society to emphasize their deep connection to more sedentary populations. In premodern societies, multiple land use practices were employed based on regional and local landscape. For the ancient regions of the Eastern Mediterranean and Southwest Asia especially, various migration practices were enmeshed with sedentarism. Agropastoralism, transhumance, and nomadic populations maintained long-established traditions of operating outside the governance of city-based administrations without cutting ties entirely. Both the city and the migrant relied upon the other through contractual obligations, kinship ties, etc. Additionally, administrations routinely employed settler colonialism, colonization, and deportation schemes to manage the lands under their patronage. Our continued focus on the settled and settlements to the exclusion of migration practices only provides a limited view of the lived experience and lifeways of the ancient peoples.

Although scholarship on nonsedentary elements is easily found for prehistoric through the Early Bronze Age, it is difficult to find for the age of empires during the first millennium BCE. Early anthropological theories about the evolutionary development of civilization and complex societies (e.g., Childe, etc.) still undergird scholars' presentations of the ancient Near East on a broad level. When addressed at all, migration practices are treated as marginal lifeways rather than the long established and regularly utilized land management techniques they were.

To challenge this state of research, this workshop seeks to examine four main migration practices through various case studies from Eastern Mediterranean, Egyptian, and

Southwest Asian regions from roughly 1200 – 0 BCE—from the early Iron Age through the early Roman Empire. The four main migration practices to be addressed include: short-range (agropastoralism, transhumance, labor, trade, etc), long-range (pastoral nomadism, labor, trade, etc.), (settler) colonialism/colonization, and imperially coerced migration. However, if we should have proposals regarding other related forms of migration these will also be incorporated.

Another Look at Motherhood in Ancient Western Asia

Time: Tuesday July 9 – Wednesday July 10

Venue: Porthania P673

Organisers

Laura Battini & Sonia Mzali

Speakers

Sonia Mzali, Barbara Boeck, Agnes Garcia-Ventura & Mireia López-Bertran, Annunziata Rositani & Lorenzo Verderame, Laura Battini, Felix Rauchhaus, Katrien De Graef, Ariadne Tsoulouhas, Haikang Liu

Abstract

Despite decades of gender studies, motherhood remains a marginal subject, even in feminist studies. Little is said about women as mothers, their role, their status and their work, and even less about the psychological and emotional aspects and the gaps between the normative representation and the actual practice of motherhood, the difference between biological mothers and feelings of attachment to nannies and other mother figures.

This workshop aims to analyse motherhood in Ancient Western Asia from different perspectives in order to rethink relationship with maternity and break free from a stereotypical view of motherhood. Motherhood was a compulsory state for almost every woman in the ancient world, which is also the most feared, death during or after childbirth being the greatest cause of female mortality. We would like to explore a broad definition of Motherhood: as a biological state, but also a psychological, symbolic, social, or legal issue, as a source of vulnerability and/or empowerment. The subject could be approached from the divine, mythological, historical, human and non-human spheres, or at the intersections between these realities.

Helsinki research from “State Archives of Assyria” to “Ancient Near Eastern Empires”

Time: Wednesday July 10

Venue: Porthania P674

Organiser

Saana Svärd

Speakers

Raija Mattila, Sebastian Fink, Saana Svärd, Joanna Töyräänvuori

Abstract

This closed workshop will discuss Assyriological research carried out at the University of Helsinki in past decades. The focus will be on two major initiatives in Helsinki, the “State Archives of Assyria” and “Ancient Near Eastern Empires.”

Known to many as “State Archives of Assyria”-project, the project is more correctly titled “The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.” It started in 1986 and one of its major contributions to the field is the State Archives of Assyria publication series. However, the project has two other publication series (State archives of Assyria Studies, State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts) and it has influenced the field of Assyriology in many other ways as well. In this workshop, we discuss the impact and legacy of the project.

The aims of the Centre of Excellence in Ancient Near Eastern Empires (funded by the Academy of Finland 2018-2025) relate to its main research question: How do changing imperial dynamics impact social group identities and lifeways over a long period of time? The chronological focus starts from Neo-Assyrian period continuing up to the start of the Common Era. Interdisciplinary and collaborative work among its circa 40 researchers as well and developing new methodologies are important for ANEE. This workshop will outline how ANEE relates to the Assyriological tradition in Helsinki and outlines in broad terms some of its potential impact. The workshop will conclude with a round table discussion on the general topic of Assyriology and interdisciplinarity – how, why, where and when?

Current Research in Third Millennium Studies

Time: Thursday July 11 – Friday July 12

Venue: Porthania PIII

Organisers

Armando Bramanti, Angela Greco & Géraldine Mastelli

Speakers

Armando Bramanti, Angela Greco & Géraldine Mastelli, JoAnn Scurlock, Sebastian Borkowski, Gabriella Spada & Lorenzo Verderame, Leonid Kogan, Szilvia Sövegjarto, Klaus Wagensonner, Licia Romano & Giulia Festa, Sophia Witzig, Andrea Rebecca Marrocchi Savoi, Jacob Dahl, Andrew Pottorf, Changyu Liu, Paola Paoletti, Xiaoli Ouyang, Seraina Nett, Massimo Maiocchi & Sasha Volpi, Nicholas Gill, Ekaterina Markina

Abstract

The Third Millennium is arguably the most formative period in Mesopotamian History. Its historical and cultural processes lay the groundwork for the development of later Ancient Near Eastern civilizations. While Third Millennium text corpora may be broad and diverse, they often present similar problems that call for shared solutions. Unfortunately, the complex and fragmentary nature of the documentation is also known to attract less attention compared to later periods, leaving space for a new impulse in the field.

On these grounds, this workshop aims to keep alive the tradition of Third Millennium studies by bringing together a number of scholars currently working on several aspects of the earliest Mesopotamian documentation – i.e. those texts dating to the Archaic, Early Dynastic (I-II, IIIa, IIIb), Sargonic, Gutian, and Neosumerian periods. The geographical scope of the contributions includes both southern and northern Mesopotamia, expanding the definition of Third Millennium Mesopotamia to encompass Ebla and its royal archives.

This workshop will ideally cover as many topics as possible in the realm of philology and history, including, among others, administration, historical geography, grammar, linguistics, lexical and literary texts, and socio-politics. New and old texts and materials will be presented combining the most traditional approaches with state-of-the-art methods in digital humanities, toward a better understanding of the earliest phases of the Mesopotamian world.

King- and Queenship in the Ancient Near East:

Maintaining Relations with the Power Base

Time: Thursday July 11 – Friday July 12

Venue: Porthania PIV, Suomen Laki -sali

Organisers

Melanie Wasmuth, Jessica Nitschke & Emanuel Pfoh

Speakers

Emanuel Pfoh, Alejandro Mizzoni, Melanie Wasmuth & Jessica Nitschke, Nurgül Çelebi, Karina Atudosie, Anne Goddeeris, Zachary Rubin & Amy Gansell, Sara Hajinezhad, Matheus Treuk Medeiros de Araujo, Nenad Markovic & Jessica Nitschke, Elisabeth Monamy, Bruno Barros, Ana Belen Rumi Gutierrez, Lena Tambs, Anne Katrine Gudme

Abstract

A key element for the success of political entities are the means and strategies employed by the leaders to maintain good relations with ‘the elites.’ These include local, regional, and imperial elites, members of the royal family, the non-royal court, the military, the clergy, and the administration, official and unofficial contacts to the king, queen and other members of the royal family, men, women, and persons of non-binary gender. Equally, the mechanisms employed for keeping the persons and institutions in power are diverse, depending on the general and specific socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political context.

The workshop focuses on the empires that ruled vast areas of ancient West Asia and Egypt in the 1st millennium BCE. Comparative papers from other time periods and areas are also welcome, if the transfer potential is made obvious.

Key questions to be explored are: 1) Who are the key persons and groups that maintained king-/queenship – locally, regionally, and on an imperial level? Especially: Is their power institutionalized or based on an ‘invisible hierarchy’; how did they gain, maintain, and lose their position of power; who was instrumental in setting up and maintaining the mechanism of interaction and support, and who benefited how? 2) Which strategies and mechanisms were employed by the royals and the ‘elites’? Especially: How generic or specific were the royal and group strategies; how was this interaction regulated and exploited? 3) Can one see distinct qualitative differences in the workings of more local vs. imperial entities and what is at the roots of these differences? 4) How can we elicit this information from the available sources?

Based on the preliminary call for papers, we will have at least a methodologically (SNA,

patronage), a geographically (Mesopotamia, Levant, Egypt), a typologically/topically (means of interaction), and an iconographically/representationally focused section.

The workshop draws on papers that take a case-study based comparative approach: e.g., on the power base and the means of interacting with them for the king vs the queen, between different towns, between different kinds of power bases, or between different empires.

Hylistic Mythological Research

Time: Thursday July 11

Venue: Porthania P673

Organisers

Annette Zgoll & Gösta Gabriel

Speakers

Annette Zgoll, Christian Zgoll, Raleigh Heth, Felix Müller, Josephine Fechner, Abraham Winitzer, Beatrice Baragli, Brit Kärger, Gösta Gabriel

Abstract

The workshop will deal with a central methodological problem in the study of mythology, i.e., how narrative material (Erzählstoff), the myths, can be extracted from different sources, and of how such material may be analyzed. As an answer to this problem the workshop will focus on a new method developed in the study of mythology: Hylistics.

The employment of hylistic analysis enables the extraction and reconstruction of narrative materials, including myths, that are otherwise hidden in their medial concretization (e.g. texts, pictures etc.). Furthermore, this approach allows for a systematic comparison of narrative materials regardless of their medium, language, time, place, or even culture. Hylistics has therefore been demonstrated to be an important prerequisite for reconstructing narrative materials in general and especially for understanding the meaning and historical development of ancient myths.

The workshop will present case studies that feature the full range of developed Hylistics analytical tools along with the analyses of concrete texts. The presentation of these studies will present new insights into well-known texts and the myths they contain as well as material that has not been in the core of mythological research until now (e.g., ritual texts).

The workshop is a joint venture between the mythological research group STRATA, University of Göttingen (<https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/556429.html>), and the Independent Junior Research Group Mythical Literary Works as Epistemic Artefacts, Freie Universität Berlin (https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/altorient/forschungsprojekte/forschung/03_Mythische-Literaturwerke-als-wissenspraktische-Artefakte/index.html).

Narrative and Storytelling as a Communication Strategy in Cuneiform Scholarship

Time: Thursday July 11

Venue: Porthania P674

Organiser

Adam Howe

Speakers

Adam Howe, Marie Barkowsky, Beatrice Baragli, Kacie Klamm, Lucrezia Menicatti, Fabienne Huber Vuillet, Gina Konstantopoulos, Troels Pank Arbøll

Abstract

Scholarly or technical texts from the ancient Near East—including incantations, ritual instructions, medical texts, and omen literature—have generally been regarded as purely functional texts, the opposite in both form and function to 'narrative literature' in the narrowest sense. In recent years, however, the literary value of scholarly texts, especially incantations, has increasingly been recognized. Recent workshops and publications have examined incantations and technical texts, such as omen texts and lexical lists, from a literary perspective, with a focus on style, form, and rhetorical effects.

Language and style are one important aspect that differentiates literature from more mundane textual production, but this workshop will focus on another: narrative or, in simpler terms, the telling of a story. The role of narrative has received attention in the context of narrative literature, but the importance of narrative in more technical texts is usually overlooked, even though the power of storytelling is important for conveying information regardless of text type.

Studies have confirmed the effectiveness of narrative communication in the presentation of science, especially to non-specialist audiences. This can be useful even within a community of specialists: we often employ narrative techniques along with literary effects in our scientific writing and pedagogical practice, in order to facilitate communication and engagement with our audience, and there is no reason to think that this wouldn't also have been the case in the ancient world.

Narrative techniques can be used to convey information to an audience, especially when we want to have a particular effect (persuasion, change of perception, etc.), or to transmit knowledge in a more memorable form. This workshop invites participants to identify and analyse examples of the use of narrative in scholarly texts, including for example:

- How rituals generate stories to have an effect on real-world outcomes

- How medical texts use narrative to explain anatomical processes and convey specialist information to the patient
- How omen texts create both macro- and micro-narratives about the relationship between signs and predictions
- How narrative can be used to persuade audiences of certain viewpoints when there are competing possibilities for the interpretation of knowledge.

Contributions might also engage with what this approach can tell us about the production and use of these texts. Also welcome are contributions examining the ways in which narrative literature can incorporate aspects of technical knowledge, when the transmission of this knowledge is not the primary aim of the composition.

Between Anarchy and Hierarchy: Creating Epistemic Order in the Ancient Near East

Time: Friday July 12

Venue: Porthania PII

Organisers

Paul Delnero, Grégoire Nicolet & Christian W. Hess

Speakers

Camille Lecompte, Matthias Adelhofer, Marta Díaz Herrera, Paul Delnero, Grégoire Nicolet, Susanne Paulus, Anne-Caroline Rendu Loisel, Kaira Boddy, Céline Debourse, Frauke Weiershäuser, Christian Hess, Marie Young

Abstract

One of the most notable features of the Ancient Near Eastern sciences is the syntagmatic grouping of signs into ordered systems. While this is traditionally linked to lists and omens, the paradigm also extends to other text types, as well as the broader question of how epistemic orders are created, preserved, and abandoned. It is also generally accepted that these orders are culturally embedded and that they mirror, reinforce, or even generate any number of hierarchies drawn from all aspects of life. Most overviews point to some basic motivating principles, including paradigmatic, homonymic, or binary associations. Though ordering is thus at the heart of the Ancient Near Eastern sciences, it has remained notably difficult to trace the underlying principles beyond individual lines or segments. More recent work has also called into question the basic assumption of an inherent hierarchical ranking present in horizontal or vertical orders, while pointing to heterarchic arrangements in which multiple principles intersect and serve as affordances to the re-incorporation of material in different contexts. The proposed workshop is thus meant to address one of the key themes of the Helsinki RAI through a diachronic and comparative examination of the relationship between epistemic organization and its social setting. The sessions explicitly welcome papers on various texts and corpora which incorporate diverse approaches, including investigations of material features of form and format.

Textiles in Cuneiform Texts: Recording, Terminology and Techniques

Time: Friday July 12

Venue: Porthania P673

Organisers

Louise Quillien & Cécile Michel

Speakers

Louise Quillien, Philippe Abrahams & Brigitte Lion, Jonathan Tenney, Vèrène Chalendar, Cécile Michel; Nicole Brisch; Philippe Abrahams & Louise Quillien, Laura Mazow

Abstract

Textile craftsmanship is as old as the art of basketry, and textiles are essential objects in everyday life which is why they are present in all types of cuneiform texts. Over the last decades, a number of international research projects have been developed around ancient textiles, bringing together specialists from different disciplines. This workshop is organised within the frame of the international research program EuroWeb: Europe through textiles. Network for an integrated and interdisciplinary Humanities. This program aims to investigate the cultural and socio-economic impact of textile production, its role in craft organisation, in trade and communication, and in the construction of individual and collective identities. The project is focused on Europe, however it also includes neighbouring areas. In the context of this project, the workshop intends to re-examine what the cuneiform texts can contribute to this field of research, by focusing on the specific nature of the sources available, on the terminology used by the scribes and on what these texts tell us about textile techniques and their development.

Textiles are mentioned in a number of texts, in particular the long lists and inventories including a wide variety of textiles and reflecting the way in which scribes used writing to manage these crafts. In these documents, how textiles were classified? Was it according to their value, their recipients, their uses, or other criteria? What was the purpose of these inventories and economic records?

These records are using a wide range of terms for textiles. Textile terminology has been the subject of two published international conferences (Michel and Nosch 2010; Gaspa et al. 2017), however many words are still to be understood. These may be linked to the fibres used, to the shape and usage of textiles, to their geographical origin, etc. The aim is to explore ways of better understanding this technical vocabulary.

Besides recording the different types of textiles, the cuneiform texts focus on the materials used, the organisation of the work in the textile manufactures, and the workers. However, we often lack precise descriptions of the techniques used in the production of textiles, from spinning to weaving and from dyeing to finishing. What do the texts tell us about the techniques involved in textile production? Can we discern any changes in textile techniques over the three millennia documented by the cuneiform texts? These are some of the many questions that this workshop aims to answer.

People and Seals in the Ancient Near East

Time: Friday July 12

Venue: Porthania P674

Organisers

Maria Elena Balza & Paola Poli

Speakers

Maria Elena Balza & Paola Poli, Camille Koerin, Clélia Paladre, Albert Dietz, Candida Felli, Zoltán Niederreiter, Maria Elena Balza, Benedetta Bellucci, Clelia Mora, Paola Poli, Rita Suliman, Irene Viaggiu

Abstract

The important role of seals and their impressions on the study of ancient Near Eastern documentation emerged fully in the late 1970s. From then on, it was no longer possible to deal with seals as objects separate from their impressions on tablets and other carriers. Rather, they obtained the role of tools and symbols of ancient Near Eastern societies in many respects: legal, cultural, social, and historical. Additionally, the seals and their impressions became subjects of study of primary importance, not only for the reconstruction of ancient Near Eastern societies and cultures, but also for the understanding of their ways of thought and their conceptual universe.

This notwithstanding, the function, use, and nature of seals still deserve further examination. Both seals and sealings represent, in fact, highly charged categories within Ancient Near Eastern material culture, whose analysis requires a multi-layered approach. Several aspects of seals – understood as artefacts closely connected with the society that produced them – have not yet been fully investigated. On the one hand, there are the variability of forms (cylinders, rings, stamps), traditions, and ways of organising image and text on the seal's surface, which undoubtedly respond to choices, conscious or otherwise, of their owners or patrons. And, on the other, there are iconographic themes and scenes on seals, which are valuable evidence for exploring different aspects of the society to which they belong and/or the profile of the seal owner, such as her/his social class, profession, religious belief, and taste.

Based on these considerations, this workshop aims to discuss the new stimuli that have emerged in recent years in the field of sphragistics. Papers may cover, though not exclusively, one or more of the following topics:

- seals as objects of the material world, deeply linked to their owner, their taste, their milieu, and/or their system of thought.
- seals and amulets, and seals as amulets.

- seals as instruments to identify people (of personal recognition).
- relationships between seals' function (e.g., personal seals, official seals, royal or dynastic seals) and seals' design and iconography.
- relationships between seals' iconography (themes, symbolism, and 'layout') and seals' owners (status, profession, beliefs, etc.).
- relationships between seals' iconography and seals' inscription.
- relationships between the gender and/or the provenance of the seal owner and the iconography of the seal, etc.

Papers

Abrahami, Philippe

Lion, Brigitte

Textile inventories in the Nuzi Palace textual documentation

Time: Friday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

The tablets discovered at Nuzi (14th century BC) shows that textiles were ubiquitous and that their production must have been one of the keystones of the economy of the Kingdom of Arraphe. Among the 630 tablets found in the palace, several deal with lists of fabrics and garments which miss any operational clauses corresponding to the handling of flow management. They are not intended, for instance, to record any transfer from or to the palace, neither in the context of distribution to individuals or groups, nor as deliveries of finished products. The administrative purpose of these documents is mainly to give a stock situation, an operation led by agents we know from other texts, who take responsibility for it and as such seal the document. At first glance, these inventories look similar, but there are differences in the way they are arranged thus allowing to establish a typology. Some relates only to textiles and clothing, sometimes in very large numbers, and give a highly developed nomenclature which is occasionally based on Hurrian words, a common practice which originates in the Nuzi cultural setting. Other lists mention fabrics in long sequences that also include items of wooden furniture and metal objects. And still other inventories show them only in association with furniture: in this case, they are blankets and cushions, which again can be very numerous. The present paper offers an overview of this very rich documentation. It aims to understand the way these inventories are organized and how their different elements form a structured whole. It also addresses some prosopographical issues regarding the staff in charge of establishing the stock.

Achouche, Imane

Death In Context. Recontextualizing Mesopotamian Statues

Time: Monday 16:30–17:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

The "death" of statues, the theme of this paper, must be studied while replacing the artefacts in a given time and place. In fact, when we think of the various ways in which "life" can be taken from a sculpture, we spontaneously think of iconoclasm. However, the variety of treatments that statues can undergo at the end of their "existence" is vast, and to understand the acts in question, it is essential to recontextualize the statue and the process that led to its discovery by archaeologists. Thanks to a combination of textual, archaeological, and iconographic sources, it seems possible to reconstruct the environment in which the rondes-bosses under study passed through all the stages of their "existence." However, as we seek to avoid the biases associated with the millennia separating us from our object of study, new problems arise: excessive comparisons with other contemporary societies, ethnological shortcuts, illustration of one type of source by another, and so on. Through a corpus of varied sources informing us about the acts associated with the "death" of Mesopotamian statues from the 3rd to the 1st millennia BC, it is possible to confront all these issues. Without seeking to propose definitive solutions to them, their theorization through a state-of-the-art approach will aim to propose a methodological discussion.

Adelhofer, Matthias

Old Assyrian "word dividers" punctuating meaning

Time: Friday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P II

The Old Assyrian word divider, or perhaps better punctuation mark, is a short vertical wedge. Its purpose in a text is, however, much more than simply the equivalent of modern whitespaces. This paper aims to elucidate the use of the punctuation mark, overcoming the frequent provisional observation that it is used 'inconsistently'. Beyond its obvious function as a graphical reading aid, the punctuation mark can delimit units of meaning, formal parts of text, or important sections providing additional ways of comprehending a text in its parts and sum. There appear to be two main modes of using the punctuation mark with more or less consistency throughout one text. These are in large parts determined by social but also pragmatic considerations.

Al-Mutawalli, Nawala

The City-centre of Umma in the Ur III and Early Old Babylonian Periods

Time: Wednesday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P I

The Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage excavated at the ancient city of Umma, modern Jokha, from 1999 to 2002. Their work concentrated on the centre of the city. The archaeological expedition discovered the temple of the city-god Shara, a building erected by King Šu-Suen of the Third Dynasty of Ur and still in use in the Early Old Babylonian period. This is evidenced by an assemblage of administrative bullae found in a room of the temple and dating to the early years of Sumuel of Umma. Adjacent to the temple of Shara lies the area designated as Main Tell. Although looters heavily devastated this area, it was possible to detect the remains of some buildings dating from the Ur III to the Old Babylonian periods. With the ongoing study of the cuneiform artefacts, bullae and tablets, found in the area of the Main Tell, a new evaluation of these buildings becomes possible. This paper intends to give a preliminary overview of the main features of Umma's city centre from the period of the Third Dynasty of Ur, the Early Old Babylonian period, mainly the years of Sumuel of Larsa, and some remains from the Middle Old Babylonian period. With the slowly emerging evidence, Umma becomes one of the most fascinating places in Mesopotamia to study a city in different political environments. Two poles of the city are known, namely both the temple and administrative centre. Furthermore, the city reflects two different periods, first as the capital of a province in the Ur III state and only 120 years later, the centre of a smaller polity depending partly on Larsa (this period will be discussed in the following paper by Walther Sallaberger).

Alstola, Tero

Open Data in Assyriology: Challenges and Solutions

Time: Wednesday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

The availability of data is fundamental to all research. This does not only apply to the research process itself, but the academic community should also be able to access the data used in published research. Without being able to read the sources, an Assyriologist cannot judge the statements made by her colleagues. The use of statistical and computational methods to study ancient sources sets further requirements for the openness of Assyriological datasets. To ensure the reproducibility of quantitative research, it is essential that datasets and the algorithms used to analyze them are made openly available. Unfortunately, publishing datasets is not recognized as a great merit in the CV of an Assyriologist, and there is still some reluctance to make datasets available after the research process is finished and its results are published in books and articles. In this paper, I will discuss some of the key questions and challenges related to open data in Assyriology and outline the open data practices of the Centre of Excellence in Ancient Near Eastern Empires. In our research group, we have used three different strategies to ensure the open availability of our research data. First, we have created searchable and explorable datasets in online services, such as the Korp concordance search tool and the ANEE Lexical Networks portal. Second, the research data used in our articles has been made permanently available in the Zenodo repository. Third, we have used research data journals as a medium to publish our datasets as peer-reviewed articles.

Anderson, Talah

Sacred Trees, Sacred Roots: King- and Queenship in the Northwest Palace, Nimrud

Time: Thursday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P I

Where are all the queens in the Assyrian reliefs? Or, rather, how is the ideological relationship between king- and queenship expressed in Assyrian imperial spaces, and to what affect? This paper attempts to answer this latter question through a case study of the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BC) at Nimrud (ancient Kalhu) in northern Iraq, which was built to be the primary palace of the empire but endured as the burial site of Assyrian queens after Sargon II (722-705 BC) moved the royal capital from Nimrud to Khorsabad (ancient Dur-Sharrukin). Advancing an integrated interpretation of the reliefs that lined the Northwest Palace's walls and the jewelry buried in the queens' tombs beneath, I propose that adopting an intermodal approach that, in particular, considers the materiality and iconography of the queens' jewelry in relation to the iconography of the wall reliefs, has the potential to significantly inflect scholarly understanding of the experience of the palace as a ritualized site. In particular, I argue that, in the context of the Northwest Palace, Assyrian visual and material culture witnesses the active co-participation of the iconography of king- and queenship in the construction of an imperial space integrated into the ancestral heart of the empire, communicating an idealized relational framework for the royal court and its visitors to negotiate.

Anor, Netanel

Secrecy and the Oracle Lore: On the Transmission of Knowledge of Extispicy over the Ages

Time: Wednesday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P III

The oracle procedure was an important method of consultation and decision making in ancient Babylonia. When a king needed to decide whether to go to war, appoint an official or give one his offspring to marriage, he would normally turn to an oracle expert, or a seer, whose craft was to consult the gods on this matter. The consultation was made by presenting a question to the gods, to which the answer was usually of rather simple nature: positive or negative. The procedure that allowed obtaining this answer was, however, complex, and consisted of an elaborated over-night ritual, of which the ultimate goal was to unveil the straightforward decision of the sun-god, written on the entrails of sacrificial animal. The ability to read such divine messages was also considered to be learned skill, sustained by an sophisticated semiotic system of knowledge, which allowed understanding different features and formations on the entrails as a network of signs, equivalent to a written message. This knowledge was also considered as esoteric and was hence labelled *niširtī bārûti*, “Secrets of Extispicy”. It was therefore only transmitted to a small and restricted number of scholars, who held the authority over the knowledge about this desirable *techne* of the elites. The dissemination of omen compendia dealing with oracle shows us that, despite these tight restrictions, knowledge about extispicy circulated to many of the scholastic centres of the Near East over a time span of at least two millennia. Overtime, these sources underwent through notable changes, and were adapted to the different socio-political conditions in different scholastic centres. However, the manner in which these sources were transmitted and the factors that played a role in their adaptation over time, is not made explicit by the ancient sources themselves. This paper will hence tackle this question by means of comparative analysis of the scholastic sources. Through comparison of omens from different periods, this paper will demonstrate that it was the teachings of interpretational principles, needed to be applied during the oracle process, that served as the main channel of transmission of knowledge about extispicy over the ages. It will show that these

principles, which probably were orally taught, were more prominent in the process of transmission, than the teaching of the written texts, such as omen compendia. An evaluation of the term Secret of Extispicy in light of the centrality of these principles will also be offered here.

Anton, Emil

Assyrian continuity: assessing the arguments

Time: Monday 16:30–17:00

Venue: Porthania P I

What happened to the Assyrians after the collapse of the Assyrian empire? Finnish scholar Simo Parpola has been a leading (and exceptional) voice among Assyriologists arguing for Assyrian continuity, not only under the successive empires (Persians, Greeks, etc.) but even until today. Assyrian continuity is essentially a given and a fundamental corner-stone of identity for the vast majority of modern Assyrians, some of whom have recently begun to try to substantiate it academically as well (see e.g. the documentary "Assyria A.D."). However, the mainstream of scholarship is skeptical about Assyrian continuity. Ancient Assyrians are deemed to have mixed with other ancient peoples, and modern Assyrian identity is seen as a 19th-century conjecture, based on archaeological finds, linguistic theories equating Syriac with Assyrian, and national romanticism. The question is hotly debated among the Middle Eastern Christian communities that go by various ethnic names, such as Assyrian, Aramean, Syriac, and Chaldean. This paper tries to discern and analyze the best arguments for and against Assyrian continuity and assess their weight. It will seek to show what the defender of Assyrian continuity needs to do (better) and where the academic and popular debate should go from here. Some topics covered include the archaeological evidence for Assyrian continuity, the (dis)continuity of Assyrian identity in the process of Christianization, and the meaning and relationship between the Syriac/Aramaic terms 'suryaya' (Syriac) and 'athuraya' (Assyrian). Attention will also be given to the political and ecclesial implications of the debate surrounding continuity and identity.

Arbøll, Troels Pank

Thoughts on Story and Dialogue in the Mesopotamian Construction of Knowledge

Time: Thursday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

This talk will explore examples of what can be called story and dialogue within cuneiform scholarship as devices for framing knowledge. Previous research has shown that stories are generally used by people every day as a way of making sense of events in the world, and they can to some extent be considered didactic in nature. In ancient scholarship, narratives appear in most periods following ED IIIa, though it cannot be excluded that at least one (folk)tale formed part of the earliest assemblage of cuneiform texts from Uruk. Yet, stories and dialogues were not only employed as literary devices, but also used to frame advanced scholarship, maybe to enhance memorization, and perhaps even as a tool for the reader to abstract and interpret a text. It is well known that the scribes of ancient Mesopotamia were not overly fond of forming theoretical statements. Still, stories provided powerful didactic tools. For example, the well-known Dialogue of Pessimism employs a dialogue between a master and a slave throughout the text, though it clearly has a “take home message”, which can be deduced from the dialogue. In this talk, I will discuss a few examples from various periods of cuneiform writing to provide some thoughts on stories and dialogues as tools for knowledge transmission and intellectual discourse.

Artemov, Nikita

Neo-Assyrian Scribes Reading Old Babylonian Royal Inscriptions, or How Much History Can Be Reconstructed from a Quote?

Time: Tuesday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

The account of the victory over Marduk-apla-iddina II and of Sargon II's marching into Babylon in the Display Inscription from the royal palace in Khorsabad contains a rather flowery formulation which almost literally reproduces a line from the large clay cylinder inscription by the Old Babylonian king Warad-Sîn describing the construction of the city wall in Ur. A close examination of the syntactic and semantic correspondences between the Neo-Assyrian (Akkadian) passage and the Old Babylonian (Sumerian) one shows that it is almost inevitable to assume an intertextual connection between them, which calls for explanation, since evidence for the transmission of Warad-Sîn's inscription in post-Old Babylonian times is lacking. What are the cultural and historical circumstances under which Sargon II's scribes could become acquainted with Warad-Sîn's inscription? The paper addresses possible scenarios that could plausibly account for the literary borrowing and the cultural framework that made it possible, drawing attention to the wide-spread engagement of Neo-Babylonian scribes with ancient royal inscriptions and their language as well as with historical-literary texts. A further consideration is that both the royal libraries in Nineveh and the collection of royal inscriptions stored at the Aššur temple in Assur were inspired by comparable Babylonian projects, of which far less traces have been left due to the vicissitudes of history. Reflections concerning the function of the intertextual reference and the appropriateness of the 'ideology framework' to explain it conclude the paper.

Artemov, Nikita

Tarhan, Zozan

The Ideologically Laden Metaphor of Loyalty and Devotion in Neo-Assyrian and Old Testament Context

Time: Thursday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P II

A series of semantically and linguistically close metaphorical expressions in Biblical Hebrew and in Akkadian express the idea of loyalty and devotion as the quality of being “whole-hearted”: “(to do something, usually to love/serve God) with a whole heart (and a whole soul)” Hebr. *bě-ḳol lěḇāḇ*, Akk. *ina gimir libbi*; “(one’s/whose) heart is fully dedicated to (Yahweh/the king/one’s lord)” Hebr. *hāyâ lěḇāḇ šālēm ‘im* (DN), Akk. *(ša) libbu gummur(u) ana/itti*; “in the integrity of heart”, “wholeheartedly” Hebr. *bě-ṭom lěḇāḇ* or *bě-lěḇāḇ šālēm*, Akk. *ina gummurti libbi*. Although the analysis of conceptual metaphors underlying idiomatic expressions is notoriously difficult, especially in the case of the second formula (using the Hebrew adjective *šālēm* or the stative of *gamāru D* in Akkadian) which due to its astounding parallelism in both languages might well be a calque (borrowed from Akkadian into Hebrew or from a Western Semitic dialect into Akkadian), it seems clear that the source domain of the metaphor is economic exchange. The non-metaphorical use of the adjective *šālēm* ‘full’ in a legal context in Deut 25:13-16 provides a clue. In this passage, “two kinds of stone weights, a large and a small” and “two kinds of measures” are contrasted with a “full and just stone weight” (*‘eḇen šēlēmâ wā-ṣedeq*) and a “full and fair measure”, whereas using two different weights and measures is equated with “doing injustice” or “acting dishonestly”. Thus, in economic and legal contexts, ‘full’ (measure or weight) is tantamount to ‘fair’ and ‘just’, which seems to have given rise to the conceptual metaphor JUST/TRUE IS FULL/COMPLETE and, by way of extension or specification, TO SERVE LOYALLY IS TO BELONG COMPLETELY. It underlies the Akkadian expression *(ša) libbu gummur(u) ana/itti* (*šarri/bēli*) referring to loyal service to the king (notably, it is primarily used in royal grants conceptualized as ‘payments’ for loyal service), which was adapted and further metaphorized in Biblical Hebrew, first as a formula for exclusive worship of Yahweh (1 Kgs 11:4; 15:3.14) and later for absolute loyalty and devotion to God (1 Kgs 8,61). However, the earliest Biblical passages where the semantically related expression “(to love/return to

God) with a whole heart” occurs point to the fact that the original target domain of the metaphor of “whole heart” was, in fact, marital union and exclusive relationship to one’s sexual partner.

Atudosie, Katerina

‘Clothed in Royalty’: Dress and Adornment as Markers of Female Royal Power in the Hebrew Bible

Time: Thursday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

This paper will employ a comparative approach to dress and adornment of royal women in Hebrew Bible texts and Neo-Assyrian royal women. The principal aim is to examine how clothing allows for distinctions to be made between royal and non-royal women in order to maintain royal female power. This paper will also explore how loss of female royal power is signified through the removal of items of dress and adornment, often by violent means. The narratives of queens in Samuel-Kings rarely mention items of dress and adornment. By looking beyond Samuel-Kings, we can examine how sartorial descriptions are used to convey female royal power or signal a fall from power. Through a case-study approach, I will explore the significance of dress and adornment to establishing and maintaining a female royal identity in Psalm 45, Esther, and Song of Songs, while the loss of royal items such as crowns and thrones signal a removal from power in Isaiah 47:1-7 and Jeremiah 13:18. Drawing on parallels with items of dress and adornment from the Queens’ Tombs in Nimrud and iconographic representations of Neo-Assyrian royal women, this paper will demonstrate how sartorial choices allowed royal women to maintain power.

Avneri Meir, Rotem

Historiographical Perspectives on Hellenistic Rule in the Ancient Near East

Time: Tuesday 17:30–18:00

Venue: Porthania P I

In the context of Hellenistic imperial rule over the Eastern Mediterranean and Near East, local communities grappled with persistent inter- and intra-imperial conflicts, administrative upheavals, and fluctuations in royal authority. Across the Hellenistic world, literate elites responded to these challenges by crafting narratives of their pasts, reflecting on their communities' autonomy in the face of foreign domination and interaction with imperial powers through diverse literary expressions. This paper delves into a key aspect of ancient historiography, examining how it often pits kings and suprahuman forces against each other as rival contenders for historical agency and causation. I will begin by exploring how these tensions are found in the works of Berossos and Manetho, who wrote under Seleucid and Ptolemaic rule, respectively. It will highlight their reliance on local traditions to portray the role of the king within the cosmic order and, consequently, in history. Building on this comparative framework, I will extend my inquiry into the historiographical literature of the Southern Levant, with a specific focus on Judea—a region marked by contention between the Ptolemies and Seleucids—which offers itself for the examination of responses to imperial rule by local groups. I will examine the strained relationship between past kings, both foreign and native, and God in Hellenistic period texts from Judea in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek like the books of Daniel and 1 and 2 Maccabees alongside some more fragmentary texts from Qumran and show how they present a nuanced image of interdependence and nested power structures, intertwining royal and divine powers. Contrary to being viewed as conflicting forces, as they are often perceived to be by modern scholars, these accounts of the Judean past portray royal and divine power as complementary facets of historical agency. I will conclude this by considering the implications of these observations for understanding the social conditions that influenced the production of such literary accounts and the nature of local historiography under empire in antiquity.

Azeez, Nyaz
Pappi, Cinzia
Coppini, Costanza

Fragmented Polities of the Transtigrine Region: Recent Research in the Region of Koi Sanjaq (Erbil, Iraq)

Time: Thursday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P I

The archaeological Survey of Koi Sanjaq/Koya (ASK) project, conducted since 2016 with the support of the University of Innsbruck and the Freie Universität Berlin, is primarily aimed to an assessment of the archaeological landscape of the entire district of Koi Sanjaq/Koya (Erbil, Iraq), including chronologic and typological analysis of the settlement patterns and the material culture of the region. Recent excavations at Qala Shila, recognised as a prominent regional center from at least the end of the 4th millennium BCE to the Early Islamic Period, revealed consistent evidence of a Middle and Late Bronze Age Settlement, possibly identified as one of the main centres of the polity of Aḫazum. This paper will mainly focus on the preliminary results of the fieldwork conducted in Fall 2023 and Spring 2024, providing a reassessment of the survey and excavation data to better define the regional chronology within the context of the diverse chronologies of Northern Iraq.

Bach, Johannes

Nebuchadnezzar's war with Elam - Neo-Assyrian contributions to the narrative?

Time: Monday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

Nebuchadnezzar I's war with Elam has been the subject of several recent scholarly debates. While some of the pertaining royal inscriptions and the historical narratives embedded in two kudurru texts are considered original, the case is not as clear-cut for inscription B.2.4.6. The latter, as had been noted most recently by John Nielsen, bears signs of a Sargonid reworking or even wholesale new creation. Adding to Nielsen's research, this talk will explore the intertextuality of the cited inscription by analyzing its major themes and motifs. It will be argued that there is a notable overlap with the language of Sargonid royal narrative texts, for example, the motif of avoiding battle out of fear of death. The talk will conclude by pointing out the importance of intertextual analysis for writing Mesopotamia's literary histories.

Baker, Heather D.

Life at the Bottom of Neo-Babylonian Society

Time: Friday 16:00–16:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

Our knowledge of Babylonian society is skewed towards the urban upper classes who generated much of the cuneiform documentation, yet within the cities, peoples of far more varied backgrounds certainly lived and interacted. It is a challenge to access the living conditions of the lower strata of urban society, but the attempt is necessary if we are to gain a better understanding of the urban community in all its diversity. The prevailing model of urban neighbourhoods in southern Mesopotamia sees rich and poor living side by side (E. Stone 1987, *Nippur Neighborhoods*, writing of the Old Babylonian period), yet for first millennium BC Babylonia the picture appears to be more complex, with some evidence for residential areas segregated by class and profession (the priesthood). This paper builds on an earlier study presented at an online Helsinki workshop in 2020 which investigated the living conditions of the urban poor as a contribution to the “view from below”. It draws on textual and archaeological evidence to address community formation, focusing on the lower social classes and examining their experience of living under empire. The paper also examines these issues within the framework of my current project on “Inheritance and Inequality in Urban Babylonia.” By definition, this project centres on the propertied classes who engaged in intergenerational wealth transmission. However, to obtain a holistic understanding of inequality we must also consider the economically disadvantaged who were altogether excluded from home ownership.

Ballesteros, Bernardo

Reversal of Fortune and Immortality: Tradition and Intertext in Babylonian and Greek Epic

Time: Monday 17:30–18:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

The heroic – and tragic – trajectories of Gilgamesh and Achilles have long been appreciated in conjunction. Homeric indebtedness to Babylonian epic remains debatable, and this paper probes a different, analogic-comparative approach to intertextuality. It explores how the Iliad and the Gilgamesh Epic each create meaning in relation to pre-existing poetry in their own tradition, and seeks to elucidate aspects of narrative execution and conceptions of mythical history. The questions raised by early Greek and Babylonian epic intertextuality are arguably complementary. Homerists debate how one should model allusion in a largely oral-compositional milieu: did poems reference other poems or just the wider tradition of song and legend? Assyriologists routinely refer to ‘the stream of tradition’, but recent intertextual studies have, in the main, tended to focus on text-to-text connections. I argue for the co-existence of two distinct, but complementary strategies: poem-to-poem allusion and a broader, non-specific re-use of the mythical tradition. I address two case-studies. The first involves dramatic irony, error and reversal of fortune. Here I explore how the Gilgamesh Epic deploys Sumerian poetry to cast a sinister light on the Humbaba expedition (potential text-to-text reuse) and on Ishtar’s rejection (potential re-use of mythico-religious traditions). I compare how the Iliad evaluates Achilles’ error – resulting in Patroclus’ death – against earlier precedents such as the Meleager legend (re-use of mythico-religious traditions); and how Homer may be re-casting an earlier narrative about Achilles’ – rather than Patroclus’ – death (potential song-to-song allusion). The second test-case concerns the mythical history of human mortality. SB Gilg. XI redeploys Atrahasis (text-to-text) to advance an ethics of moderation, but the pithy reference to how the divine assembly defined death (SB X 319–22) does not, I argue, index the Flood poem: it is best elucidated through various instances of the gods deliberating on life and death (potential re-use of mythico-religious traditions). Meanwhile, Achilles’ doomed destiny, predicted by Thetis (Il. 9.410–16), may or may not echo earlier poems (potential song-to-song allusion); it

certainly resonates with stories about the end of the 'Age of Heroes', a traditional mythico-religious complex that Homer largely submerges. Besides proposing that 'traditional intertextuality' and 'direct allusion' may both be operative in Greek and Babylonian epic, the paper also contributes to the Rencontre's general theme, inasmuch as these intertexts ultimately establish religious and paradigmatic limits to the behaviour of rulers.

Balza, Maria Elena

Forms, traditions, and iconography: Some thoughts on the seals of the Emar scribes

Time: Friday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

The archives of ancient Emar, located on the Middle Euphrates River Valley, have provided us with over a thousand cuneiform documents, a good portion of which preserve the impressions of seals used by both local people and officials, and the representatives of the Hittite administration. In fact, starting from the second half of the 14th century BC, the city of Emar became part of the area controlled by the Hittite kingdom. The Emar documentation dating to this period records a cross-section of the life of the city, of the most widespread transactions, of the legal traditions therein, and of the statuses of its inhabitants. This documentation is the work of scribes trained in the use of two distinct scribal traditions, an older, local, tradition and a more recent tradition, called Syro-Hittite. The scribes of the city of Emar left traces of their activity not only as authors of documents. In many cases they were owners of seals, which they used to authenticate local tablets. Although it is not always possible to reliably link a seal to its user, in many cases the inscriptions on the seals or tablets from Emar offer sufficient data to identify the seals owned by the scribes carrying their work in the city. The present paper will consider this material and search for recurring iconographic themes and/or forms (cylinders, stamps, rings) that can provide information about the owners of the seals, their affiliation, and their ties to local or Hittite powers.

Baragli, Beatrice

Narratology of the Bīt rimki ritual: The story told beyond ritual tablets and recitations

Time: Thursday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

The Bīt rimki (“bath house”) is one of the most important royal rituals of first-millennium Assyria and Babylonia. Designed specifically for the king, it was performed to purify and protect him from various kinds of evil. It was performed out of necessity, outside the regular annual liturgy, when a particular danger threatened the king. The length of the performance, the number of prayers recited, and the many different versions of the ritual tablets make the Bīt rimki one of the most complex Mesopotamian rituals to understand. One of the greatest difficulties for us scholars is to identify the relationship between the actions described in the ritual tablets and the prayers recited. This is where narratology comes in. Using narratological analysis, this paper aims to reconstruct the “story” of the Bīt rimki as told beyond the lines of the ritual tablets and recitations. The aim is to identify the reasons for the choice of certain incantations at certain stages of the ritual as well as to explain the purpose of certain ritual actions. This will also shed light on the effect the storyteller wanted to achieve on the ritual participants.

Baragli, Beatrice

The Sun God in the Netherworld: Mythic and Ritual Hylemes of Kiutu A

Time: Thursday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

The Old Babylonian Kiutu A, also known as Incantation to Utu, is a Sumerian incantation-prayer dedicated to the sun god Utu that aimed at reconciling several spirits of the dead (Sumerian: kitim) with the living patient. This complex text describes Utu's entire daily journey: his daytime activities in heaven and his nighttime activities in the netherworld, thus shedding light on the myth of the sun god in the netherworld. This myth is otherwise known only from scattered sources. However, several questions about this important myth remain unanswered: What exactly does the sun god do in the netherworld? How is the sun god's role intertwined with other netherworld myths? And how is the netherworld represented in this myth? This paper aims to answer these questions with the help of hylistics. Specifically, Kiutu A and other available sources will be analysed in this way in order to reconstruct the myth of Utu in the netherworld. In addition to this myth, the text describes specific ritual actions that the practitioner performs on behalf of the patient. The paper will thus present the mythic and ritual hylemes of the text and show how these two levels are intrinsically intertwined.

Barkowsky, Marie

Lamaštu makes no sense: Ritual narrative in the series Lamaštu

Time: Thursday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

The ritual series Lamaštu contains two sets of ritual instructions: those written in the rubrics below the incantations on Lam. I-II and those written on the ritual tablet Lam. III. Many of the ritual instructions in the rubrics can be found, verbatim, on the ritual tablet. However, the order of these instructions on the ritual tablet is entirely different from that of Lam. I-II, making it seemingly impossible to reconstruct the ritual of the series. The proposed paper will approach this problem from the point of view of ritual storytelling. By comparing the narrative - or lack of narrative - of the ritual actions prescribed by both sets of ritual instructions, it will argue that they are not in fact contradictory. Looking at where information is missing and where information is provided, it will suggest that rubrics and ritual tablet must be cross-referenced with each other in order for the ritual to make sense as a whole. This approach, it will be argued, resolves the numerous internal problems of the ritual tablet and gives the series Lamaštu a central logic.

Barros, Bruno

Neo-Assyrian Hegemony: Aspects of Dominance and Administration of Southern Levantine Kingdoms

Time: Friday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

Following the campaigns of Tiglath-Pileser III in Philistia and the conflict known as the "Syrian-Ephraimitic" war, the Neo-Assyrian Empire established a more systematic presence in the Southern Levant. The territories of Philistia, Israel, and Judah were reorganized into vassal states, puppet states, and provinces. The subsequent campaigns of Sargon II and Sennacherib in 701 BCE aimed to suppress rebellions in the region, solidifying Assyrian control. Even though Judah remained an independent nation, traces of Neo-Assyrian influence can be seen in its archaeological record as in the Assyrian practice of erecting buildings for administration and military purposes, and the built of new cities in a relatively short period. Due to the mass deportations occurring and the need for new dwellings in the conquered territories, several building projects were taking place in the region, something unusual in the Levant. The necessity of new dwellings and the reformulation of public buildings in these cities allowed for a new type of architecture in the region to be introduced, which followed the Mesopotamian tradition. Beyond architecture, Assyrian influence extended to burial customs, temples, and various crafts, including clay, glass, and metal-work. Monumental landmarks, such as water features and gardens, became symbols of Assyrian power and domination. Local artisans and masons adopted Assyrian concepts, leaving a lasting impact even after the end of Assyrian occupation. Despite Assyrian dominance, the region experienced economic prosperity as Assyrians developed and maintained economic cooperation networks, ensuring the flow of wealth and taxes. However, this required cooperation from local kings, particularly in Judah and other vassal states, to undertake various projects. This paper will address the issues described above and propose that the kings, particularly in Judah and other vassal states chose a policy that allowed them and their peoples to flourish under the Assyrian hegemony, based on the archaeological record and written evidence. It was vital that the communication and diplomacy between Nineveh and its puppet and vassal states were conducted with good terms, but at the

same time it could also come with a price for the leaders of those states. Nevertheless, it ensured a transfer of knowledge between the two civilizations, allowing these states to acquire new technologies and enjoy a time of prosperity and relatively peace.

Battini, Laura

Becoming a mother in Mesopotamia: biological and social components

Time: Wednesday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

This paper proposes to understand the biological and social components of motherhood through the use of textual and iconographic data that are unequal in quantity and complexity. Although it is very present in medical texts, childbirth is rarely represented. On the contrary, the duties of motherhood are often represented in the iconography but rather scattered in the texts. There is also a socio-economic component, which distinguishes royal mothers surrounded by several nannies and slaves from urban mothers.

Bellucci, Benedetta

Notes on the double-headed eagle on Hittite seals

Time: Friday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

The double-headed eagle is a powerful image, often depicted in Anatolia from the Ancient Assyrian period. Despite its obvious importance in the figurative art of the Hittite Kingdom, its meaning still needs to be clarified. On Hittite seals, the symbol is widely used, as attested in finds in the Hittite capital and sites belonging to the periphery of the Hittite kingdom, such as Emar. In this paper, I analyze the different uses of the double-headed eagle image on seals belonging to Hittite officials versus local officials at peripheral sites.

Beltz, Jon

The Sumerian and Bilingual *zi--pa3* Incantations: The Latest Findings

Time: Tuesday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P II

Magical texts known to scholars as “*zi--pa3* incantations” protected ancient Mesopotamians by imposing oaths upon hostile demons to keep them away from a person. These oaths use a particular structure including litanies of deities for enforcement, reminiscent of oaths occurring in treaties extending from the time of the Umma-Lagash border conflict down to the Neo-Assyrian period. The three major *zi--pa3* compositions of the late second and first millennium were edited by Ebeling and Borger in the 1950s and 1960s. Since then, they have received little attention in scholarship, despite the fact that two of these compositions appear to have been quite popular in antiquity, even appearing in school text excerpts. This paper will provide an overview of what we now know about the three main compositions: *Diĝir-hul* (Borger’s *zi--pa3* text plus Ebeling’s *Gattung I*), *Lugal-Namtar* (Ebeling’s *Gattung II* plus additional joins), and *CBS 590* (Ebeling’s *Gattung III*). I will outline more fully the organization and structure of *Diĝir-hul* and *Lugal-Namtar*, and provide a case that *CBS 590* represents an esoteric or perhaps cryptographic variation of a litany-type *zi--pa3* incantation. With a better understanding of the structure of these incantation texts, we can begin to surmise about their relationship to other types of texts reliant on oaths, such as treaties, and the ways that Mesopotamians dealt with both political outsiders (foreigners) and divine outsiders (demons).

Béranger, Marine

The cult of the gods of Nippur in the face of war and exile

Time: Monday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P II

The city of Nippur, under Babylonian rule since Hammu-rabi, witnessed several conflicts during the reign of Hammu-rabi's son, Samsu-iluna. After a brief period of control by the rebel king Rim-Sin II that ended in the year Samsu-iluna 10, the city remained under Babylonian power until Samsu-iluna 30. Samsu-iluna then lost it again, and for more than a year Nippur was controlled by the first king of the Sealand Dynasty, Ili-ma-ilu. It was then gradually abandoned. Babylon reconquered it on an unspecified date, during the last years of Samsu-iluna or the first years of his son and successor, Abi-ešuh —but this event is not celebrated nor mentioned anywhere. Its population leaving the city did not mean abandoning the local gods, among whom the great gods Enlil and Ninurta, or religious practices. For as long as possible, and despite the danger posed by enemies and their attacks, the local clergy and Babylonian authorities tried to keep the cult alive. When this was no longer possible, they moved it with them a little further north, to Dur-Abi-ešuh, a Babylonian fortress. The latter's archives reveal the continuity of practices despite the exile: the relocated temples, and with them their gods, their staff, their offerings and their festivals. This talk will review the documentation and historical circumstances, and present how the Nippureans and Babylonians strove to preserve the status quo despite wars and exile.

Bertolini, Ludovica

Tracing Traditions: Dissemination and Utilization of the Sumero-Akkadian Lexical Corpus in the Western Peripheries during the Late Bronze Age

Time: Tuesday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P III

This scholarly investigation endeavors to elucidate the complexities inherent in the transmission and pragmatic implementation of the Sumero-Akkadian lexical tradition within the western peripheries during the Late Bronze Age. Focusing upon pivotal sites in the Levant and Anatolia, the study seeks to answer the following research inquiries: to what extent is it plausible to assess the practical functions of the Sumero-Akkadian lexical texts that permeated the western peripheries, and to what degree was their reception into the local scribal circles a conscious process? Additionally, can discernible patterns be identified across diverse recipient sites? The analytical framework is strategically delimited to Late Bronze Age sites in the Levant and Anatolia where lexical lists connected to the Sumerian and Akkadian tradition have been unearthed, thereby considering the contextual relationship of these texts with sources originating from the core regions of cuneiform dissemination. Following a quantitative and qualitative examination of the dissemination of the Sumero-Akkadian lexical corpus to the western peripheries, this study further endeavors to address the applied utility of such material within the scribal enclaves of the Levant and Anatolia. This analysis also focuses on supplementary sources derived from the written corpora in Sumerian and Akkadian, sourced from the same archaeological sites. Interrogations central to this phase of the investigation include inquiries into the manner by which scribes in these regions assimilated and adapted the lexical content stemming from Babylonian sources, as well as the potential emergence of distinctive trends or practices within these locales.

Bezold, Helge

Provincializing Babylon: Judean Perceptions of Neo-Babylonian Hegemony in the Book of Jeremiah

Time: Tuesday 18:00–18:30

Venue: Porthania P I

Neo-Babylonian hegemony stands as a notable example of ancient Near Eastern imperialism. Numerous studies have explored the functioning of the city of Babylon as the center of the Neo-Babylonian empire, both archaeologically and ideologically. However, this emphasis on the "center" distorts the historical reality of the empire, as it neglects the perspectives of local people groups living under Babylonian dominance. This paper contributes to the discussion by presenting a viewpoint from the "margin." The biblical book of Jeremiah provides unique insights into how scribes from a local people reflected on their identity under Neo-Babylonian hegemony. This paper examines a notable shift in the depiction of Babylon in the opening (Jer 1–12) and the concluding chapters (50–51) of the prophetic book. It illuminates what can be called a gradual "provincialization" of Babylon over time: from being depicted as an imperial superpower during Nebuchadnezzar's siege and conquest of Jerusalem (597–586 BCE) to a ravaged city after the events of 539 BCE. Thereby, in a way, Babylon meets the same fortune as Jerusalem. The argument presented in this paper emphasizes the impact of this shift on the conceptualization of Judean identity and theology. Notably, both the laments about the siege and eventual fall of Jerusalem in chapters 1–12 and the anti-Babylonian oracles in chapters 50–51 employ pastoral imagery to depict Judeans as a marginalized, subaltern community. However, the fall of Babylon is construed as an act of divine justice originating from Jerusalem/Zion. Consequently, Jerusalem/Zion emerges as the new center of the world from where YHWH rules. Thus, the scribes composing Jer 50–51 offered their theological interpretation of history. This paper evaluates these findings from a postcolonial perspective, acknowledging the intricate strategies employed by local communities to negotiate their identity under imperial hegemony. It becomes clear that Judean scribes were highly capable of adjusting their ingroup's social identity to new historical circumstances. Given that the fall of Babylon marked the beginning of Achaemenid hegemony, however, it comes as no surprise that the

texts do not criticize the existence of empire per se. Instead, the Judean scribes developed a hybrid worldview in which their god becomes the true imperial king, and their city becomes the capital of his empire.

Bigot, Cécile

The Middle Diyala under the Cassite rule: an emblematic example of an efficient political and cultural agency

Time: Monday 16:30–17:00

Venue: Porthania P II

Situated halfway between the Zagros mountains and the capitals of Dūr-Kurigalzu and Babylon, the Middle Diyala region (around the present-day Hamrin basin) was actively colonised from the 14th century onwards by the Cassites. Throughout the second half of the 2nd millennium, this region was nevertheless marked by its proximity to Nuzi and a long history of Mittanian influence, followed by the military ambitions of the Middle-Assyrians. The settlement policy pursued by the Cassite leaders had to be compatible with the expression of local identities, in a place of exchange and multicultural settlement that acted as an interface between different political areas. Through the systematic study of a series of cultural and identity markers that I will present, taken from 10 archaeological sites and epigraphic sources from this region, my aim is to illustrate more generally how the Cassite dynasty, a new actor of the international scene, integrates with the economic, political and cultural dynamics of Late Bronze-Early Iron Age Mesopotamia. In fact, this peculiar region, located between the mounts Hamrin and Mirwari, and the Diyala and Nairi rivers, displayed specific features in terms of material culture, architectural choices, as well as settlement and subsistence strategies, that set it apart from the surrounding areas, particularly the Lower Diyala area further south, much closer to the political capitals of Karduniaš. Although apparently peripheral to the baricentre of the Middle-Babylonian state, the settlements in Middle Diyala show a very clear and dense Cassite faciès, which proves the importance given to this geographical area, with an asserted economic dynamism and whose elites mix with, or even copy, Babylonian traditions. At the same time, the archaeological and epigraphic record also reveals a number of heterogeneous cultural and identity markers, which bear witness to several contacts with the Elamite, Mittanian and Assyrian worlds, as well as to local and isolated (indigenous?) practices of micro-production and burial. On the whole, the specificities of Middle Diyala suggest that we should move beyond the concept of “middle-ground” developed by Irad Malkin, in favour of his other concepts

of “fusion” or “mixture”, in order to better understand the way in which Cassite identity was inscribed, arranged and interacted with large-scale politics.

Birkner, Victoria

Analysis of Emesal in the lament over Eridu

Time: Monday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

The Lament over Eridu describes the destruction of the city by outsiders that are characterized as a devastating storm and the resulting abandonment of the city by its patron deities Enki and his wife Damgalnuna. It was composed in the Old Babylonian period, either within the reign of Išme-Dagan or Nur-Adad. Although the lament itself is not preserved in its entirety, there are multiple manuscripts that, while not all similar, can be pieced together to form an extensive composite text. I am going to examine the vocabulary, the frequency and distribution of Emesal-writings in the different manuscripts of the text. The composite text is structured into eight kirugus, although the beginning of the first as well as most of the eighth are missing. The first few kirugus deal mostly with the destruction wrought upon Eridu and contain little to no Emesal. My focus will be on the later kirugus that describe the lament of Eridu's patron deities and, as can be expected from a text of this variety, contain numerous Emesal forms used by both Enki and Damgalnuna. I will approach each kirugu separately and compile their uses of Emesal, explaining, as well as possible, the phonetical evolution of each form and comparing them to relevant parallels. This should provide the necessary base upon which to draw conclusions pertaining to the frequency of this specific Emesal vocabulary and through that, the placement of the composition within the corpus of Old Babylonian Emesal literature.

Blasweiler, Joost

Queens and marriages in respect to traditions and alliances in Central Anatolia during the Old Assyrian and Old Hittite Kingdom period

Time: Tuesday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P II

Some Old Assyrian texts reveal an important position of queens in Anatolian kingdoms. It is often thought that they were widow queens. However, we see in the case of the kingdom of Mari along the Euphrates, that certain queens also achieved important political positions. A structurally powerful type of queenship appears in the Kizil Irmak basin of Central Anatolia. Hittite texts tell of the important position of the Tawananna queen of Hatti and their cooperation and clashes with the king. During the Old Kingdom period the Tawananna queen rules besides the king. The Hittite texts narrative the frequent use of adoption and marriages to connect or merge kingdoms. Family and clan relationship formed the backbone for the governance of a kingdom. Ancient Anatolian traditions and beliefs seem to have shaped the remarkable role of queens and sons-in-law. What circumstances might have played a role in the origins of these traditions in the distant past? What advantages and disadvantages did these positions of queens and sons-in-law have for the stability of Anatolian kingdoms during the MBA period?

Boddy, Kaira

Celestial omens in Šumma ālu

Time: Friday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P II

The latter part of the lengthy Šumma ālu series features omens related to the movement and appearance of “stars”. Some of these have very close parallels in the diagnostic handbook SA.GIG, while others are also found in the celestial omen series Enūma Anu Enlil. In Šumma ālu these omens are combined with a ritual that is also part of the Namburbû series. Several prominent texts could thus be consulted to explain or respond to omens of this kind. This paper discusses where and why omens about shooting stars and meteorites are found in Šumma ālu, looking in particular at the material shared with other texts and how it is organized.

Boeck, Barbara

Thoughts on the reproductive domain: From the mother goddess Mami to the baby-snatching demon Lamashtu

Time: Tuesday 17:30–18:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

Starting from the description of the mother goddess in literary sources I deal in this paper with gendered expectations for women. My goal is to explore the idea of motherhood as natural and normative by assessing deviant childless cases. In doing so I offer a fresh look at the story of Atramhasis and contribute to the discussion about ancient Mesopotamian gender ideology.

Borkowski, Sebastian

Towards a holistic model of the historical geography of the Ur III state

Time: Thursday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P III

Despite significant contributions in recent decades, the historical geography of the Ur III state (c. 2112–2004 BC) remains largely elusive. Lately, new surveys in southern Iraq have expanded the catalogue of archaeological sites and provided new clues about the location of ancient place names, otherwise known only from the textual record. However, in the absence of stratified epigraphic evidence, the correspondence between most toponyms and an equally large number of archaeological sites is tentative at best. Originating from the project 'The Rivers of Mesopotamia' (2019–2021) at the University of Bern, the paper introduces an adaptive and data-driven model of the historical geography of the Ur III state. The model integrates geographic information documented in the Ur III administrative corpus as well as settlement patterns and paleo-channels detected by means of surveys and remote sensing. In an iterative process, the heterogeneous data is analyzed through multi-layered networks, including the co-occurrence of toponyms and hydronyms, documented transport routes, and spatial networks of archaeological sites and paleo-channels. The model defines reliably identified sites as fixed points in the historical geography of the Ur III state. This provides a responsive and holistic framework for testing hypotheses about the location of ancient place names. The paper outlines the methodology and discusses competing scenarios for the historical geography of the Ur III state based on recent contributions to the scholarly discourse.

Borkowski, Sebastian

Novák, Mirko

Schrakamp, Ingo

HyMes – The Hydrography of Mesopotamia. Rivers and Channels in Babylonia from the late 4th to the 1st Millennium BCE

Time: Tuesday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

In the late 4th millennium BCE, southern Mesopotamia gave birth to mankind's first urban civilization. This was made possible by favourable environmental, socio-ecological and economic conditions. Given the aridity of the climate in the region, the agricultural set-up depended on irrigation. The interaction between natural processes and human activities led to a hydraulic landscape characterized by a dense network of natural and artificially created canals constituting complex irrigation systems with a variety of hydraulic devices and a corresponding administrative structure. Late 4th to 1st millennium BCE cuneiform texts in Sumerian and Akkadian reflect many aspects of water systems. The data-driven approach of the HyMes project (2024–2027) relies on data mining and formal network analysis to link toponyms and hydronyms mentioned in texts with archaeological data on settlements and remote sensing-based hydrographical network reconstructions. The outcome is a multi-temporal network of rivers and canals, covering several key periods of Mesopotamian history from the late 4th to the 1st millennium BCE. Each disciplinary dataset will complement the others and help to fill eventual gaps and inaccuracies. Based on this multi-temporal hydrographic network, it will be possible to analyse changes in hydrography and link them with societal evolutions as derived from existing historical and archaeological knowledge and findings. The multi-temporal hydrographic network will then be used to develop a simplified hydraulic model. The model will allow a closer investigation of specific environmental changes such as the increasing aridity on water circulation through the network and foster thereby further analyses on the impact of these environmental changes on civilizations. The implementation of data provenance and uniform resource identifiers (URIs) establishes external links to existing databases. The project's research data will be published in compliance with FAIR and CARE principles via the DaSCH (Swiss National Data and Service Center for the Humanities) infrastructure which supports open standards such as the Resource Description Framework (RDF), the Web Ontology Language (OWL) and the query language SPARQL.

Bramanti, Armando

Greco, Angela

Mastelli, Géraldine

Third Millennium Studies: Reassessment and Original Research

Time: Thursday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P III

The Third Millennium is arguably the most formative period in Mesopotamian History. Its historical and cultural processes lay the groundwork for the development of later Ancient Near Eastern civilizations. While Third Millennium text corpora may be broad and diverse, they often present similar problems that call for shared solutions. Unfortunately, the complex and fragmentary nature of the documentation is also known to attract less attention compared to later periods, leaving space for a new impulse in the field. This is the foreground of the organization of this session, the third in a series of thematic workshops on third millennium studies at the Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale – the first two were held in Paris 2019 and Leiden 2023. After a reassessment of the current research in Third Millennium studies, the speakers will briefly present their original research as an introduction to the workshop. Armando Bramanti will present his current work on text editions, with particular regard to Latin American collections. Angela Greco will offer an overview of her research on the exploitation and management of natural resources in the southernmost Mesopotamian landscape. To conclude, Géraldine Mastelli will bring attention to a selection of Urukagina's fish offering lists challenging the notion of ki-en-gi in Early Dynastic Sumer.

Brandes, Tim

The paleography of Haft Tappeh: Contributions to a paleography of Susiana Cuneiform Texts

Time: Wednesday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P I

In the recent years, the Akkadian texts from Haft Tappeh – a site close to Susa – have been edited systematically for the first time. The texts can be dated to the early middle Elamite period (approx. 1500-1400 BCE) and represent the last Akkadian records before the written sources in Elam largely undergo a linguistic shift to Elamite. The texts not only give an insight into a period that is scarcely represented by written records, but they also contribute to closing a paleographic gap between the Akkadian cuneiform texts from Susa mostly dating to the preceding Sukkalmah-period and the Elamite cuneiform texts of the later middle Elamite period. In the current phase, the project “Digital Edition of Cuneiform Texts from Haft Tappeh (Iran)” at Mainz University is working on a paleography of the Haft Tappeh Cuneiform text corpus, including synchronous and diachronic comparisons to neighboring cities and regions. The digital Resources and infrastructure of the project allow for an equally digital methodological approach based on annotations on 3D-Renderings. The aim is to close the aforementioned gap and potentially provide a basis upon which further research can be conducted. Overall, the paleographic research on (non-elamite) Cuneiform texts in the Susiana is still mostly restricted to the analysis of single text corpora, and therefore still leaves a systematic analysis to be desired. The intention of the lecture is to give an overview of the results of the paleographic research on the Haft Tappeh material, as well as an introduction to the methodological approach.

Britton, Joshua

Adoption, Adaption and Misunderstanding: Towards an approach to mistakes in the Old Assyrian archives

Time: Tuesday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P III

The Assyrian occupation at Kaneš in central Anatolia (modern Kültepe in Kayseri Province, Türkiye) during the Middle Bronze Age is attested by over 23,000 cuneiform texts excavated from private archives. These texts document the business activities and personal lives of Assyrian merchants living abroad as well as their interactions with the local Anatolian population of Kaneš. This represents the earliest period of recorded history in Anatolia, as Assyrian merchants brought cuneiform to the region which was subsequently adopted as a technology of literacy by the indigenous population. In recent years, scholarship on this period of Anatolian history has begun to focus on the nature of the cultural interactions between the Assyrian merchants and Anatolians with whom they conducted business, lived side-by-side and (in some instances) entered into marriages. The material evidence from Kültepe has been noted for its lack of foreign – specifically Assyrian – elements, while the textual record attests interactions between the two groups. The use of writing amongst Anatolians has largely been discussed in reference to the errors committed by those writing in a foreign language using an unfamiliar script. Such errors include the misspelling of personal names and the grammatical gender in suffixes among others. This paper argues that regarding these so-called ‘mistakes’ as a purely linguistic phenomenon is unsatisfactory. Rather, a nuanced appreciation of these textual features allows us to consider the cultural and personal misunderstandings that lay behind the writing of these texts. Such an analysis aims to move beyond simplistic assumptions about ethnicity and culture and towards an appreciation of the ways in which intercultural contact and knowledge exchange is experienced at the level of the individual. As well as contributing to our understanding of the Assyrian presence in central Anatolia, this paper challenges the usefulness of terms such as ‘native’ and ‘foreign’ when discussing the history of ancient cultures. Rather than viewing the adoption of technologies of literacy as an exchange between two monolithic culture groups, this paper aims to highlight the importance of individual agency

and circumstance in generating the situations in which these adoptions and adaptations took place. This paper thus examines a zone of language contact as a nexus through which social relationships are interpreted, re-interpreted, and at times misunderstood.

Burgin, James

The Conquest of Aleppo in Hittite Collective Memory

Time: Wednesday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P II

The conquest of Aleppo, capital of the Kingdom of Yamḥad, was an event of seminal importance to the Old Hittite Kingdom. References to the event appear in many historical texts from the Old Hittite period onwards. A first-hand account of the conflicts leading up to the destruction is yet to be discovered; the city conspicuously absent in the Annals of Ḫattušili I (CTH 4), and hostile actions on the part of the king of Aleppo are only hinted at in the Res Gestae of Ḫattušili I (CTH 14). A promise of punishment for disobeying the word of the Hittite king in the “political wisdom of Ḫattušili” (CTH 5) is the earliest reference to the city’s impending destruction. Yet the first narrative of events post-dating Aleppo’s alleged conquest, found at the beginning of the Annals of Ḫantili I (CTH 11), makes no mention of destruction. Ḫantili, who as Muršili’s cupbearer was conceivably an eye-witness to the event, states only that the king of Aleppo made recompense (šarnink-) to Muršili. Ḫantili’s version of events was not adopted by future kings. The historical prologue of the Telipinu Proclamation (CTH 19), which takes a dim view of Ḫantili’s reign due to his murder of Muršili, states that Muršili “destroyed” (ḫarnink-) Aleppo. Later references, e.g., a historical retrospective of Arnuwanda I (CTH 148) and the prologue of a treaty with the Hittite viceroy of Aleppo (CTH 75), follow Telipinu. But it will be shown in the proposed talk that these texts are intertextually dependent on Ḫantili’s narration; they in fact include details from CTH 11 that the Proclamation of Telipinu elides. This leads to the conclusion that Ḫantili’s narrative was not lost, even while its version of events was suppressed. It seems that the scribes who composed Hittite historical texts could selectively compose their narrations from conflicting sources. Even a text as important as the Proclamation of Telipinu could only reshape, but not eliminate, Ḫantili’s version in the collective memory of the Hittite chancellery.

Campi, Giorgio Paolo

From Intertextuality to Hypertextuality in Ancient Near Eastern Literature: The Case of The Poor Man of Nippur.

Time: Tuesday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

The literary composition known by the name The Poor Man of Nippur (PMN) has often been categorised, since Gurney's first edition of the tablets found in Sultantepe/Huzirina (1956; STT I, 38.39; STT II, 116), as an example of a humorous genre in the cuneiform literary tradition. More recently, scholars (Finet 1992, Ottervanger 2016) have been able to highlight a dense intertextual network between PMN and other literary genres, mostly the epic genre (this is the case, e.g., of the Standard Babylonian recension of the Gilgamesh Epic, and especially tablet X; 1300-1000 BCE ca.), but also the wisdom tradition (e.g., the composition called Advice to a Prince; 1000-700 BCE ca.). On one hand, this network allowed to establish a more secure timeframe for the dating of the original composition of PMN; on the other hand, it opened the stage to hypotheses related to the use of intertextuality for a parodic and humorous aim. Intertextual allusions, however, should not automatically rule out other patterns of connection. On the contrary, they all the more attest to the fact that PMN is a work in dialogue with other literature, to be understood in light of other knowledge deriving not just from the fruition of the text in itself. This paper will take this approach further and highlight a shared background of tropes and motifs between PMN and both Mesopotamian and biblical wisdom literature of the 'pious sufferer' (e.g. A Man and his God, Ludlul bēl nēmeqi, Job). This lays the foundation for a new reading of PMN and allows it to be reframed in a new context and envisioned as a 'hypertext' – to use Gérard Genette's terminology – in dialogue with Ancient Near Eastern wisdom literary tradition. Genette (1997) defines hypertextuality as "any relationship uniting a text B ([...] the hypertext) to an earlier text A ([...] the hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary." While PMN's use of intertextuality might be deemed incidental, its core meaning lies in its hypertextual relationship to the wisdom literary tradition. Ultimately, PMN can be read as a sample of 'skeptical literature', in line with other cognate examples stemming from the Ancient Near Eastern wisdom tradition – this, of course, does not imply the lack of a humorous component to it.

Ceccarelli, Manuel

Digital analysis of Sumerian divine Epithets. Ninurta's epithets in Sumerian texts.

Time: Tuesday 18:00–18:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

Mesopotamian deities reflect the entire natural world of Mesopotamia as well as the elements of Mesopotamian society and culture. Their names alone, however, usually do not reveal their manifold powers and qualities. Specific linguistic determinations, the epithets, are needed in order to convey the full range of the deities' manifestations and aspects. Epithets can express not only hierarchical, gender or qualitative differences, but also equivalences between deities. Epithets are shaped by elements derived from various sources: for instance, typical aspect of human life or Mesopotamian society (e.g., "father" or "vizier of x"), animal world, natural phenomena, also mythical narrative materials, which can be concretized in various texts, can be a source of epithets. They can express general concepts of the deities (e.g., "shining") or a specific aspect of a deity (e.g., Innana's epithet "young woman"). While some epithets are typical for a deity and can potentially appear in every text as almost fixed lexical items ('standard epithets'), others are chosen according to the specific context and purpose of the text ('contextual epithets'). This paper aims to show first results of the database of Sumerian divine epithets created within the frame of the project "Divine Epithets in Sumerian Literature and Royal Inscription" (Marie Skłodowska Curie Action). The potentialities and functionalities of the database will be illustrated by focusing on Ninurta's epithets, analysing their semantics, grammatical structure and divine aspects.

Çelebi, Nurgül

An Evaluation on Naqī'a's Political Power: Visible or Invisible Power?

Time: Thursday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

Within the predominantly male-centred administrative framework of Assyria, women were relegated to marginal roles. Despite evidence of Neo-Assyrian women engaging in trade, property acquisition, and slave ownership, they remained subject to male domination. After marriage, women were transferred from paternal rule under the power of their husbands to spousal rule. Furthermore, it is important to note that women who engaged in various commercial activities during this period came from the upper class, leading to the conclusion that their social status was not unfavourable. In such a period, there are a few strong female figures who stand out. One of them, and the main focus of this article, is Queen Naqī'a. The main objective is to explore the political power that Queen Naqī'a wielded, and gain a better understanding on the extent of her influence. The article seeks to answer the following question: Was Naqī'a's power institutionalised or was it based on an "invisible power" or "visible power"? Additionally, how did she attain, retain, and relinquish her influential status? The second objective of this article is to understand the nature of Naqī'a's political influence during the reigns of her husband Sennacherib, her son Esarhaddon and her grandson Assurbanipal. This study differentiates Naqī'a's adê (state treaty) from other Neo-Assyrian adês by analysing the political context in which it was formed. Our aim is to provide an impartial assessment of the role of women in the Assyrian state by closely scrutinising Naqī'a's adê and by offering a nuanced comprehension of the socio-political situation that shaped Naqī'a's position.

Chalendar, V  r  ne

Clothes, rags and wool: Unveiling the practical and symbolic dimensions of textiles in Assyro-Babylonian therapeutic practices.

Time: Friday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

This presentation will provide an initial overview of the use of textiles in rituals and therapeutic prescriptions. Indeed, while these procedures regularly mention the use of textiles, they do not seem to have been studied in depth in this specific context. Yet wool, which can be specified as raw, dyed, carded, etc., finds a variety of uses, such as the manufacture of threads, phylacteries or wads. Mention is also made of fabrics whose material is sometimes specified (linen, for example) for making bandages, but also for carrying out technical operations in the preparation of remedies, such as filtration. Finally, several kinds of clothing are mentioned, either for the patient or, more regularly, for effigies created as part of rituals. The identification of these different garments is not always obvious, and contextual analysis could help refine their translation. In this paper, particular attention will be paid to the terminology, materials and colors of these textiles, which will be analyzed in their context of use. It is hoped that this preliminary study of these textiles will shed light on certain practical and symbolic aspects of Mesopotamian therapeutics.

Chike, Julian

Cultural Memory and Structural Amnesia: Conceptualizing the (De-) Construction of Ancient Western Asian Standing Stones

Time: Monday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

Over the past century, archaeologists have discovered a myriad of upright standing stones in various ancient Western Asian regions from as early as the Chalcolithic Age down to the Iron Age. They are designated with terms such as maṣṣebâ (in Levantine and Phoenician sources), 'anṣāb (in Arabic sources), sikkānum (in Ugaritic, Emarite, and Mariote sources), ḥumūsum/rāmum (Mariote sources), and ḥuwaši (in Hittite sources). While most of the scholarly discussion has centered around the production and use of these standing stones (i.e., why did the ancients desire to make them?), less attention has been given to the destruction and abuse of these standing stones (i.e., why did ancients desire to break them?). Only a few administrative texts from Mari and religious texts from the Levant offer textual documentation of such intentional iconoclasm; but these, however, do not disclose any underlying motivations of the iconoclast. To shed further light on these documented acts of iconoclasm, I offer an interdisciplinary analysis that draws from scholarship on Assyriology, sociology, theology, and the cognitive sciences. In particular, I engage with the theoretical frameworks of Pierre Nora's *Les Lieux de Memoire* and Christopher Kavanagh's work on ritual and social cohesion in conversation with recent scholarship on iconoclasm (e.g., David Freedberg, Kristine Kulrod, Marina Prusac). As the standing stones perpetuated cultural memory by re-administering the presence of the past in the present, the intentional destruction/deactivation of these "sites of memory" may be likened to structural amnesia – the prevention of memory from its consolidation in history.

Coppini, Costanza

Political contacts and influence on ceramic production and consumption: the case of Tell Fekheriye (Syria) between the Mittani and the Middle Assyrian periods

Time: Tuesday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P III

Before the rise of the Assyrian Empire in the first millennium BC, the territory encompassing the Khabur basin and valley (northeastern Syria) and the Tigris valley, from the plains north of the Tur Abdin to the steppe plains of modern-day northern Iraq, was a fundamental part of the Middle Assyrian and Mittani kingdoms. In this vast area, the site of Tell Fekheriye, located in the upper Khabur basin in the Syrian Jezirah, provides the ideal case study to investigate habitus formation when referring to the concept of identity in the daily lives of individuals. The site was excavated between 2006 and 2010 by a German team from the Freie Universität Berlin, led by Dominik Bonatz, and it revealed a Late Bronze Age occupation, demonstrating that the site was a major centre during both the Mittani and Middle Assyrian periods. Therefore, the ceramic assemblages and contexts excavated in Area C indicate changes not only in the mere ceramic vessels, but also in their function, according to the finding context. This is particularly evident in the Middle Assyrian phases when the occurrence of distinctive ceramic types with clay sealings and written sources allows for the reconstruction of the economic and political environment at the site. In this paper, I propose to discuss the topics of identity and economy in relation to the Middle Assyrian ceramics and associated finds and contexts at the site of Tell Fekheriye.

Curcio, Cloe

My Garden is Greener than Yours. Defining Intercommunity Relations through Gardens and Parks in Ancient Mesopotamia

Time: Monday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P III

Gardens and parks become social symbols for ancient Mesopotamian communities. They are perceived as expressions of wealth and prosperity, they are charged with sacred and liminal values, they contribute to the ecological monumentalization of human and divine power and since the 2nd mill. BCE they are conceived as “identity criteria” for the city. Gardens and parks highlight social distinctions on an intracommunity level, but they are also favored places for the consideration of intercommunity relations, contributing to the construction of a cohesive cultural analysis in terms of identification and differentiation, but also by showcasing superiority. This process, which is at the core of the present paper, happens in a threefold way: by appropriation or destruction of the enemy’s gardens following a military victory; through the importation of exotic vegetal and animal species; by reproducing foreign miniature landscapes at home, conceptualizing them as “better” than the original ones.

Cyrus, Georg

Forced migration and agricultural production in the Neo-Assyrian empire – a household archaeological view.

Time: Tuesday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

During the Neo-Assyrian Empire large relocation projects of subdued inhabitants and the forced sedentarization of nomads were conducted to control the population and to channel their work force. Although these groups could become proper Assyrian citizens most of them also ended up in agricultural production, where the worth of the Assyrian citizenship is debatable. Within the archaeological record we can identify the houses and villages of people that were coercively settled. In general, the occurrence of small, one-phased sites dating to the 9th to 7th centuries BCE fit the description of these large-scaled, agricultural projects. However, although many of these sites are known due to various survey projects, most of them remain unexcavated.

In this talk I want to discuss these settlements, as they give us an idea about the materiality of the living conditions of those that were forcefully settled. This is important for the ongoing discussion on how to judge the deportation and sedenterization practices of the Neo-Assyrian Empire that falls within two extremes: between a negative, orientalist/despotic view on the one hand and a positive view that depicts the empire as force of progress. I suggest that a third perspective must be possible that tries to understand the majority of its citizens. This perspective is possible with household archaeology as it deals with a source that was created by this silenced majority and it may bring us closer to the reality of ancient, forced migration and sedentarization that certainly was brutal but not in the despotic way we expect it to have been.

Dahl, Jacob

AN 1952-0021: gaps in our sources and the collapse of states.

Time: Friday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P III

I will use a cylinder seal in the Ashmolean Museum (Ashm 1952-0021 = Buchanan 1966: number 466 = P473152), to explain the lack of physical Ur III cylinder seals in modern collections. I will suggest that most of the seals listed as Ur III (or even Neo-Sumerian) in published catalogues are of either post-Akkadian or Isin-Larsa date, and that most of the original Ur III seals were re-cut and re-used in the subsequent Isin-Larsa or Old Babylonian periods. I will then use this to argue that although the Ur III dynasty collapsed, daily life in southern Mesopotamia continued without any greater disruption.

Daneshmand, Parsa

Between Refusal and Acceptance: Cultural Dynamics through Schismogenesis in Ancient Elam

Time: Wednesday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P III

This paper explores the concept of schismogenesis to analyze cultural distinctions between the ancient Elamite civilization and its Mesopotamian counterparts, as well as schismogenesis within the Elamite culture. Despite awareness of the Mesopotamian cuneiform script and a native Elamite writing system (Proto-Elamite), communities in ancient Iran, particularly around Susa, exhibited reluctance to adopt writing. The resulting schismogenesis manifested both within Iran and in the divergence between Susa and Mesopotamia. Notably, Susa's scribes adopted Mesopotamian cuneiform with deliberate alterations but refrained from using it for religious texts, possibly indicating a cultural restriction. The absence of Elamite incantations in Susa, in contrast to Mesopotamia, suggests potential taboos or cultural restrictions on documenting certain rituals within Elamite territories. This discrepancy may reflect societal norms or religious beliefs influencing the transmission and inscription of these texts, leading to their scarcity in Susian excavations. The intentional divergence in Akkadian omen texts found in Susa, marked by the use of logograms, altered syllabic values, and new logograms, highlights a purposeful effort to establish a unique orthography distinct from Mesopotamia. This study contributes to understanding schismogenesis in ancient cultures and offers insight into the intricate dynamics of writing adoption, adaptation, and cultural practices in the ancient Elamite civilization.

Darby, Erin

Excavating Identity along Imperial Borderlands?: The Shrine Artisans of Southern Israel

Time: Monday 17:30–18:00

Venue: Porthania P III

The study of ancient Israel knows no shortage of purported identity-markers, but ritual objects pose particular problems. The scholarly tendency to associate political affiliation with the veneration of “national” deities often leads to the elision of political, ethnic, and religious identities, such that the deity venerated at a site is taken as a proxy for political and ethnic affiliation. Aside from its theoretical weaknesses, this approach is also plagued by the limited extent to which ritual objects, like those uncovered in Iron IIc southern Israel, can be identified with any known deities. Nor is it a simple matter to correlate the artistic style of the ritual objects with known ethnic groups or national borders. Nevertheless, these challenges have not impeded scholars from positing various reconstructions of identity and affiliation for the region. At the same time, ritual objects allow us to think constructively about the production communities responsible for ritual assemblages and the varying production organizations and institutional affiliations that create, sustain, and challenge identities. All too often, craft producers are omitted from archaeological treatments of identity. While publications may engage with iconographic content on ritual objects, scholars rarely center the complexities of production process, the social organization of producers, and the varying levels and types of institutional infrastructures that enable artisan work. By moving beyond merely tracing the geographic distribution of object types or iconographic motifs, a production-centered approach to the archaeology of identity in the Negev will shine light on the often overlooked artisan population while providing a lens through which to examine the complex constellation of organizations, social hierarchies, and ritual economies responsible for ritual activities, identities, and political affiliations. When our focus shifts to the producers of ritual inventories questions arise about the infrastructure supporting production lines, their social organization, the itinerancy or permanency of the production community, and the relationship between craftspeople, ritual officials, and polities. Similarities with objects from other regions, like the kingdom of

Moab in central Jordan, belie the presence of itinerant craftspeople or a network exchanging ritual and production knowledge across the western side of the Neo Assyrian and Neo Babylonian Empires. Seen from this vantage point, identity in the southern Negev is constituted by interlocking institutions, infrastructures, and industries.

de Boer, Rients

Al-Hussainy, Abbas

The 2023 fieldwork season at ancient Marad

Time: Thursday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P I

Between October and December of 2023, a collaborative Iraqi-Dutch archaeological team excavated at the ancient site of Marad (known today as Tell es-Sadoum), located within the Al-Qadisiyah governorate in southern Iraq. The primary aim of this excavation was to delve into the city's historical evolution during the extensive period from 2340 to approximately 1600 BCE. A focal point of the investigation was to discern whether the era of Marad's autonomy —around 1890 to 1860 BCE— exhibited distinct characteristics compared to times when it was under the dominion of larger polities. This period of independence is notable for Marad being governed by a succession of rulers bearing Amorite names. The research team is keen to explore the impact of this Amorite dominance on Marad, particularly in terms of cultural, political, and social aspects. The 2023 excavation season concentrated its efforts on two specific areas: Area B and Area J. Area B extends the work of prior digs and Area J represents a newly opened trench for this season. This communication will share the initial findings from these recent excavations, shedding light on Marad's storied past.

De Graef, Katrien

Matrons of Monarchy: Exploring the Power of Motherhood in Elamite Political Dynamics.

Time: Wednesday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

In their inscriptions from the 2nd millennium BCE, Elamite rulers often identify themselves as the 'son of the sister' of another ruler. This kinship relation, termed 'ruhušak' in Elamite and translated into Sumero-Akkadian as *dumu-nin9-šu* or *mār ahaṭišu* (literally, 'the son of his sister'), has sparked considerable debate. Although initially contested, it is now widely accepted that 'ruhušak' denotes an avuncular (uncle-nephew) succession. This is generally considered a claim to power through fictitious lineage, rather than embodying a biological and legitimate succession practice. Rulers used 'ruhušak' as an epithet to accrue higher status by asserting descent from a respected, albeit distant, predecessor via his sister. However, a reappraisal of the sources, enriched by new textual material, suggests that the avunculate in Elamite royalty may have been a biological reality rather than a mere titular device to legitimise power through fictive descent. Evidence of this includes rulers who emphasized their avuncular succession through a dual lineage, either by underscoring their shared mother and brotherhood with the preceding ruler or by explicitly naming their mother (the otherwise unnamed sister). Although embedded in a complex web of power dynamics that alternated between matrilineal and patrilineal bases, the practice of avuncular succession in Elamite society underscores a matrilineal tradition. Within this framework, the Queen-Sister, as the mother of heirs to the throne, played a pivotal role: power and functions were transferred among males but through females. Documentary evidence also unveils a societal structure where both brothers and sisters played significant roles in property inheritance and ownership, indicating a nuanced approach to kinship and succession that valued both matrilineal and patrilineal lines, contingent on the context. This study focuses on the Queen-Sister's strategic role in birthing future rulers, thereby maintaining power within the socio-political fabric of the Elamite state. It also explores the potential ethnic implications of preserving Elamite lineage through maternal lines in contrast to the influences of foreign marriage.

De Magistris, Francesco

The Chronology of the Amarna Letters: a Digital Approach

Time: Thursday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

The corpus of letters found in the Egyptian capital of Akhetaten – modern Tell el-Amarna – is arguably the most important source of information on the Near East during the 14th century BC. The letters found in the Egyptian capital of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten are administrative and diplomatic briefs sent to Egypt from across the Near East. They discuss the short-term necessities and circumstances of either regional kingdoms like Hatti and Mittani or of small and belligerent Levantine cities. The letters, sent over a timespan of about 30 years, were never meant to form a coherent narrative and the sequence of the events they expose is often difficult to reconstruct. Over the past decades, this sequence has become a disputed and thorny problem, both for the diachronic sequence of the letters themselves, and for the placement of the events they narrate (including the fall of Mittani and the early days of Middle Assyria) in the wider Near Eastern chronology. This presentation will focus on a methodology capable of establishing a clear chronology of the Amarna Letters. The methodology consists of both analytical and digital instruments. The analytical instruments connect the letters to one another, retrieve historical and geographical data from the corpus, and contextualize the information. The digital instrument is Chronolog, developed by Eythan Levy (Zurich University). Chronolog is capable of organizing the vast network of connections between letters, verify that the database does not contain internal contradiction, and identify the shortest possible time range allowed by the data. Together, they organize the Amarna Letters in recognizable patterns that make it possible to reconstruct the chronological succession of the letters and of the events that they discuss.

de Ridder, Alba

The Great Star is for an attack by Subartu: Predicting the Future for the Polities in Enūma Anu Enlil

Time: Tuesday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P II

Like all cultural artefacts, omen compendia are a product of their society. Written in Babylonia and Assyria, the foreign lands of Amurru, Elam, Gutu and Subartu figure extensively in the astrological series Enūma Anu Enlil. In Mesopotamian thought, the terrestrial, lunar and solar surfaces could be divided into four quarters, associated with, and named after five lands: Akkad, the land of the diviners, and Amurru, Elam, Gutu and Subartu. The foreign lands all had a unique relationship, both historical and in literary texts, to the inhabitants of Mesopotamia. that could relate themselves to Akkad in different ways. Because of the seemingly regular, highly-structured nature of the omens, where an omen about the east is generally followed by an (inverse) omen about the west, it is often assumed that the omens treat all five lands in the same way, with an “impartial” judgment. However, my research shows that this is far from the case. My paper looks at the ways in which the omen compendium of Enūma Anu Enlil relates to the five different lands. Which outcomes are attested for these five lands in the omen compendia? Did the relationships of the Mesopotamians with the foreign lands influence what was thought possible to happen in the future? And were those possibilities the same in practical divination, as evidenced in astrological reports, as dictated by the compendia? My paper focusses on the roles and characterizations of the five main lands in Enūma Anu Enlil, evidenced mainly in the first millennium, but it will take other omen series into account as well. My research shows that the omen collections distinguish the types of dangers faced and posed by the five most important lands, and that these differences can be explained by examining the stereotypes and the relative power-dynamics with these lands from the perspective of the Babylonians and especially the Assyrians.

de Ridder, Jacob

The stewards' archive: epigraphical finds from the 2001 excavations in Assur

Time: Thursday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P II

The Middle Assyrian M 7 archive belongs to the official administration, with the mašennu (AGRIG) 'steward' playing a central role in most documents. It was uncovered southwest of the Sîn-Šamaš temple of Aššur in a large building on two occasions. The first group of ca. 410 tablets was discovered during the excavations of Walter Andrae in the early 20th century with several main excavation numbers: Ass. 13058, Ass. 21101 and Ass. 21036. A large number of additional tablets were excavated by Peter Miglus' team in 2001. These tablets were never properly published due to the consequences of the second gulf war. This paper will report on the current state of the tablets and the prospects of publication. Their content as well as their relation to the archive as excavated by Walter Andrae will be discussed. The information provided follows cooperation with Eckart Frahm, epigraphist of the tablets.

Debourse, Céline

Gabbay, Uri

Recording ritual in the Late Babylonian Series of "Ancient Sumerian"

Time: Friday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P II

Several Late Babylonian ritual texts, including the New Year Festival texts, bear a colophon indicating that they were part of a series with the emic title “Ancient Sumerian”. The exact nature of this series remains obscure and its creation in this late stage of cuneiform culture raises many questions. In this paper we shed new light on “Ancient Sumerian”, reconsidering its title, reflecting on the principles of serialization behind it, and speculating on its intended purposes. We show that at the macro level of epistemic ordering, the creation of textual series too was dependent on its social setting.

DeGrado, Jessie

“Any Qadištu Can Do It”: SAA 10 245–246 and the Lunar Eclipse of 670 BCE

Time: Friday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

Two letters written by Esarhaddon’s chief āšipu Marduk-šakin-šumi, SAA 10 245 (LAS 186) and 246 (LAS 187), discuss the actions of an unnamed female ritual participant. In his edition of the texts, Simo Parpola (1983 [LAS II]) assumed that the woman involved must be a ritual patient. On this basis, he classified the letters as rituals for Esarhaddon’s mother, Naqia, and his reconstruction has been accepted in nearly all subsequent studies. I argue instead that the letters pertain to the performance of apotropaic rituals for the king and crown prince and belong to a dossier of missives sent by Marduk-šakin-šumi in response to a lunar eclipse on 15 Kislīmu (22 December), 670 BCE. In this context, the unnamed female participant is an officiant, not patient, and can be identified with the qadištu mentioned in SAA 246: 13’–14’. The two letters thus add significantly to our understanding of women’s participation in state-sponsored rituals during the Neo-Assyrian period.

Delnero, Paul

The Structure and Organization of Very Elementary Education at Nippur

Time: Friday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P II

At Nippur in the early second millennium, the place and period for which the most abundant evidence for scribal training are preserved, the first and most elementary phase of education was bookended by two signs lists: Syllable Alphabet B and Proto-Ea. The first, Syllable Alphabet B, consists of a small number of mostly simple cuneiform signs repeated, without pronunciation glosses, in different sequences throughout the list. The second, Proto-Ea, is a much more extensive list of over 800 basic and complex signs, none of which are repeated, and nearly all of which are listed with signs indicating how they were pronounced. While it is clear that these two lists — and the personal name and thematic word lists that were learned between them — were intended to teach the most basic and essential aspects of how to write and use the cuneiform writing system, how these lists were structured to teach these skills has yet to be considered in any depth. In this paper, the content and pedagogical structure of Syllable Alphabet B and Proto-Ea will be examined to show the different ways in which these lists were used to teach how to write and pronounce cuneiform signs.

Díaz Herrera, Marta

a-ku-me-pap: Building on Previous Knowledge in Old Babylonian Nippur Schools

Time: Friday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P II

The curriculum of Old Babylonian Nippur schools (ca. 1800–1700 BCE) is known for its recursiveness: the content learned during the early stages of education through sign exercises and lexical lists is found again in the second, literary phase of the curriculum, more or less explicitly. Cases of such intertextuality, or inter-compositional dependence (Crisostomo 2015), include the connection between the Early Dynastic list of birds—an extra-curricular composition—and the literary composition *Nanše and the Birds* (Veldhuis 2004), the acrographic list of words *Izi* and the *Enheduana Corpus* (Crisostomo 2015), and the list of words *Lu-azlag* and the *Edubba'a literature* (Böck 1999; Crisostomo 2015; Gadotti and Kleinerman 2017). In this talk, I present yet another case of intertextuality between curricular compositions copied in the scribal schools of Nippur, here involving two lists taught during the first phase of scribal education: the elementary sign exercise *Syllable Alphabet B* (SAb) and the advanced lexical list of simple signs *Ea* (also known as *Proto-Ea*). I show that there is a direct structural dependence between these two lists such that virtually every new sign listed in *Ea*—unless triggered by graphic or thematic association—follows the same order as in SAb. This observation deepens our knowledge of *Ea* and the Nippur scribal curriculum. First, this connection strengthens the argument that *Ea* was composed after the Ur III period (Edzard 1982, 57), localizing its creation more securely within Old Babylonian Nippur, given that SAb is unique to this time and place, and the social setting for its creation within the scribal school. Second, the structure of *Ea*, as established by Edzard (1982), must be revisited, expanding it to three structural levels: a supra-macro-structure corresponding to the sequence of signs in SAb, a macro-structure where signs resembling one another are grouped into “families,” and a micro-structure where the readings of the signs are listed. Moreover, the inter-compositional dependence of SAb and *Ea* can account for some of the sequences in the latter advanced list which Edzard (1982) had difficulty explaining. Third, the shared structure between SAb and *Ea* provides another example of

recursiveness and the use of constructivist pedagogic methods: teachers expanded students' knowledge by building on their previous experience. Finally, by looking at what is common and different between the two lists, we can gain a deeper insight into the conceptualization of signs in the Old Babylonian period.

Dietz, Albert

Dinner for one? Early Dynastic stamp seals and the adaption of popular cylinder seal scenes

Time: Friday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

During the 7th millennium BCE stamp seals became essential components in the ever-growing organization of settlements. They were necessary for the successful trade networks and the administration of the first cities. However, by the end of the 4th millennium BCE, stamp seals were all but replaced by the iconic cylinder seals in Mesopotamia. By the 3rd Millennium BCE, cylinder seals display intricate motifs, taking advantage of a larger 'canvas'. Early Dynastic cylinder seals are most well-known for their complex animal contest and banquet scenes, highlighting the possibilities of compositions. But what about stamp seals? How frequently are they used in the 3rd millennium BCE Mesopotamia? Do they display the same complex scenes seen from cylinder seals? Inspired by an unpublished stamp seal from the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe (Hamburg, Germany), I examine the continued use of Early Dynastic stamp seals, focusing on the imagery they display. In the absence of the extra space provided by cylinder seals, what elements remain on stamp seals? Do these differences influence the choice to use either cylinder or stamp seals? Investigating the iconographic similarities and differences between stamp seals and cylinder seals provides a better understanding of use and utilization of seals in Mesopotamian society.

Djabellaoui, Mustapha

Political Construction in Babylonia during the Long Chaldean 8th century B.C

Time: Monday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P I

This communication focuses on the nature of the political structures established and practiced by the Chaldeans in Babylonia between 850 and 638. These state-like organizational structures were called *bītus* (e.g. *Bīt-Yakīn* “House of Yakīn”), but in fact they were polities displaying some but not all the usual characteristics of a Babylonian kingdom. They were hybrid structures, shaped politically by ongoing contacts between the Babylonian world and its neighbors, mainly Assyria and the West, but also Elam. The relevant corpus consists of kudurrus, letters, economic texts, and Assyrian royal inscriptions. Based on this evidence, my communication proposes a political history of the five Chaldeans houses during the “long Chaldean 8th century” (ca. 812-689). It focuses on the social and political structure of the *bītus*, emphasizing differences between Chaldean and Aramaean political organization. It also examines the economic pattern of Chaldeans *bītus* and their involvement both with the temples and with the Crown. The main issue at stake is how to operate distinctions between the different structures of power in Babylonia during the first half of the 1st millennium: the Babylonian kingdom, the Chaldean polities spread all over the country, and the system set up by the Assyrians. It appears that Chaldeans were organized in lineages and Arameans in tribal chiefdoms, while the king of Babylon acted as mere intendant responsible chiefly for the management of current affairs. Assyria succeeded in preventing the Chaldean political structures from reaching a significant degree of organization, even if, paradoxically, it contributed to their rise.

Dubovsky, Peter

The first years of Sargon II's reign: A study of Royal Identity and Rhetoric

Time: Tuesday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P I

Grant Frame has reconstructed the first thirteen lines of Sargon II's annals from the palace at Khrosabad (published in 2021, 2023). Eckart Frahm compared Sargon II's inscriptions and suggested that the earlier inscriptions from the beginning of his reign do not mention some events such as Sargon II's conquest of Samaria (published in 2018). Sargon II's victorious campaign against Samaria situated in his accession year appears only in later inscriptions. This paper examines Sargon II's annals from the literary and intertextual viewpoints. First, I analyze literary techniques that the later scribes used to re-interpret the earlier campaigns, such as stereotyped phraseology, telescoping, retrojecting, etc. The analysis of these literary techniques will us to argue that Sargon II's scribe felt obliged to fill the gap of Sargon's first regnal years and credited Sargon with events that did not take place at his accession and first year of his reign. Based on this analysis, I will propose a new reconstruction of Sargon II's first years.

Edmonds, Alexander Johannes

Aššur-uballiṭ 1.5: Yet another New Neo-Assyrian King

Time: Tuesday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P I

With the very recent identification by Eckart Frahm of a new Neo-Assyrian rebel king Tilgath-pileser during the reign of Aššur-dān III (772–755), the present reconstruction of the succession of Assyrian kings during the early Neo-Assyrian period must be critically reassessed. The present paper examines an unusual reference to an “Aššur-uballiṭ” within the early Neo-Assyrian textual corpus, and explores a series of hitherto overlooked irregularities in the accession of Adad-nārārī II of Assyria (911–891), most prominently his mutilation of a colossal statue of a previous Assyrian ruler to create his own eponym stele. From this and other evidence, it is demonstrated that Adad-nārārī II had usurped the throne from a previous king, who must be none other than this same Aššur-uballiṭ. From this, the wider consequences for the understanding of this period are discussed, and some further irregularities in the succession of early Neo-Assyrian kings briefly identified, one of which might even harbour yet another forgotten ruler.

Endesfelder, Marc

The "Writing Sumerian" Corpus: Developing a Machine-Oriented Representation of Cuneiform Texts

Time: Tuesday 17:30–18:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

Digital methods hold vast potential for the study of cuneiform text corpora. However, their effectiveness strongly depends on the underlying representation of the cuneiform texts. Classical cuneiform transliterations, even when optimized for machine-readability, encode many disparate pieces of information (that may or may not be relevant for a given task) in ways, that are very difficult for machines to untangle. It is therefore usually advantageous to convert them to a more machine-oriented format that precisely reflects the inherent structure of the information contained in the texts. This significantly reduces the complexity of developing algorithms that run on these data, while multiplying their capabilities and efficiency. The project "Writing Sumerian" seeks to conduct a comprehensive analysis of third millennium Sumerian orthography based on an extensive digital corpus. This requires precise tools to search, harmonize and analyze the corpus, which in turn depend on a highly optimized underlying data format. This paper will introduce some of the basic principles that govern the representation of cuneiform texts in the "Writing Sumerian" corpus, and demonstrate how these facilitate simpler and at the same time more powerful algorithms. An online version of the corpus is already available under <https://corpus.writing-sumerian.assyriologie.uni-muenchen.de> and will receive a major update in the coming months.

Eph'al-Jaruzelska, Izabela

Was Legitimacy an Attribute of Ancient Near Eastern Monarchies?

Time: Tuesday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P I

Was Legitimacy an Attribute of Ancient Near Eastern Monarchies? Izabela Eph'al-Jaruzelska In this paper it is argued that the ancient Near Eastern sources are consistent with political legitimacy as it is defined in political science; i.e., the recognition of a ruler's right to demand obedience from his subjects. The three basic conditions for such recognition are: 1) his power has been acquired and exercised according to accepted rules; 2) these rules are validated by beliefs that are shared by both rulers and ruled; and 3) power is justified by appropriate acts of recognition and approval. Based on the political science view that political legitimacy is a universal phenomenon, we must acknowledge that these three criteria may have taken different forms in different periods of history. Each of the three are illustrated by the Mesopotamian sources (mainly royal inscriptions) from the pre-Sargonic through the Persian periods. Examples are deliberately taken from the texts of rulers who came to power by usurpation, since usurpers often used the arguments of legitimate rulers in their search for recognition. This confirms the claim that the rules of legitimacy show their strength when they are lacking. Although the ancient Near Eastern sources, often fragmentary and laconic, do not always allow us to conclude whether a specific kingship in the areas under discussion was ultimately deemed legitimate, according to the aforementioned three criteria above, they reveal a sophisticated idea of what constituted legitimate authority. The paper's final insight is that royal legitimization propaganda is to be understood as being directed primarily at royal officials. This observation illustrates Max Weber's view that both rulers and their administrative staff, rather than the general population, must be the main parties involved in the legitimation of power. These officials were the first addressees of the sovereign, since they were the intermediaries through whom he ruled. As a sovereign would be unable to exercise his power without the obedience of his administrative apparatus, it was necessary for the king to concentrate his efforts on convincing them of his legitimacy, so as to gain their compliance and loyalty.

Fechner, Josephine

Dumuzi's escape from the netherworld demons and Ĝeštinana's lament: Exploring the hermeneutics of a ritual narrated in a myth

Time: Thursday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

The Old Babylonian Sumerian cultic song known under the title "Dumuzi and Ĝeštinana" (UET 6, 11) was recently re-edited by several Sumerologists (Attinger 2023; Pintér 2022; Peterson 2019). This important philological groundwork considerably facilitates an in-depth analysis of its contents, which has not yet been undertaken. For an assessment of the contents of this cultic song, the methodology of Hylistics is an optimal tool, since it enables the identification and reconstruction of the mythic narrative materials contained in this text. This paper attempts at reconstructing and analyzing one of the myths related in "Dumuzi and Ĝeštinana". It is a myth in which Dumuzi briefly escapes from the netherworld demons to his sister Ĝeštinana, who then performs a death lament for him. But while Ĝeštinana is still lamenting for Dumuzi, the netherworld demons come to Ĝeštinana in search of the escaped Dumuzi, find Dumuzi there, and eventually abduct him into the netherworld. As such it may be asked: was Dumuzi's brief escape from the netherworld demons in vain? Or is there a purpose behind it, and if so, which one? And what is the function of Ĝeštinana's death lament in this context? Or was it also in vain, as it was interrupted and cut off by the demons? In order to approach these questions and, thereby, to explore the hermeneutics of this myth and of the ritual contained and narrated in it, a thorough (re)reading of this myth in combination with a hyleme analysis will be undertaken in this paper.

Felli, Candida

Taylor-made: the interplay between seal image and power in 3rd Millennium Mesopotamia

Time: Friday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

Seals are a fundamental tool in the functioning of the bureaucratic machine of 3rd millennium urban societies of ancient Mesopotamia. The rationale behind the choice of their imagery is neither obvious nor easy to detect but has clearly to do with the seal functions and the value of images in Mesopotamian world. The paper tackles the question by reviewing seals of officials linked to the royal family both at the time of the Akkadian and the Ur III periods. The adoption of specific scenes or the insertion of specific details within standardized types of scenes will be considered in relation with the officials' role and career and compared with other, different, cases. Aim of the study is to investigate aspects of continuities and change in visual communication through time and ultimately to address the complex issue of the interplay between power and bureaucracy in these ancient societies.

Fernandes, Charlotte

« This is the way » : A transmission of Knowledge between the Hittites, Ugarit and Emar

Time: Tuesday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P III

Hittite political domination of northern Syria after the fall of the Mitanni kingdom in the mid-14th century raises the question of its impact on the religious life of its vassals. Given the numerous religious texts they produced and their political situation, the two great cities of Emar and Ugarit are ideally suited to studying this phenomenon. Until now, the focus has generally been on understanding whether the creation of new types of knowledge during this period of Hittite domination was a political desire to interfere by imposing new cultic practices, or whether it was a social initiative responding to specific needs. This paper proposes to shed light on the ways in which this knowledge circulated by comparing Hittite documentation with sources from Emar and Ugarit. The analysis and recontextualisation of several case studies will enable us to understand how this new religious knowledge was created and received. Hittite gods were integrated into the religious life of Emar, as illustrated by the 'Anatolian' rituals, and Emariot gods were integrated by the Hittites in Anatolia in the oracular accounts. Diviners and priests were sent to each other's cities to question adopted deities about their well-being in oracular accounts from the city of Emar. Rituals such as malḥašše sacrifices have been identified in texts from Ugarit. The expression "in the manner of Aštata/of Ḫattuša" tends to prove that some cult specificities were nevertheless preserved depending on the deities honoured. This circulation of knowledge could also have been accompanied, on the other hand, by a certain resistance to adaptations such as the great local festivals and cults of Emar and Ugarit, which seem to have remained rooted in their local traditions without much Hittite interference. These few examples are intended to demonstrate the variety of ways in which knowledge circulates, between knowledge that is transmitted, received, adapted, adopted and also rejected. Ḫattuša, Emar and Ugarit are particularly suitable sites for studying the links between the circulation of knowledge, the geopolitical context and the influence of the periphery on the centre and vice versa.

Fernandes Pedroso, Gustavo

Harmony in Contrast: Poetic Metre, Structure, and Antitheses in Ludlul bēl nēmeqi and Akkadian Incantation-Prayers

Time: Tuesday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

In Ludlul bēl nēmeqi, Marduk is an angry deity who abandoned and punished the sufferer Šubši-mešrê-šakkan, but also a merciful god who relented and forgave him. This duality is not exclusive to Marduk; other deities are described in a similar manner in other compositions such as lamentations and prayers. The contrast between divine anger and mercy is a common motif across different textual types, including Akkadian incantation-prayers (Gebetschwörungen), namely šuila- and diġiršadaba-prayers. My paper investigates how scholars deployed Akkadian poetic metre and structure to emphasize the antitheses expressing this duality across three textual types: pious sufferer poetry, focusing on Ludlul bēl nēmeqi; šuila-prayers; and diġiršadaba-prayers. I will show that similar poetic structure and metre were used in the three genres to highlight these antitheses by creating antithetical parallelism within lines and strophes. Moreover, I will demonstrate how their shared āšipūtu background and their contexts of use can explain their similar deployment of Akkadian poetic metre and structure to create harmony in contrast.

Fink, Sebastian

Emesal in the Nippur Lament

Time: Monday 15:30–16:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

Emesal in the Nippur Lament This presentation aims to analyze and understand the use of Emesal in the Nippur Lament. Therefore the Emesal vocabulary, its frequency, its contextual setting and the Emesal-Emegir variants in the extant manuscripts will be studied and compared to other city laments.

Fink, Sebastian

The Impact of SAA

Time: Wednesday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

The “State Archives of Assyria” had a deep impact on the Assyriological community and many studies and books would not have been possible without the groundbreaking work conducted by Simo Parpola and his team. With the project Helsinki became a hot-spot for Neo-Assyrian studies and a who-is-who of international Assyriologists visited Helsinki during the project. While it is obvious for anyone in the field that SAA pushed Neo-Assyrian studies to a new level, I also want to stress that the texts and studies published by the project had a deep impact on neighboring fields. To give just one prominent example: The prophecies published in SAA IX are much discussed in Biblical Studies and today most Biblical scholars would agree that it is impossible to understand Biblical prophecy without its Near Eastern Context. Also the Melammu-Project is a child of SAA and would not have been possible without it. Its aim is to investigate the continuity, transformation, and diffusion of Mesopotamian and Ancient Near Eastern culture from the third millennium BCE through the ancient world until Islamic times and after. In this talk I will try to outline the impact of SAA on Assyriology, Biblical Studies and Ancient History.

Flores, Marc

Gilgamesh, Huwawa, and the Netherworld

Time: Monday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

Gilgamesh's journey to the Cedar Mountains in Gilgamesh and Huwawa A (GH A) is usually understood as a journey to the "Land of the Living". In his *editio princeps*, Kramer called the story "Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living" and, since then, many scholars have translated the opening lines of the text accordingly: "Lord Gilgamesh set his mind to the Land of the Living" (en dbil3-ga-mes-e kur lu2 til3-la-še3 ġeš-tu9ġeštu-ga-ni na-an-gub). More recently, Alhena Gadotti has made a compelling case in favor of this understanding. A catch-line with the opening line of GH A at the end of a Meturan tablet of Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld (GEN) suggests that the events narrated in GH A follow those of GEN. Because the Meturan GEN tablet concludes with Enkidu's gloomy description of the netherworld, Gadotti argues that learning about the fate of humanity "spurred Gilgameš to turn his attention to a better, more promising kur" –the Land of the Living. I argue that, in competition with the Meturan tradition, GH A was understood elsewhere as a journey to the fringes of the netherworld. The netherworldly dimensions of GH A have not been thoroughly investigated before. While scholars like Edzard, Shaffer, and Römer already picked up on the intertextual connections between GH A and Inana's Descent, the implications of these intertextual connections for the interpretation of GH A have never been explored. While references to Inana's Descent are the most conspicuous, I show that GH A displays other allusions to the netherworld, including Inana's deathly look in Uruamairabi, the term kur "land/mountain/netherworld", Huwawa's demonic characteristics, and the netherworldly aspects of Utu and the Seven. Together with the mention of Ningišzida in a GH A fragment identified by Peterson, and of the iri-gal "netherworld" in a new source to be published by Volk, I argue that all these references attest to a scribal tradition that conceptualized GH A as a journey to the fringes of the netherworld. Since this tradition seems to have coexisted with the Meturan tradition, which understands GH A as a journey to the Land of the Living, I conclude by reevaluating some aspects of Gadotti's characterization of the Sumerian Gilgamesh Cycle.

Fraenkel, Aviya

[mu BÀ]D.AN.KI ba-hul ‘The year Dēr was destroyed’: Šulgi’s 21st regnal year

Time: Friday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P I

The conquest of the city of Dēr, the historical event after which was named the 21st regnal year of Šulgi, the second king of the Ur III dynasty, stands at the center of one of the most complex and magnificent self-laudatory hymns composed in honor of the king, and of his royal majesty: Hymn Šulgi C. The long hymn was composed in two different parts, and this is the reason, that the hymn was also preserved in two non-overlapping segments: A and B. The 7 stanzas that make up Segment A vary in length and are arranged from the short to the long. In each of the stanzas, Šulgi describes in the first person, his dominance in one of the governing institutions or the events that engaged the ancient Sumerian kingdom. Segment B, the second part of the hymn, includes a historical narrative, in the background of which stands one central historical event: Šulgi’s war campaign to conquer the city of Dēr, at the foot of the Gutian mountains. During the historical narrative of Segment B, all of the talents and skills that Šulgi described in detail in Segment A, come into play. The first part of my lecture I would like to devote to a geographical-historical description of Šulgi’s war campaign to conquer the city of Dēr, a campaign that lasted only two days, and to a tactical report of the course of the battle, step by step, as it is described in detail in the center of the historical narrative of the hymn. In the second part of my lecture I would like to discuss the political, ideological and moral order that Šulgi gives in the hymn to the chain of historical and geopolitical events, those that preceded the conquest of the city of Dēr, and those that were created following it, as they are poetically described in the opening and closing units of the historical narrative of the hymn. I would like to conclude my lecture with a methodological literary discussion regarding the ideological-political use that Šulgi makes of the literary genre of the Sumerian Royal hymnology in order to reveal a systematic ideological-political order for one of the most important historical events of the king’s long reign – the short war campaign to conquer the city Dēr.

Frahm, Eckart

Tiglath-pileser 2.5: A New Neo-Assyrian King

Time: Tuesday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P I

A dearth of royal inscriptions, along with data from a variety of other sources, suggests that the power of the Assyrian crown during the period from the death of Adad-nirari III in 783 BCE to the accession of Tiglath-pileser III in 745 BCE was severely diminished. References in the Assyrian Eponym Chronicle to plague, rebellion, and the cessation of military activity point to a particularly serious crisis in the years between 765 and 745 BCE. So far, though, there was no clear evidence for dynastic infighting in the two decades prior to the insurrection that brought Tiglath-pileser III to the Assyrian throne. This paper will provide such evidence, demonstrating that the Assyrian royal family was actually far less united during this time than it has seemed. Based on a new reading of an Assyrian royal grant, the paper will show that in the late 760s, the people of the city of Ashur recognized another – a new – Tiglath-pileser, a son of Shamshi-Adad V, as their king; and it will analyze and contextualize, to the extent possible, the dramatic events related to this man's rise and fall.

Franklin, Norma

The cone-shaped object held by the genii in Aššurnāṣirpal II's palace at Kalḫu is identified as the medicinal, purifying fruit, the citron (*Citrus medica*).

Time: Tuesday 17:30–18:00

Venue: Porthania P II

This paper proposes that the cone-shaped object, held by approximately 221 genii carved on the wall reliefs of Aššurnāṣirpal II's Northwest Palace at Kalḫu, is a citron (*Citrus medica*). This identification was first proposed by Emanuel Bonavia in 1870 but then rejected. The cone-shaped object was called a purifier (*mullilu*) by the Assyrians. The citron's purifying properties were known in ancient China and India, and widely used there in traditional medicine. Recently modern pharmacological research has identified the flavonoids contained in the citron's essential oil, all of which have important purification and medicinal properties. The cone-holding genii always hold a bucket (*banduddû*) in their other hand, presumed to have held water. The bucket of water will be shown to play an important role in the extraction of the aromatic oil. Releasing the purifying oil was a simple procedure that rendered the oil ready for immediate use, in stark contrast to other perfumed oils that required weeks of preparation. The citron, and the knowledge that it was a powerful medicinal agent, apparently arrived in Assyria from the Himalayas, probably in the 9th c when it is depicted on the walls of Aššurnāṣirpal II's palace, yellow-colored citrons appear on the wall tiles of Sargon's palace, yellow is the color of a picked citron, rather than the green of those still on the tree. The citron spread westward, together with the knowledge of its ability to purify and protect from disease.

Frazer, Mary

Late Babylonian Scholarship's Debt to Assyria: The Bottleneck Hypothesis Reconsidered

Time: Wednesday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P III

This paper examines different models for the transmission of cuneiform scholarship during the seventh and sixth centuries BCE. In particular, it interrogates the idea proposed by Eleanor Robson in her 2019 monograph, *Ancient Knowledge Networks. A Social Geography of Cuneiform Scholarship in First Millennium Assyria and Babylonia*, that the fall of Nineveh in 612 BCE inadvertently led to the loss of as much as half of cuneiform written knowledge, which is often supposed to have been destroyed or irretrievably buried in Nineveh's burned palaces and temples. Drawing on the evidence of Late Babylonian manuscripts of earlier texts this paper argues that, far from removing knowledge from circulation, the collecting habits of Assyrian kings may have been crucial for the successful transmission of so much cuneiform scholarship into the sixth century BCE.

Földi, Zsombor J.

Dates and the date of Hammurāpi's death

Time: Tuesday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P I

One of the few archival documents that have directly influenced our historical reconstruction is an Old Babylonian account of dates in the cuneiform collection of the National Museum of Finland. Its date formula is often interpreted as a *terminus ante quem* of Hammurāpi's death. In my paper, I review this interpretation and gather information that may be relevant to this question.

Gabriel, Gösta

Apotropaic Myths? Babylonian Toponyms and Their Role in the City's Defense System

Time: Thursday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

How is a city protected? One might initially consider massive walls and gates, but from an emic perspective, this would not be sufficient. Threads also and above all come from numinous beings (mainly gods), which, as a consequence, necessitates divine protection. The talk will explore how this crucial aspect of the city's defense system was integrated into its infrastructure. In order to do this, I will examine the topographical list Tintir, which documents the names of various sites in the Babylonian capital, including temples, daises, streets, gates, and walls. The text of the topographical list Tintir is well known thanks to the edition of Andrew George (1992) and its digital updated version (BTTo), although some parts are still missing. The talk will expand on this solid philological groundwork. The analysis will apply the hylistic approach to selected parts of the list to extract the narrative material (Erzählstoff) from the toponyms. The specific nature of the named site will be taken into account in each case. Thus, various mythical patterns, i.e., myths with at least one variable, will be reconstructed. It will be discussed how this kind of mythical Erzählstoffe should be read and how the variables should be interpreted. This is closely linked to the question of the function of these narratives within the context of Babylon's city defense. In addition, it will be explored how the list Tintir bundles toponyms and thus creates larger narratives.

Garcia-Ventura, Agnes

López-Bertran, Mireia

Gender stereotypes in the construction of motherhood: an approach through the lens of Mesopotamian baby incantations

Time: Tuesday 18:00–18:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

Crying is a situation that anyone who cares for a baby has to deal with, especially in its first months of life. Some Mesopotamian texts, among them the ones known as baby incantations, reflect this experience. Often these texts refer to the reactions of mothers, fathers, nannies, wet nurses, gods or goddesses to a child's incessant crying. In this communication we look at the reaction of one of these groups, the mothers, in an attempt to explore certain aspects related to the construction of motherhood, and by extension of an ideal of femininity and of gender stereotypes. We take as starting point a first millennium BCE baby incantation known to us thanks to two duplicates found in the city of Assur (VAT 8896 and A 139). More specifically, we concentrate on the two references to the mother in this text. In the first one the mother herself cries when she sees that she cannot stop her baby's crying. In the second one the mother is presented as unable to attend to the work she has to do because of the baby's crying. In our analysis we argue that both references underline important pillars in the construction of femininity and, as a consequence, of gender stereotypes. On the one hand we emphasise that the crying of the mother can be read, at least partially, as an empathetic reaction. On the other, we defend that the busy mother in the text embodies the ideal of the industrious woman – in contrast to the negative archetype of the lazy woman, a frequent trope in Sumerian and Akkadian literature.

Giannone, Francesco

Control, Manipulation and Repression of Public Opinion in Second-Millennium Southwest Asia

Time: Thursday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P II

The royal discourse of the Amorite kings often refers to them as “kings of justice” or shepherds of the “human flock” of their kingdom. The authority of the king relied on his positive perception by the population (or at least by the elite). The conception of the king as just and of society as based on justice was essential, and the king was the guarantor against the structural iniquities of the socioeconomic system. However, non-propagandistic texts from the Amorite period such as letters clearly show a different picture. The state administration was extremely concerned with monitoring the internal opinion about the king and his administrators, and no event was too minor to be reported and addressed. The countermeasures could vary from the momentary removal of dissidents or their secret imprisonment, to their execution, either secret or public, to serve as an example. Similarly, in the Late Bronze Age, documents such as the Hittite Instruction texts and treaties, or the Amarna letters, show that the states were virtually obsessed with monitoring any possible seditions and treasons. Although the Late Bronze Age evidence may be less explicit than that of the Amorite period, these documents allow for similar considerations: informing was at the core of the state administration, and any possible deviant behavior towards authority had to be signaled. This paper will examine the numerous strategies devised to encourage informing, to manipulate the public opinion, and to repress any kind of defiant opinions or attitudes towards the central authorities throughout the second millennium in Southwest Asia.

Gill, Nicholas

Enki amid Snakes and Scorpions

Time: Friday 16:30–17:00

Venue: Porthania P III

One of the major questions in the study of Mesopotamian incantations is to what extent do the incantations of the first half of the second millennium represent continuity with the earlier incantation traditions of the third millennium and to what extent do they constitute a break with those earlier traditions and signify new growth and development in the Mesopotamian incantation tradition. Drawing upon new research on the incantations of the Old Babylonian period, this study will approach the question of continuity by tracing the development of a mythological motif found within incantations inscribed upon the large Sumerian collective tablet VAT 8379 (VS 17, 10). Several incantations on this tablet recount a violent encounter between Enki and a scorpion whose celestial associations are emphasized in several other incantations, an aspect of the creature which predates the Old Babylonian period by several centuries. Through a close examination of the incantations containing this motif in the first half of the second millennium and incantations dating to the third millennium, this paper will trace the origins of this motif from the third millennium into the first half of the second millennium and provide new insight into the development of the incantation tradition at the onset of the Old Babylonian period.

Goddeeris, Anne

In Service of God and King. Thoughts on the *kāribu*, his profits, his duties, and his origins.

Time: Friday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

The offerings of the *kāribu*, appearing in various texts from the first millennium BCE relating to temple management, are considered to be offerings by ordinary worshippers. As such, they have found their place in the established picture of Babylonian cult in the first millennium. However, when the title *kāribu* is traced back in time, a very different picture emerges. During the second half of the second millennium BCE, it is given to priests who receive a royal endowment. A corrected reading of a title on some Old Babylonian seals allows to go even further back in time, to the reign of Samsuiluna of Babylon. In this paper, I will reassess the glimpses of information we have concerning the *kāribu*, concerning his income, his expenses, and his status. I will show that the title *kārib šarri*, abbreviated to *kāribu* in lists of offerings, is best understood as a tool with which the king establishes and reinforces his power base in the traditional Babylonian cities. The title appears when the king reestablishes the cult in a temple after a period of crisis, and from that moment onwards members of the clergy, the local urban elite are tied to the king.

Gopnik, Hilary

Negotiating mobility: Median tactics of dispersal and congregation

Time: Tuesday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

The “Mighty Medes” (*madāya dannūti*) became a thorn in the side of the Assyrian Empire, not least because they were adept at avoiding the administrative control of taxation and tribute. Unlike urban-centered polities, the Assyrian tactic of siege and deportation seems to have been relatively ineffective in controlling these communities, arguably because they could easily disperse when threatened. Both archaeologically and textually, there is evidence to suggest that the Medes were agropastoralists who lived in small communities, but whose strength derived from their ability to congregate and disperse. While we have relatively few archaeological sites that can be definitively identified as Median, landscape surveys indicate that the pattern of dense settlement in the Bronze Age was abandoned in the Iron Age to give way to dispersed settlement with nodes of congregation in regions that crosscut zones of agriculture and pasturage. This presentation will argue that this mode of mobility was a fluid and active response to imperial pressures rather than a static adaptation to the environment of the Zagros mountains.

Gordin, Shai
Romach, Avital
Lincke, Eliese-Sophia
Hubert, Mara
Sahala, Aleks
Béranger, Marine

OpenDANES: An Open Access Platform for the Ancient Near East and Neighbouring Cultures

Time: Wednesday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

This talk presents OpenDANES, one of several activities of the Digital Ancient Near Eastern Studies network (DANES) to promote transparent digital and computational studies of the ANE (<https://opendanes.org/>). The creation of the platform and the network's other activities—working groups, a monthly newsletter, and a Discord community—are meant to promote digital literacy and the application of computational methodologies in our fields of study. Without minimal background in these methods, it is difficult to understand how they enrich our understanding of the ancient world. The transformation of texts, images, and objects into digital data, their metamorphosis into statistical tables and graphs, distances us from the original objects. It is the equivalent of looking at a sword and trying to understand how it was forged without seeing the process or knowing anything about the tools and methods used. In the case of machine learning methods, the transformation is so complex, it is like observing someone crafting a watch, and still finding it difficult to follow the procedure. To mitigate these issues, OpenDANES publishes open access tutorials and white papers. Tutorials are step-by-step instructions on how to apply computational methodologies for beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. White papers can be anything from opinion pieces, updating the community on projects, or introducing initiatives of groups and individuals working on digital and computational studies of the ancient world. All contributions go through a peer-review process to ensure high-quality and usefulness to the community, as well as to properly acknowledge contributors' work. Upon final publi-

cation, contributions receive a DOI. OpenDANES also includes the DANES resources, a downloadable dataset which collects resources on the study of the ANE (<https://opendanes.org/nav/DANES-resources.html>). It includes online databases, datasets, tools, and programming, academic, and pedagogic materials. We will conclude our talk with a call to the ANE community for two things: (1) to contribute and benefit from the resources and initiatives of the DANES network, particularly OpenDANES. This will unravel enigmatic methods and trendy AI jargon, without losing academic rigour; (2) to partake in this new community in order to build a shared language and make conscious choices on the directions in which digital humanities are taking the field of assyriology.

Gorris, Ellyn

Balancing power & autonomy: Commercial benefits of short-range migration for the Neo-Elamite kingdom (8th -6th century BCE)

Time: Tuesday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

In the early to mid-1st millennium BC, a myriad of Aramean and Chaldean tribes settled at the head of the Persian Gulf. These (semi-)pastoralist communities were so diverse in their system of governance, their social structure and their commercial involvement that regional powers dealt in different ways with the tribal influx in the Elamite-Assyrian borderlands. Due to Assyria's centralised government system, the tribal Sealand region (Bit-Yakin) was placed under an imperial superstructure controlled by the Assyrian king. The Neo-Assyrian repressive approach of the (semi-)pastoralist communities at the head of the Persian Gulf regularly placed pressure on the government system. The Elamite kingdom on the other hand was governed by a decentralised system, where regions (lowlands vs. highlands) had a considerable amount of local power. This governmental structure allowed Elamites to implement an interactive model based on economic exchange, creating a form of cohabitation between the Elamite urban population, littoral communities and those with a range of pastoralist lifestyles. In recent papers, I argued that the installation of new Elamite harbour facilities (Mahmiti, Nagitu) at the northern Gulf littoral intensified maritime interactions in the Upper Gulf space. While operating within the boundaries of the Neo-Elamite kingdom, littoral communities had the technical knowledge to navigate the marshes and pastoralist communities had the geographical knowledge of overland routes. This paper will explore how the Elamite government implemented pastoralist communities, who had a pattern of short-range migrations, in their mechanisms of trade in order to strengthen the cohesion of the kingdom.

Guinan, Ann
Good, Camryn

Razor or Raze, Ritual or Omen? A Rediscovered Tablet Fragment from The Reš Temple of Uruk

Time: Tuesday 18:00–18:30

Venue: Porthania P II

Guinan recently discovered the following letter from Werner Mayer dating to the early days of the University of Pennsylvania's Šumma ālu Project. Included with the letter was van Dijk's copy of W20030/94 with their handwritten notes.

PONTIFICIO ISTITUTO BIBLICO

May 18, 1979

I – 00187 ROMA

VIA DELLA PILOTTA, 25-Tel. 679.64.53

Miss Moren,

Looking through my Warka copies for the n-th time, I just discovered that text W.20030/94 might be an omen text. Van Dijk, when copying, had thought it was a ritual. I thought first it was some kind of commentary. But couldn't it be an omen text? What do you think about it?

Yours Sincerely, Werner Mayer

As Werner's 1979 letter states, they both wondered if the fragment could be an omen text and wrote to Dr. Sally (Moren) Freedman. Freedman apparently was unable to place the fragment in Šumma ālu as it did not appear in her first volume of Šumma ālu, published in 1998, or in the two subsequent volumes (2006, 2017). Had Erle Leichty, her advisor, been able to identify the fragment as a ritual or even an omen tablet from another series he surely would have written back to them. Furthermore, Guinan was unable to place the fragment anywhere in tablets 80-105.

In 1980, a year after the letter was written, Van Dijk and Mayer published a copy of W20030/94 in Baghdader Mitteilungen, Beiheft 2 as text 74; they still classified it with

uncertainty as either an astrological omen or a ritual text.

A key and enigmatic element of the fragment is the logogram GUL.GUL (Akkadian: *naqāru*), clearly visible in the second line, suggests the tearing down and building up of houses and temple walls, a common motif in *Šumma ālu* and the Hemerological Series, *Iqqur Ipuš*. However, the verb may also be translated as “to scarify” and it could refer to the self-mutilation and scarification rituals found in the Ishtar cult at Uruk described in the Erra Epic IV 52-62. In either case, the structure and vocabulary of W20030/94 align with the descriptions of violence and destruction in Uruk depicted in the Erra Epic.

This presentation will analyze the structure, the ambivalent vocabulary, and archaeological context of W20030/94. We will explore the possible genres and classification of this fragment as an omen, commentary, or ritual text and present our preliminary results.

Haider, Mohammad Raza

‘Those who are beyond the Sea and Mountains’: Expression of Regional Identities in Achaemenid Babylonian Royal Inscriptions

Time: Tuesday 18:00–18:30

Venue: Porthania P III

The ideology of the Achaemenid Empire espoused a world-view that acknowledged the diversity of the people that inhabited it and contributed to its ‘timeless’ existence. In the case of Achaemenid royal inscriptions (ARI), we see that expressions of regional identities, especially of the people inhabiting the imperial periphery, were frequently changing, and were often re-defined by increasing their specificity. While some of this evidence has been explored in previous studies, the full implications of the background of the Babylonian versions and toponyms remain to be established. This presentation will focus on two major aspects of change in toponyms used for peripheral regions in the Babylonian versions of ARIs. Using country lists known from the reigns of Darius and Xerxes, it will first discuss how imperial perspectives about people living at the periphery changed over time. It will also study how peripheral regions were described differently in the Babylonian versions, their historical background and the effect on their supposed audience. A preliminary analysis of the evidence shows that the concept of being ‘beyond’ (Old Persian *para-* ; Babylonian *aḫullā / nibirtu*) the known boundaries of the world was often used to describe people that inhabited the eastern and western extremities of the Persian empire. These diffuse identities were later brought into focus, which involved defining them with specific geographic or visible markers. An example of this is the increasing specificity of various Ionian groups in the west, who go from simply ‘Ionian’ in early inscriptions, to ‘Ionians of the mainland’, ‘those beyond the bitter sea’, and ‘Ionians who wear maginnu-hats’. In the Akkadian versions of the same country lists, we see several cases of archaic toponyms known from the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian period, such as Gimirru for Scythia, Uraštu for Armenia, and Qadu for Maka. This contributed to the Achaemenid kings’ self-presentation as ‘kings of the lands of all tongues’. Both of these concepts undergo further development, as some identities get fossilized and others are borrowed into Old Persian from existing toponyms in Babylonian.

Hajinezhad, Sara

Royal Power and King-Queenship in Elamite Art: Depicting Relations with the Divine Authority and Power Base

Time: Friday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

Pictorial sources from ancient Near Eastern civilisations offer invaluable insights into their socio-cultural, socio-religious, and socio-political contexts. The Elamite reliefs serve as primary materials in this study, providing a deeper understanding of how kings, queens, and elites were represented in various divine and religious settings, which sustained their power locally and regionally. Attributed to the Elamite civilisation and scattered across four different locations, eighteen monumental highland reliefs are dating from the seventeenth to the sixth century BC. Some of these depictions are also considered sacred imagery. To complement these sources, representations of deities, kings and queens in other forms of pictorial sources, such as seals and steles, will be examined, too. These additional sources illuminate the institutionalised power or hierarchy and the depicted relationships between deities and royal characters. This study aims to uncover the strategies and mechanisms employed by royals and elites to maintain power and foster positive relations with subordinates. Mostly, textual sources remain silent about these representations and the present author is trying to decode them by conducting a comparative analysis and considering all available sources. The reliefs predominantly feature individuals adorned in long garments, ranging from deities, kings, and queens, to elites, officers, worshippers, and participants. These depictions occasionally showcase both female and male deities, alongside kings, queens, officers, elites, and ordinary people witnessing divine, political, or religious ceremonies. The nature of these ceremonies varies, including animal sacrifices, musical events, and communal feasting with public participation and ritual pilgrimage which highlights the diversity of these representations and the ceremonies themselves. Participation in these events may have been subject to certain restrictions. Notably, the presence of specific animals, such as snakes and cows, in various representations is significant.

Helle, Sophus

The Sumerian Bicycle: Circular and Chiastic Structures in the Uruk Poems

Time: Monday 16:30–17:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

In her pathbreaking book *Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld*, Athena Gadotti argued that the Sumerian poems relating to Gilgamesh constitute a coherent literary cycle, with a fixed sequence, an overarching narrative development, and a set of re-curring elements. In this paper, I argue that, first, the poem *Gilgamesh and Akka* does not fit into the pattern set out by Gadotti and forms an independent story to be excluded from the cycle; and second, that the resulting four-poem cycle has a series of narrative and structural parallels to the other four-poem cycle set in Uruk, about Enmerkar and Lugalbanda's war with Aratta. The two cycles are interlinked, both internally and with one another, by a series of chiastic and circular narrative structures. While each poem in this "bi-cycle" did constitute an independent poetic and narrative composition, I would suggest that they can also be conceived of as installments in a larger story-world, linked to each less strictly than the tablets in a series of later Babylonian literature and more akin the separate poems in the Greek Epic Cycle. If this theory is correct, it presents a striking parallel to two other major epic traditions, the Homeric and the Sanskrit. In both cases, the epic tradition rests on a twin foundation, with one of the two poems focusing on the adventures of one hero (the *Odyssey* and the *Ramayana*) and the other presenting a larger perspective on war, including a larger cast of characters and a more distributed focalization (the *Iliad* and the *Mahabharata*). I would argue that the Sumerian bi-cycle abides by the same pattern, with the *Gilgamesh* cycle being focused on one individual and the *Aratta* cycle involving a more varied set of characters.

HersHKovitz, Yehonatan

Orthographic Changes in Cuneiform during the Old Babylonian Period and the Transition from Sumerian to Akkadian

Time: Friday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P I

The paper aims to shed light on orthographic changes in cuneiform signs during the Old Babylonian period, which may illustrate the transition from the 3rd millennium Sumerian-based scribal training to the OB Akkadian-based school curriculum. The Old Babylonian period marks a significant transformation in writing in Mesopotamia. With the decline of Isin I, to some extent the direct continuation of Ur III, there is a notable shift from writing in Sumerian to the prominence of Akkadian, the language that would dominate Mesopotamia and beyond for more than a millennium. Concurrently, this period witnesses the emergence of various textual genres previously absent in 3rd millennium Mesopotamia, including scholarly texts, like divinatory, medical, mathematical, and astronomical texts, alongside the introduction of Emesal, a sociolect of Sumerian, characterized by its unique phonology and written in a pure syllabic form. Further alterations manifest in paleography and orthography of cuneiform, and even in the physical shape of the tablets. Orthographic changes during the Old Babylonian period can be categorized into two facets: modifications in the composition of texts and internal adjustments within the signs themselves. The former involves distinctions such as the representation of voice or gemination in writing. The latter focuses on the specific utilization of the signs; coalesce of two or more signs into one, splitting of a sign into two different signs, and alterations in reading indicators. This latter shift may serve as a test case to demonstrate the detachment from Sumerian as a living language and the adoption of Akkadian as the main language of Mesopotamia.

Hess, Christian

Hierarchies and Heterachies in the Organization of Syllabary B

Time: Friday 16:30–17:00

Venue: Porthania P II

The two tablets of Syllabary B (Sb A and B) developed during the second half of the second millennium to form one of the core texts of Mesopotamian schools up until the disappearance of cuneiform. Placed into a sequence after Syllabary (and Vocabulary) A (Sa), Sb came to replace the better-known Ea = nâqu lists in the curriculum during this period in providing the backbone of the Sumerian reading tradition. Despite its importance to the transmission and stability of the writing system, much remains unclear about the origins and organization of the list, including its incorporation of rare and unusual sign forms and readings. While more recent work has emphasized the specific relationship of Sb to Ea, a closer look at the individual sign sequences supports a return to a polygenetic relationship with the syllabary tradition. Starting from the notion of heterarchical information structures which allow for multiple and shifting orderings, the paper seeks to establish the ways in which Sb combines, adapts, and expands the source material from the Sa and Ea traditions in creating a scholastic compendium of cuneiform.

Heth, Raleigh

The Curious Case of Marduk's Doubled Divinity: Hyleme Analysis in Enūma eliš

Time: Thursday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

The description of Marduk's birth in Enūma eliš (I 87-102) frequently serves as a crux in scholarly conversations revolving around the mythic text. One of the lone extended birth narratives of a god from ancient Mesopotamia, the passage provides intimate details regarding Marduk's creation, nursing at the breast of goddesses, and status among his peers. Following his emergence from the waters of the murdered Apsû and rearing at the hands of the Ea and Damkina, Marduk cuts an imposing figure among his fellow gods. Despite his apparent physical superiority, the god of the sky, Anu, endows Marduk, his grandson, with additional divine qualities, leading to his divinity being "doubled" (uštāšbīšumma šunnât ilūssu), such that his construction is unable to be learned or reproduced (lā lamda). The text then describes Marduk's bizarre physical appearance, complete with an extraordinary form, long limbs, as well as four all-seeing eyes and four all-perceiving ears. Those who assess Enūma eliš for its literary precursors and theological underpinnings alike have long been confounded by what the depiction of this divine doubling intends to convey as well as its significance for the larger narrative. Utilizing a new, empirical methodological approach to myth and mythic text developed by researchers at the University of Göttingen called Hylistics (cf. Zgoll 2019; Gabriel 2022), this paper provides an answer to the purpose of depicting Marduk's divinity as being "doubled." After discussing the various explicit hylemes (or, "action bearing units") within the narrative, this paper provides an overview of the text's various implicit or unspoken. In doing so, this paper shows that the patent "theological imperialism" (cf. Lambert 1997) of Enūma eliš begins far earlier in the text than previously supposed and with a single, prominent god in view: the sun-god, Šamaš.

Howard, Caleb

The Kalḫu Annals of Ashurnasirpal II: Composition and Purpose

Time: Friday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P I

Most objects bearing the annals of Ashurnasirpal II are inaccessible to us, having been re-buried or lost. Extant objects are fragmentary or otherwise incomplete. Modern editions are of necessity largely based upon early twentieth century copies of squeezes made in the nineteenth century. Information about the findspots of the original objects, and even what the objects were, has also not been readily available to previous editors. This state of affairs has obstructed our ability to understand the annals. How do we define their text? And what was their role in the massive architectural project of Ashurnasirpal II at Kalḫu? Fortunately, Austen Henry Layard made detailed copies of many of these objects in his unpublished notebooks. These remain an untapped resource for understanding Ashurnasirpal's annals and other inscriptions. Moreover, recent excavations have provided further evidence, and much work has been done over the past three decades to understand the objects on which these texts were inscribed and their architectural context. A project is now under way which includes making a new edition of Ashurnasirpal II's royal inscriptions, building upon volume two of A. Kirk Grayson's *The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Assyrian Periods* (1991). Drawing upon Layard's unpublished copies and recent advances in our understanding of Ashurnasirpal's monumental architecture in Nimrud, this work has revealed much about the literary forms of the versions of the Kalḫu annals and how they relate to one another and to their architectural setting. This paper aims to highlight some key findings, including the text-forms of the annals versions known to us, insights into their compositional development, their relationships with Ashurnasirpal's summary inscriptions, and their role in the temples of Kalḫu.

Howe, Adam

Speculative Fictions: The Manipulation of Narrative Time and Real-World Events in Mesopotamian Ritual

Time: Thursday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

This paper examines the use of narrative in Mesopotamian incantations to manipulate time and thereby achieve the ritual's intended real-world effects. The use of narrative, storytelling, and metaphor is an important part of the exorcist's strategy, allowing him to channel the power of the gods and manipulate the fate of various participants in the cosmos. Rituals frequently employ analogical actions to manipulate others across space, such as when figurines are used to represent sources of evil that are not present. The power of narrative, however, also allows for manipulation across time, changing future outcomes for the benefit of the exorcist and his client. Narratives in incantations or ritual actions manipulate time by imagining alternative futures that should or should not come to pass, accelerating the life cycle of ritual actors, allowing causes of suffering to be born and killed in the course of the ritual, or returning to primordial time and the point of creation of causes of suffering, to explain how to deal with them.

Manipulation of time, especially the future, is an important aspect of the staging of many Mesopotamian rituals. They are supposed to take place in a kind of bubble outside of the restraints of time, space, and cause-and-effect in the normal world, thereby allowing events normally governed by these restraints to be manipulated in various ways. This especially highlights the literary nature of these incantations and rituals, as the suspension of reality and creation of differing realities are key functions of literary narrative. Indeed, it is the power of narrative that above all lends these rituals their effectiveness and communicates their ability to change the future.

Huber Vuillet, Fabienne

Narrative Layers in Šumma ālu Purity Omens

Time: Thursday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

The divinatory series Šumma ālu ina mēlê šakin contains two chapters dedicated to purity: one addressing the purity of a man going to the temple (part of Tablet 91), and the other discussing the purity of the king in various circumstances (Tablet NU KÙ). The macro-narratives for both the king and the man underscore overarching themes related to purity, divine intervention, and societal expectations within their respective roles and contexts. In this talk, it will be demonstrated that while the king's purity omens focus on royal duties, interactions with the divine, and the underlying political implications of ritual purity, the man's purity omens revolve around everyday rituals, behaviors, and the societal norms inherent within the broader community. Both sets of purity omens feature micro-narratives detailing actions, encounters, or events that influence the individual's purity status. It will be demonstrated that involuntary acts primarily compromise the king's purity (such as dreams or unexpected street encounters), whereas the purity of the man primarily involves specific actions such as eating/avoiding certain foods or performing rituals. In summary, while the king's purity omens are embedded within the political and religious context of kingship, the man's purity omens offer insights into the everyday rituals and religious practices of ordinary individuals within the community. Each contributes to the broader narrative of ritual purity.

Hussein, Laith M.

Iraqi Cultural Heritage between Destruction and Rehabilitation

Time: Monday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

The Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale provides a good opportunity to present the actions undertaken in Iraq to preserve the cultural heritage of Mesopotamia. Many countries and international organizations have shown a longstanding commitment to safeguarding this unique and outstanding heritage after the wars of the last decades and the invasion of Daish. A main impetus to these developments was, of course, the dramatic damages inflicted to the Iraq Museum and many other cultural centers in 2003. However, wars have not been the only elements which threaten Iraqi cultural heritage. Climate change, desertification, and the aridification of the marshes have had a major impact on the state of conservation of many archaeological and heritage sites. We will thus show you a brief presentation which covers the developments from the aftermath of the 2003 conflict through the actions taken by UNESCO, the international alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH), and other organizations and universities to preserve this heritage.

Ito, Sanae

Messengers in the Assyrian Empire

Time: Friday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

The ones who carried the state correspondence of the Assyrian Empire are usually not referred to, or are sometimes called simply by messengers (mār šipris) in the letters of the SAA volumes. However, the carriers are occasionally mentioned by their personal names and/or titles/roles such as an express messenger, emissary/envoy (našpāru; šīru; šapru), eunuch, third-man, mounted scout, cohort commander, mercenary, clergyman (ērib bēti) of the temple of Aššur, and royal confidant (ša qurbūti, previously often translated as royal bodyguard in SAA). As ša qurbūtis frequently appear as the deliverers of royal orders and letters issued by the Assyrian kings, I overview their other varied functions and background especially by focusing on the cases of Dūr-Katlimmu (Tell Sheikh Hamad) in order to support the recent translation of ša qurbūti as the royal confidant. After that, I present the various types of couriers with examples and show how they transferred messages by utilizing the Assyrian imperial communication system consisted of a pair of mules, chariots, drivers, express messengers, royal roads, roadside stations, royal seals for authorization, and the maintenance by station staffs and local governors. And then I discuss the relationship of couriers with their senders, recipients, accompanies, and the contents of the correspondence.

Conjurations from the archives of Ḫattuša and their narratives

Time: Tuesday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P II

Some colophons and incipits of the cuneiform texts found in the Hittite capital Ḫattuša contain the Hittite term ḫukmai- or its Akkadian equivalent ŠIPTU ‘conjuration’. Most of the Hittite texts marked as ‘conjurations’ feature mythological narratives that were supposed to be pronounced by witch-doctors. In contrast, the so-called incantations that are incorporated into the rituals usually describe the actions of the ritual practitioner and their significance in context of the ritual. The Hittite scribes apparently viewed the conjurations as an independent textual genre, presenting them separately in the Catalogue texts. Summing up, Hittite conjurations differ from Hittite rituals (Sum. SISKUR) both notionally and through their content, even though, there are examples of genre intersections. Thus, the mythological narrative about a divine feast organized by the Sun-god is exceptionally pronounced by a ritual practitioner during the Ḫantitaššu Ritual (CTH 395). Anatolian conjurations and their narratives reflect cultural characteristics of different peoples populating the Bronze Age Asia Minor, namely the Hittite, Luwian, Hattian, and Hurrian milieus. Nevertheless, they are united by the parallel formulaic repertoire. Most of the conjurations do not mention their authors but are named after the problems they address (conjuration of pregnancy, conjuration of fire, conjuration of blood). The only exception is the birth conjuration by the woman Pittei (CTH 767). The conjuration may be attributed as the word of the god ‘ŠA DN uddār’. In contrast, the rituals are usually named after their performers (Maštigga, Puliša etc.). Most of the conjurations are comparatively small in size and therefore accumulated in the collection tablets. In contrast to the rituals, these compositions were not adapted to new settings; thus, we cannot trace the development of tradition. Some of them, however, contain traces of translation from Luwian to Hittite. The conjurations with the embedded mythological narratives were performed, for example, during the birth-giving process, washing a newborn child, appeasing quarreling relatives, or treating the patient’s diseases. The narratives were supposed to have their own impact on the

patient, describing the parallel events in the divine realm, which explain the origins of his ailment. They are usually followed by specific instructions regarding its treatment. Summing up the previous discussion, the mythological narratives help to define conjurations found in Hattuša as an independent genre of religious texts, distinct from religious rituals but also used for therapeutical purposes.

Jahani, Jeiran

Statistical analysis of Persepolis Fortification Tablets

Time: Tuesday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

The aim of this presentation is to explore the utility of machine learning approaches to study Persepolis Fortification Tablets, thousands of tablets that are part of the administrative archive of the Achaemenid empire, recording the management of goods, animals and people among other things in its heartland of Fars region during the 13th and 28th year of Darius' reign, 509-494 BC. The objective is to understand the underlying social organization and administrative units within this regional network by way of clustering the named individuals, places and sealings that are present on the tablets. While network theory has recently been used to study these tablets, it has not been pursued in a principled way. As I will demonstrate, clustering approaches help us understand the hierarchical structure of the administration, the potential location of unidentified sites, administrative sealing practices, and the relative importance of different centers in this region. While this approach is used to identify administrative patterns, it cannot explain why those patterns exist and how they came about. We have to rely on the content of documents themselves or other sources to do so. Additionally, there is much activity that is not covered by the archive, for example personal transactions of the agents of the empire and its other residents in this region, limiting the generalizability of results. Nevertheless, this exercise uncovers these patterns and opens potential research directions.

Jankowski-Diakonoff, Aleksei

Calderbank, Daniel

Jotheri, Jaafar

Tell Dehaila in Southern Iraq: a city that probably survived Samsuiluna

Time: Thursday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P I

Tell Dehaila-1 (EP-34 of Henry Wright's survey, 47 ha), located in Southern Iraq, occupied the same natural environment (approximated as "The Eridu Plain") as the previously excavated sites of Eridu (26 km southeast), Ur (30 km east), and Tell Khaiber (17 km northeast). After brief surveys in 2018-2019, soundings were made in 2020 and 2021 at the edge of the floodplain and in the central part of the city. High-resolution photogrammetry followed in 2023, which revealed detailed plans of several areas, especially the eastern (harbour) and the southern ones. The bulk of the Tell Dehaila-1 ceramic assemblage generally corresponds to the Old Babylonian (OB) tradition, but has its own idiosyncrasies. The closest comparable assemblage is from Phase III (c. 1800–1600 BCE) at Tell Yelkhi in the Hamrin. Stratigraphic and morphological considerations make us distinguish three periods of habitation in the excavated areas of Tell Dehaila-1: 1) the main OB city, with its central part built over a crevasse splay to gain elevation over floodplain; 2) a rather thin "tannur layer" with vessel forms that we tentatively interpret as post-Samsuiluna (early Sealand Period?); and 3) a 1st millennium BCE presence (Neo-Babylonian, NB) lacking any architectural remains within the excavated area, and apparently belonging to a non-urban settlement. Although the excavated areas in these different parts of the tell are small, their material shows a unified picture, both morphologically and technologically, and surface finds align with the conclusions drawn from the stratified ceramics. The city of Tell Dehaila was situated on a branch of the Euphrates known as i7-edin-NUN-ki ("the River of the Eridu Plain", in the appendix to Ura-hubullu K.2035a, rev. III 13), the Eridu River in our documentation. At the north-west of the city, several parallel traces of a rescue canal are visible, probably with a small harbour. The canal served to bring water from a western branch of the Euphrates when the Eridu River became silted. A much later, most probably Neo-Babylonian (NB), defensive trench cut the southern areas of the already extinct city. An area of the gravitational irrigation is adjacent to the east, with several tells of different

periods: OB, Kassite, and NB. A Kassite presence is also probable at a newly discovered settlement, Nun-5, immediately to the south of Dehaila.

Jasim, Yasmin Abdulkareem Mohammed Ali

College of Archaeology/ University of Mosul and the challenges after the liberation of the city from ISIS terrorist groups

Time: Thursday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P I

The College of Archaeology at the University of Mosul was established starting from the academic year (2008-2009) in similar ways to the rest of the well-known international and Arab universities. The college has three departments:

1. Department of Archaeology, and this department has two branches (Ancient Archaeology) and (Islamic Archaeology).
2. Department of Ancient Iraqi Languages, and this department has two branches (Cuneiform Studies) and (Oriental Languages)

Graduate studies and their role in documenting the ancient city

3. Department of Civilization.

First (Branch of Islamic Archaeology \Architecture and Heritage Buildings)

Heritage buildings in the city of Tal Afar, a field study of selected models.

Second (Branch of Islamic Archaeology / Islamic Architecture and Arts)

The effect of marble inscriptions in highlighting the architectural elements of Mosul houses (1863-1954 AD) (An applied study)

Third (Branch of Ancient Archaeology / Excavations, and maintenance of archaeological finds)

Destruction of cities and archaeological sites in Nineveh Governorate A field study

Field visits of the College of Archaeology

A field visit to the old city of Mosul, entitled (Walking through History)

Research programs, projects and training courses for the College of Archaeology

- Participation of the College of Archaeology in the activities of the Jordanian-German Week for Digitizing Cultural Heritage

Jauhiainen, Tommi

Jauhiainen, Heidi

Advancing Cuneiform Text Dating Through Automatic Analysis

Time: Thursday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

This paper presents work on the automatic dating of cuneiform texts based on their textual content. We extracted c. 20,000 transliterated texts from the ORACC database. Of those texts, c. 19,000 came with metadata indicating the possible creation date. The metadata came in various forms, such as "13 Tebêtu, Darius II (?) year" as Date_of_origin, "671, 666, or 624" as Year, and "Early Dynastic IIIb" as Period. Based on readily available sources, we created mapping rules from these forms to years or year ranges. Most of the texts contained several of these "dates", and we kept the most specific one for each text. Aiming at analyzing texts before the already interpretative transliteration, we transformed the texts from transliteration to Unicode cuneiform. We had previously built the Nuolenna program for that purpose when organizing the Cuneiform Language Identification shared task in 2019. We updated the program and its sign list to accommodate additional readings and new cuneiform characters in the updated Oracc. We randomly divided the dated texts into training (16,990), development (999), and test (1,000) portions. We have previously used a Naive Bayes and character n-gram-based classifier to identify the date and place of Greek texts found in Egypt, and we adapted this software to work with Unicode cuneiform signs. The classifier uses the development partition to optimize the length of the cuneiform sign n-grams and the smoothing value for previously unseen features. The classifier operates with year-range buckets, where a text is placed into each of the buckets overlapping its date range. The length of the used year-range buckets is another parameter optimized using the development data. We experimented with several sizes of year ranges from 5 to 275 years. On the development set, the optimal parameters were the five-year range for the buckets with cuneiform n-grams from one to three. Of the 999 texts, 694 were dated correctly inside the date range, with 95 more within two years. Exiting case studies can be performed on the worst-performing texts, such as P283778, which is marked as Old Babylonian in ORACC but as Neo-Babylonian in CDLI, the latter of which would be 1,000 years

closer to the year indicated by our classifier. Using the optimized parameters and the development data as additional training data gave an average error of 52.0 years on the test set. In our talk, we will present the current state of the research.

Jauhiainen, Heidi

Machine-Readable Texts in Egyptology: Current State and Challenges

Time: Tuesday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

Assyriology has freely downloadable corpora of machine-readable texts, such as the Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (Oracc) with almost 7,000,000 words according to the 2021 Korp-version of Oracc at the Language Bank of Finland. These resources have enabled digital investigations into various aspects of ancient Mesopotamia, including divine networks and emotional practices. By contrast, the digital exploration of ancient Egyptian texts is limited by the scarcity of comparable corpora for hieroglyphic texts. Hieroglyphic signs are typically arranged within boxes, allowing for stacking and nesting. Additionally, Egyptological transliteration represents an interpretative step, rather than a direct depiction of the signs used. In Egyptology, encoding techniques are employed to accurately position hieroglyphs for print, with the Manuel de Codage (MdC) being the prevalent method. This encoding system utilizes letter-number combinations from the so-called Gardiner list, categorizing signs and assigning numbers for reference. The encoding is used in specific Hieroglyphic text editors from where one can then export the hieroglyphic text as a picture while the encoding is saved in a binary file meant for the software. Although the encoding can be used to reproduce the original hieroglyphs of the text and are machine-readable, they have not been considered important enough to publish. Despite these challenges, valuable digital dictionaries such as Ramses Online and Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae (TLA) that make use of encoded texts have been developed. A snapshot of the TLA was released in 2018 with approximately 280,000 annotated Egyptian words. Additionally, the Ramses Transliteration Corpus (RTC), derived from Ramses Online data, comprises nearly 500,000 encoded words with transliteration. The author, along with a few others, is actively involved in the development of tools aimed at converting binary files containing encoded hieroglyphic texts into more accessible formats such as text files and Unicode characters. This paper provides an overview of the present state of machine-readable texts within the field of Egyptology, highlighting the challenges encountered in the endeavor to broaden the accessibility of these resources.

Jotheri, Jaafar

Landscape Archaeology of Southern Mesopotamia: a long history of migrations and movements

Time: Tuesday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

Over millennia, two natural and anthropogenic processes mainly structure the landscape of the Mesopotamian floodplain. Rivers, floodplains, marshes, and deserts dominate the natural processes, while canals, roads, trenches, farms, and settlement sites dominate the human-made processes. These two processes should be considered when the landscape archaeology of southern Mesopotamia needs to be understood. In this paper, we will discuss how ancient South Mesopotamia roads are valuable evidence to understand the migrations and the movement of people into, from, and inside this region. Multidisciplinary research methods, including remote sensing, fieldwork, and historical texts, have been used to identify the ancient roads. An intensive network of ancient roads in the Western Desert of Iraq has been identified that shows the movement of people in and out of the floodplain of Southern Mesopotamia. The other discovered network of roads is in the dried marshes of southern Mesopotamia, which showed the movement inside the marshes. As they connect North Mesopotamia with the south, the rivers Tigris and Euphrates were also one of the main routes and roads the ancient people followed to move and migrate between these two regions. Searching for more agricultural and pastoral land was behind most of the people's movements, but there were other reasons, such as labour, religion and politics

Kamil, Iris

Valence and aspect – A re-evaluation of the morphosyntax and morphosemantics of the Akkadian verb

Time: Friday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P I

Semitic verbal templates (i.e., the patterns into which root consonants are inserted) consist of multiple morphemes, each encoding features such as word class, person/number/gender, tense/aspect/mood, voice, etc. These morphemes can further influence a verb's transitivity (e.g., Š, N, and factitive D) and features such as grammatical aspect (e.g., /i/ in uparris vs. /a/ in uparras). While the morphological build of Akkadian verbs is well understood, the semantic patterns characterising the individual template patterns (i.e., G, D, and Š) raise a number of issues. For one, D verbs can form either intensive or factitive equivalents to G, or show no difference to G verbs derived of the same root (e.g., ezēbu 'leave behind' vs. uzzubu 'leave behind'). But the difference between factitive D verbs and causative Š verbs is also not always clear (e.g., ḥummuṭu 'make sth. burn' vs. šuḥmuṭu 'make sth. burn'). Addressing these issues, the present paper presents a novel account of Akkadian verbal morphology, which aims to account for the semantic variety of D verbs (i.e., intensive, factitive, and equal to G semantics), but also the overlap between the transitivity-increasing properties of causative Š and factitive D verbs. This approach relies on two foundational assumptions. Firstly, morphemes are assigned fixed semantic values such as [±argument]. Depending on which other morphemes (including roots) or stems they interact with, the final "output semantics" (i.e., factitive, intensive, causative, passive, etc.) may change. Secondly, Akkadian must be analysed as an aspectual language. This entails the understanding that events are viewed and referenced in terms of their degree of completion and the subject's/objects' positionality in reference to the event. Based on these foundations, the present paper suggests that while iprus and iparras denote the aspect of subjects, D and Š morphemes may denote the different aspects of objects. Thereby, the doubling morpheme of D denotes an imperfective aspect (i.e., factitive) while the ša-morpheme denotes a perfective (i.e., causative). Intensive Ds, usually derived from roots deriving transitive Gs, mirror the imperfective aspect through prolonged duration or a deeper experience of the event. Finally, (transitive) G and Ds with seemingly no difference, may be argued

to have encoded the same aspectual distinction as D and Š on the basis of textual evidence. Secondly, I hope to show that a more precisely defined understanding of Akkadian (verbal) morphology can prove useful to philology, especially in translating ambiguous phrases and identifying nuances deliberately expressed by the scribes.

Karakaya, Doğa

Poolman, Laurel

Ecological adaptations of migrant communities in the Northern Levant during the Iron Age

Time: Tuesday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

Due to its heterogenous climatic and environmental conditions, the Northern Levant is one of the most interesting regions in the Southwest Asia to approach migration and land management practices during the Iron Age. The region abounded with many communities of distinct origins, including Arameans, Phoenicians, Luwians (and probably a group of the so-called Sea Peoples). Nonetheless, little has been done on how these migrant communities adapted to the equally diverse climatic and environmental conditions of the Northern Levant. This paper aims to summarize the ecological adaptations of the migrant communities inhabiting two geographical formations, the Lower Orontes Basin and Cilicia, to stress that the Iron Age I and II were critical periods in constructing new economic niches through communal identities and subsistence practices. Through environmental archaeological data, it will be demonstrated that the local climatic and environmental conditions were significant primary determinants for these migrant communities to approach the agricultural, pastoral and wood resources in these newly created economic niches.

Kasif, Chaya

Divination and Desire: A theoretical perspective on sex omens

Time: Tuesday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P II

The Mesopotamian world and its order was constructed by divine will. Here, the world was overflowing with signs and symbols, and the capacity to be aware of and decipher these was a knowledge and responsibility given to humanity by the gods – and thus they could share in the world's creation. Information about one's fate could be gathered from any and all phenomena, including human sexual behaviour. In fact, sexual intercourse was similarly decreed upon humanity by the gods as part of the organisation of civilisation. The 1st millennium treatise of terrestrial omens *šumma ālu* includes observations of over one hundred portentous sexual behaviours. But how can such human behaviour even be considered ominous? This question continues to puzzle scholars. Surely, if one is conscious and in control of one's behaviour, it cannot be considered a divine sign, at least by our modern understanding of the order of things. Many scholars view these texts as made for the purpose of social organisation and the regulation of behaviour. I offer a new theoretical perspective on these texts, taking into account the divine intention behind humanity's organisation. The Mesopotamian conception of divination as an act of co-creation with the divine, and of sex-acts as entwined in this creation, recalls modern philosophical discourse on eroticism and desire, particularly that of Georges Bataille and his explorations of the concepts of desire and continuity in his book *Erotism*, as well as cultural theorist Lauren Berlant's *Desire/Love*. My research investigates the ancient textual evidence, using critical philosophical theories as inter-disciplinary tools for understanding how Mesopotamians constructed their ideas around sexuality and divination through text.

Kipfer, Sara

How to Narrate Defeat: 1 Sam 4:1b-22 and Social Identity Theory

Time: Monday 15:30–16:00

Venue: Porthania P III

The war against the Philistines in 1 Sam 4:1b-22 is interesting to be analyzed through social identity theory for three reasons: First, because it contains information about the defeat of Israel in two different versions. The defeat is presented in a narrative (1 Sam 4:2, 10) as well as in a messenger report (1 Sam 4:17). This repetition does not only show, how the defeat in its horror was personalized over time, but the narrative may also be seen as an early document of how being a victim was used to shape group identity (see also 2 Sam 2:17; 2 Kings 14:12). Second, the war narrative in 1 Sam 4:1b-22 raises questions about the sociology of war: there is no king, judge or general leading to war, instead the elders of Israel play a crucial role in preventing the defeat with the help of the ark. Consequently, questions about the importance of social hierarchies and constructs of complex societies in wars need to be addressed. Third, the text belongs to those narratives, where the Philistines were talking about Israelites in direct speech as “Hebrews” (1 Sam 4:6, 13:3, 19; 14:11, 21; 29:3) and the Philistines mutually ask one another to behave like men (1 Sam 4:9). These notions should be analyzed under aspects of othering and determining social groups (gender) in war.

Kitazumi, Tomoki

Contribution to the Hittite text(ual) organization: double paragraph divider

Time: Wednesday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P II

Surprising though it may sound, there is no systematic study of writing conventions in the Ancient Near East. By “writing conventions” one refers to, for example, spaces between words, capitalization or the choice of fonts, i.e. the graphic means that primarily achieve a typographical effect and thus contribute to the comprehensibility of a text as an aid to reading. Despite a comparatively comprehensive study by Willemijn Waal (2015) on the physical properties of the clay tablets (i.e. diplomatics) to date, a study of such scribal conventions is still relatively limited (cf. among others: Busse 2018/19, Kloekhorst – Waal 2019, Pisaniello 2022). Among such hitherto unquestioned features on the tablets, the double paragraph dividers are focused as a starting point in this contribution. A systematic compilation is a pre-requisite, and a renewed investigation based on this is a desideratum. The selected examples are used to illustrate their function and typology. This choice of topic allows the Hittite text structure to be analyzed under the three aspects of physical, typographical and linguistic aspects. The aim is therefore to explore these double rulings in the Hittite texts as an interface between these three aspects, and it sheds some light on the text/tablet organization such as so-called “Sammeltafel” and the scribal habits in the Hittite Empire.

Klamm, Kacie

Epistolary Diviners: Stories of Expertise in Neo-Assyrian Letters

Time: Thursday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

The collection of letters in SAA 10 reveals that scholars—diviners, exorcists, scribes, physicians, etc.—were an indispensable force in the Assyrian court. These letters are fascinating for many reasons, not the least of which is the way the senders of the letters emerge as characters and how their expertise becomes narrativized. As the scholars share their “wisdom” with the king, they at times situate the content of their expertise—whether visions, omens, or medical advice—in a story, perhaps concerning the circumstances in which they performed divination or in which they now find themselves writing the letter. More striking is that some of the narrative themes and tropes found in the Neo-Assyrian letters also appear in literary texts, both Assyrian and from elsewhere in the ANE. This paper will look at a selection of Neo-Assyrian letters (e.g., SAA 10 160, SAA 10 179, YBC 11382) and literary texts that exhibit similar stories concerning scholars, including the Sin of Sargon (SAA 3 33), the biblical story of Joseph (Gen 40–41), and the tale of Ahiqar. Shared narrative tropes include, *inter alia*, imprisonment and release; the use of bilingualism to explain interpretations; conspiracy and suspicion; and dream interpretation. After comparing the sources, different options to explain such similarities will be discussed and evaluated.

Koerin, Camille

Interactions Between Egypt and Mesopotamia During the 4th Millennium BCE: Evidence from Cylinder Seals

Time: Friday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

The question of the interactions between Egypt and Mesopotamia during the 4th millennium BCE has been a recurrent issue in the archaeological research of the Egyptian Predynastic period since the beginning of Egyptology. The first excavations demonstrated the importance of the Mesopotamian influence upon the Predynastic Egyptian culture, as evidenced by the appearance of various oriental elements in their material and iconographic culture (ceramics, cylinder seals, and various iconographic motifs). Throughout the history of research, various theories were given to determine the modalities of contact between these two distant civilizations. However, none of them could be irrefutably demonstrated. Recent discoveries, both in the Nile Delta and in the Levant, allow us to bring new elements to fill the gaps that still exist in the research. A study of the geographical dispersion of cylinder seals, typical Mesopotamian objects that were discovered in the Egyptian Predynastic layers, would make it possible to precisely determine the means by which the Uruk and Egyptian civilizations were able to come into contact during the 4th millennium, despite the great geographical distance. This study is based on an unprecedented corpus of cylinder seals discovered in situ within several geographical and cultural regions (Egypt, the Levant, and Northern Mesopotamia) forming the Near East. The in-depth analysis of the objects in the corpus will make it possible to define the points of encounter between the different civilizations, as well as to determine the origin of the artefacts (local or foreign). Thanks to these studies, I will be able to determine the modalities of contact between Egypt and Mesopotamia, and to also fill a gap in the archaeological knowledge of the 4th millennium BC in the Near East. This is the fourth presentation about my PhD thesis, which was started in September 2021. It is intended to provide an update on the advancement of my research.

Kogan, Leonid

"This is NOT a Personal Name!": on Some Eblaite Verbal Forms Misread as PNs and the Philological Implications of Their Re-Analysis

Time: Thursday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P III

In the previous research, quite a number of linguistically uncertain sign strings from the Ebla texts (particularly the notoriously difficult "Chancery Texts") have been interpreted as (mostly abbreviated theophoric) personal names. A fresh look at the corpus makes it patent that in many of such cases true East Semitic (Eblaite) verbal forms are rather involved, which allows for a rather massive reinterpretation of the relevant segments or even entire documents. The paper intends to present about 10 case studies related to this issue, demonstrating the philological potential of the new method and its relevance for our understanding of the Eblaite text corpus.

Konstantopoulos, Gina

Story, Action, and Instruction: Generating and Using Narrative in Mesopotamian Incantations

Time: Thursday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

The Mesopotamian texts that fall, however loosely, under the umbrella of “incantations” may vary considerably from one another. These texts can come from different periods; be written in one of a number of cuneiform languages; be intended for different audiences; and even designed to be performed by various distinct, if related, specialists or practitioners. Despite these differences, incantations may find commonality in their inherent function: they are fundamentally effective texts, designed to affect a change on the world that exists beyond the text itself. To create such an impact, incantations may rely on their interior worlds. More specifically, incantations can utilize the narratives constructed purely within the space of the incantation and its text. This paper considers several different examples of how narratives are constructed within both Sumerian and Akkadian incantations, and how such narratives may engage with the functional qualities that are intrinsic to incantations and critical for their eventual use. Beyond more overt examples such as the mythical stories found in historiolas, incantations may build subtler narratives that exist entirely within the space of one text or connect between several different texts, often with the aim of reinforcing the incantation’s practical purpose. In doing so, this paper suggests that the qualities and categories of narrative and use are intertwined, and the relationship between these two features may work in both directions. Just as the desired function of an incantation may influence its narrative, so too may “function follow form.”

Kreimerman, Igor

Hazor in the Bronze and Iron Ages: New Discoveries

Time: Tuesday 17:30–18:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

The 'Selz Foundation Hazor Excavations in Memory of Yigael Yadin' take place annually since 1990 on behalf of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This presentation will give a detailed report of the finds and main conclusions from the latest seasons, conducted from 2022 to 2024. The presentation will focus on the remains of the Late Bronze Age palace that has been excavated in recent years and will review the results in light of other palaces excavated in the Levant, discussing mainly the palace economy and its situation within the social fabric of the city. The presentation will then proceed to discuss the remains of other periods in Areas M and A, as well as the expedition's excavations in the Lower City (Area T). Among the notable finds that will be discussed are the remains of a new, probably monumental structure, in the Lower City, new cultic remains on the Upper mound, and possibly a new phase within the Iron Age IIA (10th-9th century BCE) that predates the so-called Solomonic fortifications..

Kröll, Noah

Sumerian Interjections and Emesal

Time: Monday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

Like every language, Sumerian also has a special class of lexemes that can be called interjections. Semantically, interjections can be divided into four main groups: Emotional interjections, which verbalize the speaker's emotional/sensory state, cognitive interjections, which express the speaker's state of knowledge, conative interjections, which encode what the speaker wants the addressee to do (or not do), and phatic interjections, which express the speaker's mental state in relation to ongoing communication situations. The wide array of Sumerian Emesal-texts contain a fairly big amount of different interjections, which are conventionally humped together as expressing the very same rather vaguely defined emotive/conative states of sorrow and lamenting. The presentation will explore ways through which this rather generic assessment can be modified, particularly in light of the classification above.

Babylonian Language in Assyrian Script Negotiating Identity in Middle Assyrian Royal Inscriptions

Time: Tuesday 17:30–18:00

Venue: Porthania P III

This paper will examine how the choice of language and script reflects the negotiation of Assyrian identity in a time of conflicting attitudes towards the Babylonian neighbour. Royal inscriptions, continuously written and read at the royal court, will be contrasted with other genres, and the archaeological record. The Amarna letters of the 14th century witness the consolidation of a new regional entity first attested under its later ubiquitous name: *māt Aššur* "Assyria". Assyria's independence from Mittani and its territorial expansion under king Aššur-uballiṭ I are commonly referred to as the rise of the Middle Assyrian Empire. But, at the same time, first linguistic Babylonianisms appear in official royal inscriptions of the Assyrian king. Until the late 13th century, more specifically the reign of Tukultī-Ninurta I, Assyrian dialectal forms virtually disappear. The scarcity of Assyrian linguistic imprints is contrasted by the introduction and later prevalence of the Assyrian script in the same period of time. Earlier inscriptions prefer the archaizing 'ceremonial' script Šamšī-Adad had introduced to Assyria in the 18th century. From Tukultī-Ninurta I onward, the Assyrian script is used almost exclusively. It is striking that the change of language and script occurs in exactly those 150 years between the Assyrian independence under Aššur-uballiṭ and Tukultī-Ninurta's military campaign against Babylonia.

Kärger, Brit

The banishment of Lamaštu to the netherworld

Time: Thursday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

The written tradition of the demoness Lamaštu is widespread both geographically and chronologically. Ritual texts (recitanda and agenda) from the early second millennium to the first millennium BC are well attested throughout the Ancient Near East. Walter Farber's 2014 edition of all known Lamaštu texts has provided an important basis for a comprehensive semantic analysis of the mythical material, which has yet to be undertaken. From a semantic point of view, the fundamental question is whether and what kind of narrative material the incantations and rituals about Lamaštu contain. Is it possible to reconstruct a Lamaštu myth from the ritual texts? What mythical narrative(s) did the Mesopotamians pass on over such a long period of time? The paper attempts to answer these questions in a case study methodologically based on the hylistic methodology.

Lacambre, Denis

Patrier, Julie

Parayre, Dominique

The fate of officials after Samsī-Addu's death: between execution, rallying and seizure of power

Time: Monday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P II

The fall of a powerful kingdom in the ancient Near East, as elsewhere, meant that the members of the defeated administration could suffer a disastrous fate. There is a wealth of documentation on this subject from the Amorite period. In particular the Mari archives and contemporary archives such as those at Chagar Bazar (ancient Ašnakkum) and Tell Leilan (ancient Šehnā/Šubat-Enlil) provide a wealth of information on the events that followed the death of the powerful Samsī-Addu in the beginning of the 18th century BCE. The consequences for the fate of the members of his administration will be studied by combining the study of tablets, seals and sealings discovered in the numerous archives from this period. Various cases will be studied and recontextualised during this lecture.

Lairie, Elliott

Pique, Morgane

From Aššur to Sippar: merchant-controlled assemblies and kings in the early second millennium BCE

Time: Thursday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P II

Though their inscriptions may give the impression that the institution of kingship was the sole decision-making authority, kings were far from being the supreme centre of power in early Middle Bronze Age Mesopotamian polities. On a local level, they often had to deal with other political bodies with their own agenda and varying degrees of autonomy from the central administration. To illustrate this phenomenon, we will focus on two cities known for the important role merchants played in their political life: Aššur in Northern Mesopotamia during the 19th-18th C. BCE and Sippar in Central Mesopotamia under the First Dynasty of Babylon (late 19th-17th C. BCE). Despite being a frontier town in the Babylonian kingdom, Sippar was not directly governed by the crown but was informally ruled by the *kārum*. While the word usually referred to self-governed trading posts in foreign lands such as the Assyrian ones in Upper Mesopotamia and Anatolia, it designated a local merchant assembly in Sippar. In addition to its economical duties, the Sipparian *kārum* notably served as a judicial body for its citizens headed by the overseer of the merchants first with the city judges at his side. As long as merchants paid taxes to the king, Sippar was mostly left to its own devices. The practice of local assembly is also clearly attested in Aššur with the *ālum*. As the main decision-making body of the city-state, it acted both as an assembly and a court-of-law while the role of king of Aššur was limited to that of its mere chairman and executive officer. How were the relations between the king and these assemblies structured? How did the differences in approach to kingship between Upper and Central Mesopotamia impact the role of the king with the institutions? Even though it lacked a local kingship institution, the case of Emar's assemblies will also be considered. In this paper, we aim to compare the political institutions of Aššur and Sippar in the early 2nd millennium BCE, and more specifically the relationship between kingship and merchant-controlled assemblies.

Lang, Martin

Some thoughts about the intertextual universe of šar gimir dadmē ("Erra Epic" / "Išum and Erra")

Time: Tuesday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

The Babylonian poem šar gimir dadmē ("Erra Epic" / "Išum and Erra") is a literary monument of cuneiform literature that deals in an extraordinary way with the themes of war, violence and wrath, namely divine wrath and the absence of divine order. šar gimir dadmē is definitely a piece of literature that was written in the late period of the Akkadian literary tradition. Researchers have discussed dating it to the 7th century BC and earlier. More recently, attempts have been made to understand Erra's discourses on violence and war. Some intertextual studies have been carried out to read Erra as a counter-text and to figure out its intertextual relationships with Assyrian royal inscriptions, the enūma eliš and Anzu (bin šar dadmē). The paper will suggest and discuss possible further transtextual relationships, especially in Mesopotamian scholarly literature, and ask whether the text also conceals - or reveals - the author's knowledge of literature that we have hitherto only known in Sumerian.

Lang, Martin

The use of Emesal in The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur

Time: Monday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

The aim of this study will be to analyse an early documented use of Emesal based on what is possibly the oldest of the literary city laments in terms of tradition, the lament over Sumer and Ur. The paper will focus on this particular Sumerian piece of literature, which itself is not yet an early Emesal composition, but contains a small number of words in Emesal, to analyse Emesal vocabulary, the frequency of Emesal words, different spellings of Emesal words, the context of Emesal passages and Emesal-Emegir variants in different manuscripts. In the course of the investigation, the question will be addressed as to whether or not any intertextual references to the ritual laments attested from the Old Babylonian period onward can shed light on the use of Emesal in literary texts.

Lange, Matthias

The Historical Geography of Şehitkamil / Gaziantep in the Iron Age and the “Land of the Storm God Survey” 2022–2023

Time: Tuesday 18:00–18:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

The lecture combines some of the results of the first two seasons of the “Land of the Storm God Survey” in Şehitkamil, a district in the province of Gaziantep / Türkiye, with other iconographical material of this region as well as textual sources which can be related to this area. One of the aims of the survey is the contextualization of the Iron Age Storm God temple on the Dülük Baba Tepesi whose deity was known in Roman times as Jupiter Dolichenus. Due to the fact that the name-giving city of this god – Doliche / modern Keber Tepe – was settled only from Hellenistic times onwards and the name has no securely established precursor, the Iron Age contexts of the temple remains unknown. But also, no other site of Şehitkamil has been identified yet during this or one of the earlier periods. Therefore, in addition to the survey data and the Neo-Assyrian sources, the monumental sculptures or their fragments which have been found on Dülük Baba Tepesi, in Güngürge Höyük and Sinan Höyük will be taken into consideration in order to establish a preliminary picture of this region during the Iron Age.

Lecompte, Camille

The Colophons of the Archaic Scholarly Texts

Time: Friday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P II

This paper examines the corpus of the earliest colophons found in the Late Uruk lexical lists, part of an ongoing project on the edition of texts from the Late Uruk period. It will present the results of a re-edition of the colophons, including several improved readings and integrating unpublished texts unavailable to Englund and Nissen in their publication of ATU 3 . The lack of an unambiguous term for scribe and the occurrence of several professional designations not seemingly connected with writing raise questions about the training of scribes and the broader social organization of writing during that period.

Lenzi, Alan

The Prayer of Nabû-šuma-ukīn (BM 40474) in Light of Mesopotamian and Social Scientific Perspectives on Gossip, Slander, and Reputation

Time: Tuesday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P I

Gossip and reputation maintenance are some of the most powerful mechanisms for humans to navigate, regulate, and police their social formations—who is “in”, who is “out”; who is worthy of approval or admiration and who deserves disapproval or sanction. This kind of speech can also be an insidious, anti-social tool to undermine the standing of another unjustly via lies and slander. Thus, the very mechanisms that can help maintain social formations can also tear them apart. Anyone who lives in community knows these dangers well. The focus in this paper is on the Prayer of Nabû-šuma-ukīn (BM 40474), a prayer in which gossip, slander, lies, and evil speech have overwhelmed the supplicant, who cries out to Marduk for remedy. The prayer was first published by Irving Finkel in 1999 (CDOG 2: 323–242); other editions and translations include Foster, *Muses*, 3rd ed. (2005): 852–856; Oshima, *ORA* 7 (2011): 95–96, 316–327; Hecker, *TUAT*, n.f. 7 (2013): 91–94; and Lenzi, *Akkadian Prayer Miscellany* (2022): <http://akkpm.org/P499184.html>. After a brief overview of the prayer’s content and literary structure, the present paper situates the supplicant’s worries and petitions within the broader ancient Mesopotamian concerns with unfounded or illicit gossip, slander, and character assassination. The paper will then consider these indigenous ancient Mesopotamian concerns from a variety of modern social scientific perspectives. The results of the paper will shed new light on both the prayer and the cultural significance of gossip, slander, and reputation in ancient Mesopotamian ideas of social life.

Leokumovich, Yael

Weaving Lines: Intertextuality in a Late Babylonian Cultic Composition

Time: Tuesday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

Citation techniques are frequently employed in cultic cuneiform texts. The incorporation of quotes creates a network of interconnected texts, words, and phrases. The reworking of these numerous quotations leaves an indelible trace in the texts, binding them together and offering glimpses into their genealogical lines. In my paper, I delve into a distinctive Urukian cultic recitation in Akkadian, originating from a ritual text focused on the eclipsed moon. This recitation, comprising cited lines from Emesal lament-prayers, unveils prominent performative and literary features. The paper explores the changes and modifications occurring in the cited lines, with a specific focus on agency and related aspects. Another dimension of the paper delves into literary techniques such as montage, discussing their relevance to cuneiform literature and highlighting their role as a mode of textual creativity, preservation, and their intricate relation to textual and cultic traditions.

Leonard, Timothy

In Two Places at Once: Hittite Gods with Two Geographical Epithets

Time: Wednesday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P II

The Hittite cuneiform writing system frequently designates the names of divinities ideographically. This practice often obscures the theonym underlying the ideogram, and it imposes Mesopotamian archetypes onto local Anatolian deities. To resolve this ambiguity, Hittite scribes frequently qualified divine names by means of an epithet. These divine epithets could be descriptive, but more often they were geographic in nature. This phenomenon is not limited to Hittite texts, of course, but also occurs in cuneiform sources throughout ancient Mesopotamia. Ancient Near Eastern deities were not ubiquitous, but were intimately connected to the place (or places) where they were worshipped. The most prominent of these deities retained their geographical designation even when they were venerated in another location (e.g. Ištar of Nineveh). In such cases, a divine entity can be described as localized, that is, the location of their original cult center was the essential, defining component of their identity. Using Ištar of Šamuḫa as an exemplar of this process, I trace the emergence of this goddess from the earlier divine figure Ištar of the Field, and I discuss the changing significance of this deity on the level of both state and local cults. I further analyze the process by which a divinity's cult is expanded to a new location, and the interpretation of the resulting divine names that are modified by two sequential geographical epithets. These examples will help elucidate the Hittite conception of divinity, and will demonstrate ways in which localized divine power could be felt in two places at once.

Liu, Haikang

Motherhood on display: a relook at the foreign mothers in neo-Assyrian palatial reliefs

Time: Wednesday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

Compared to other ancient cultures women are relatively few in the art of ancient Mesopotamia, let alone mothers. The deported foreign women in neo-Assyrian palatial reliefs, though small in number, always stand out in historical scenes featuring male soldiers and kings because of their specific physiognomy and dress. It's generally thought that women are knitted into the historical narratives of masculinity as visual tropes. A closer look at these figures reveals that many of them are foreign mothers, identified by their physical affinity with children. The triple identity of being foreigners, captives and mothers served as the unique visual rhetoric to represent the victory of Assyrians and more importantly, their proud policy of counting the foreign people as Assyrians (*itti/ana nišē KUR Aššur amnūšunūti*) in that only mothers can act as the central point to associate together all the captives while any other identity fails to do so. How mothers interact with their companions and children of different ages and genders are best exemplified in the relief of Battle Lachish while a queue of mere captive mothers and daughters in the booty scene of Ashurbanipal's Elamite victory might not be visual coincidence. A legal document excavated in Ashur recording a slave transaction of an Elamite mother and her daughter, who were probably taken to Ashur as booty after the fall of Elam, suggests that mother and daughter both being house slaves might not be rare in Assyrian cities and the scene is no strange to Assyrian spectators. Despite the foreign mothers as captives, being a mother could also incur fatal incident in the case of Arabic pregnant women during the reign of Ashurbanipal. The one and only relief recording Assyrian soldiers attacking women and ripping open pregnant women shows that an expectant mother resides in the very core of the Arabic nomadic tribes both physically and conceptually, protected by the *ḥurādu* soldiers. This essay tries to break away from stereotypical way of imagining being a mother in the ancient world and explores how the conquerors, Assyrians in this case, use mother figures to advance its own historical narrative.

Liu, Changyu

Inward and Outward: Prosopography of the Ur III diplomatic individuals between Puzrish-Dagan administrative texts and Girsu-Irisagrig messenger texts

Time: Friday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P III

This study aims to do a prosopography of diplomatic individuals both who are responsible for (giri3 or maškim) foreign envoys visiting to Babylonia from Puzrish-Dagan administrative texts (ba-zi) and who traveled to foreign lands from Girsu and Irisagrig messenger texts. The former was titled as the Ur III civil servant (mostly Sum. sukkal, Akk. sukkallum) who served inside for the foreign envoys or messengers (mostly lu2-kin-gi4-a). The latter was titled as the Ur III messengers or errands (mostly sukkal and lu2-kas4 from Girsu texts also military personnel, lu2-gištukul or aga3-us2, and lu2-kin-gi4-a or lu2-kin-gi4-a lugal from Irisagrig texts) who served outside and traveled, or responsible for (giri3) Elamites travelling, between Babylonia and its eastern neighbors. How many individuals serving for Ur III diplomacy were there? What were their titles or professions? Which foreign lands were they responsible or travelling? Did they have different divisions and responsibilities? Building on previous scholarship and big data statistics, a comparative analysis of administrative ba-zi texts from Puzrish-Dagan with messenger texts from Girsu and Irisagrig might suffice to bring about a conclusive answer to these questions and sum up the diplomatic system in the Late Third Millennium Babylonia.

López-Ruiz, Carolina

Schloen, David

Phoenician settlements as a sustainable, counter-imperial strategy

Time: Tuesday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

There is much that we do not understand about the motivations and organizational mechanisms of the Phoenician expansion in the Mediterranean, which started in the ninth century BCE. Was Tyre the main motor behind the initial enterprises, as the sources claim, and (if so) how much was it involved in the growth and maintenance of these networks in the long run? Or was this a more decentralized commercial and diasporic phenomenon? Whatever the case, the strategy followed by the Phoenicians was not one of military or administrative domination of large territories, yet the mechanisms they deployed resulted in a sustainable, thriving network for centuries to come. Instead of seeing the Phoenician diaspora as a string of interconnected trading posts of limited political vision, I propose to see their settlements as part of a deliberate, adaptive, and non-imperial strategy that contrasted with that of the Near Eastern empires (Hittite, Egyptian, Neo-Assyrian) with whom city-states such as Ugarit, Byblos, and Tyre had dealt with since the Bronze Age. In this too, the Phoenicians were proper heirs of the Canaanite states and provided alternative geopolitical models for others to follow.

Maggio, Michèle

The "NA.GAD" of the Temple of Nanna from Ur. Presentation of a category of people from a religious institution in southern Mesopotamia at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC.

Time: Friday 16:30–17:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

This conference will present a category of people in attempt to define the specific role they had, to submit hypotheses about the economic activities of a religious institution and to try to clarify the "polities" (in their original sense of the term, i.e. that have an interest in the management of public and civil affairs) of a city at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC in southern Mesopotamia. Administrative texts from Ur have been discovered for almost a century. Some have been collected under the name "Nanna-Temple Cattle Dossier", which has been known and studied for several years (MAGGIO, PhD, p. 111 et seq.; FARBER, H., A discussion of the Nanna-Ningal Temple at your during the Old Babylonian Period. This unfinished thesis was announced in 1979 in *Akkadica* 15 (p. 61). BUTZ, WZKM 65/66, 1973/1974, pp. 1-58. VAN DE MIEROOP, BSA 7, 1993, pp. 161-182. BÉRANGER, Archibab 4, 2020, p. 233 et seq.). These are dated documents, with an assured provenance. Their study is crucial, as they allow us to better discern the *modus operandi* of the main religious institution of the city of Ur, the sanctuary of the god Nanna and his consort Ningal. Called "shepherds" or "herders", the NA.GADs are mentioned on inscribed bullae, also known as tablet basket "labels", and on tablets that can be extended to 6 columns (3 columns per side) for a fairly short period dating from the reigns of three kings of the Dynasty of Larsa: Sin-eribam, Sin-iqišam and Šilli-Adad (from ca. 1842 to 1835 BC). The NA.GADs are about 150, often linked by fraternal ties, and they are responsible for transporting to the Temple of Nanna the skins of sheep and goats, died of natural causes. In order to fully fulfill the goals of this conference, we will attempt to clarify their family ties and status within the city of Ur.

Mahmoud, Dean

Continuity and change in the south-eastern Sulaymaniyah region (Northern Iraq/Kurdistan Autonomous Region) during the Late Iron Age to the Seleucid period

Time: Thursday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P II

This lecture aims to present a pertinent section of my dissertation, currently being written at the Department of Near Eastern Studies (University of Vienna). Focusing on the late 6th to the late 2nd century BCE in the Sulaymaniyah region, my presentation explores the ramifications of political empires on material culture, features, and communities. After the fall of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, an Assyrian cultural continuity in connection with western Iranian influences in material culture, architecture, burial customs, etc. continued to exist in parts of the south-eastern Sulaymaniyah region until the Seleucid period. The region's peripheral position within the post-Assyrian empires facilitated a distinctive development that merged with external imperial influences. Local elites with a conservative character may have been granted political autonomy by the empires in the post-Assyrian/Achaemenid period up to the beginning of the Seleucid period. Effects such as these led to a particular development of groups in this foothill region between the Mesopotamian lowlands and the Zagros. This study seeks to unravel the influence exerted by these elites on material culture and the landscape from the 6th to the end of the 2nd century BCE in the southeast Sulaymaniyah region. Utilizing case studies from sites such as Gird-i Qalrakh, Gird-i Kazhaw, Bakr Awa, and others, I will illustrate how changes and continuities effected local communities from the Late Iron Age to the Seleucid period in the Sharizor plain and its surroundings. My research will scrutinize whether excavated finds and features in the Sulaymaniyah region during the Late Iron Age to the Seleucid period reveal discernible patterns of continuity and/or change.

Maiocchi, Massimo

Volpi, Sasha

Reassessing Economic History in the Early Dynastic Period: Sources, Methods, and Perspectives within the frame of the "Urban Economy Begins" Project

Time: Friday 16:00–16:30

Venue: Porthania P III

Over the past twenty years, Early Dynastic sources for the reconstruction of economic history of Mesopotamia and Syria have increased considerably. The newly available texts provide key information on many relevant topics, such as primary production, land and workforce management, private and institutional transactions, etc. Despite this wealth of information, a coherent, comprehensive study that integrates these recent findings into a broader analysis is still lacking. The issue is particularly acute when it comes to broad interdisciplinary studies on economic developments in diachronic perspective. This contribution provides an overview on possible ways to mitigate this situation, addressing the problem from two complementary points of view. On the one hand, it offers an updated overview of the new finds, highlighting most relevant archives and dossiers for the study of ancient economy. On the other, the paper explores current methodologies employed in the analysis of epigraphic data, with emphasis on dedicated digital tools developed within the frame of the Urban Economy Begins project. The overall goal is to draw attention on the formative phase of urban economy in the ancient Near East, in the hope that the newly developed framework may contribute to reignite scholarly debate on ancient economies as a whole.

Malitzky, Max

Reading Between the Lines: The Mesopotamian Text Commentary Tradition and its Relationship to Rabbinic Literature

Time: Tuesday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P II

The contemporary scholarship on Babylonian and Assyrian text commentaries has enhanced our understanding of them as the earliest known example of hermeneutic reasoning, a sophisticated and self-conscious attempt to reflect on language, knowledge and interpretation itself. Our growing ability to recognize the sophistication of these texts allows us to mine them in order to understand the Mesopotamian scholarly mindset; begging the question of the contribution of Mesopotamia to the intellectual culture of the ancient world at large. In brief, it can be argued that a broad reading of the commentary literature reveals much common epistemological ground alongside important differences dependent on period and locale; one important aspect of which is the deep belief in a divinely inscribed and “readable” cosmos, where the activity of decryption and commentary could be seen as a powerful mode of contact with the divine. This paper will focus on a Neo-Babylonian diagnostic omen series and its commentary, in order to paint a picture of scribes and scholars treating the language of their antiquity as embossed with the authority of the divine signature, and working interpretatively with the language of canonical texts in ways that reflects such a belief system. These notions about divine writing, the investment in their investigation and the unique approaches to written language that inhere have a strong parallel in the Rabbinic literature of late antiquity, namely Midrash, an interlinear commentary on the Hebrew Bible that forms the backbone of rabbinic intellectual culture. Nevertheless, there has been a stubborn insistence in reading, and understanding its content and form as a result of Graeco-Roman influence. This paper will argue that it is in fact much more appropriate to see both the form of rabbinic composition and its intellectual program as an evolution of a tradition shared with Mesopotamia. Although it will not be possible to demonstrate a clear vector of transmission, a number of possible modes and sites of exchange will be considered. These include the diffusion of cuneiform and Mesopotamian scribal practices during the late Bronze age and enduring Jewish settlement in Mesopotamia with ongoing ties to Jewish Palestine beginning in the late 7th Century BCE and continuing into

late Antiquity. Perhaps most importantly, this discussion will seek to complicate the false binarism between “Hellenistic” and “Mesopotamian”, stressing the important interconnectivities between the Western Mediterranean and the Ancient Near East.

Manasterska, Sara

Carrying, give or take – people and institutions in positive orders and requests

Time: Friday 16:30–17:00

Venue: Porthania P I

Communicating commands and requests across distance is one of the key functions of Akkadian epistolography already in the earliest corpora (Sollberger 1966, Kienast and Volk 1995). The so-called letter order as an administrative genre persists until the Persian (MacGinnis, 1995) and Hellenistic periods (McEwan, 1981). Positive requests and commands, present in these letters as well as in other types of correspondence, although grammatically limited to the form of imperative or precativ, assume a wide variety of pragmatic forms, involving a wide range of variously expressed means of persuasion, and present a striking variation in the density of information provided by the sender. The purpose of this paper is to point out some of the differences between the broadly considered pragmatic forms of positive orders and requests and to connect them to the institutional or non-institutional (in relation to a polity or another institution) background of their senders, based on several subcorpora from the 2nd and 1st millennium BCE.

Manasterska, Sara

Strategies of presenting in-group identity in I millennium BCE epistolography

Time: Monday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P III

Overt and direct proclamations of identity of the writers in the epistolographic corpora of the Ancient Near East are extremely limited. However, in the course of their persuasive endeavours, numerous letter-writers would not infrequently compare themselves favourably or unfavourably against other members of groups they felt that they themselves belonged to. It is the purpose of this paper to trace these comparisons in their narrative context within the letters, as well as to try to present a rough draft of their typology and history.

Markina, Ekaterina

Power, Politics and Literature in the Sargonic era: the "Weapon of Blood" letter

Time: Friday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P III

The so-called "Weapon of Blood letter" is one of the most famous Sargonic letters known presently. Although only a fragment of it is preserved, it offers intriguing insights into the game of powers during the layer phase of the Sargonic period. In 2018 a closely related letter was published that shows significant similarities to the "Weapon of Blood" letter both thematically and lexically. Both texts have been examined with regard to their potential for the historical reconstruction of the events. However, they clearly offer more than that, as they contain a significant number of parallels to royal inscriptions and literary texts. The present paper is an attempt at analyzing this literary dimension of both letters and the ways it might affect the conventional understanding of them as historical sources.

Markovic, Nenad,
Nitschke, Jessica

Chosen by the King: The Agency of the High Priest of Ptah in Persian and Ptolemaic Egypt

Time: Friday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

The High Priest of Ptah at Memphis is officially known as the “Greatest of the Directors of Craftsmen (wr ḥrpw ḥmwt)”, a title exclusively reserved for influential individuals who consistently belonged to the social and political elite and maintained close links to the king across various historical periods. In the 26th (Saitic) Dynasty (664–526 BCE), the title in question was initially conferred upon a scion of prominent local priestly lineage and subsequently passed on within another family for a minimum of six generations, thereby establishing a local non-royal dynasty. Following the Persian conquest in c.526 BCE, the same family retained their position in office and likely continued to provide titleholders throughout the 5th century BCE. Our knowledge of the office during the 4th to early 3rd centuries BCE is constrained due to the limited number of sources; however, we know that eventually the position was conferred by Ptolemy II Philadelphus (284–246 BCE) to a prominent member from a different family, leading to the rise of another local non-royal dynasty whose last known members are documented as holding the same position at least until the early 1st century CE. The objective of this paper is to analyse the socio-political and socio-cultural agency of the High Priest of Ptah during the Persian and Ptolemaic eras through a comparative case study. In order to better understand the history of this office and the relationship between its holder and the royal authority in these periods, we will compare the prosopographical information available for Ahmosemen(em)inebhedj, who served as the high priest of Memphis under Cambyses II and Darius I (c.526–486 BCE), and Nesisti/Pedubast, who held the same position during the reign of Ptolemy II. In both cases, the direct involvement of royal authority was crucial in the selection and appointment of the High Priest of Ptah. Both individuals were appointed as the governor of Memphis, an atypical role in the longer history of the office, whose responsibilities were traditionally restricted to the cultic sphere. This expansion of the office duties to encompass a major political function points to a shift in royal strategies for organising administrative power in ancient Egypt in the mid-first millennium BCE. The two selected examples showcase a continuity in

the relationship between the king and local leadership in the Persian and Macedonian reigns, as well as distinct choices of whom to entrust with that leadership.

Marrocchi Savoi, Andrea Rebecca

Not a Sumerian Soap-opera: what Di-til-la Texts Tell Us About Ur III Domestic Life

Time: Friday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P III

In this presentation, the focus is on an in-depth exploration of family structures and the interplay of social dynamics during the Ur III period in ancient Mesopotamia, centered around a detailed examination of the di-til-la procedural texts. This research proposes a departure from the conventional use of "kinship terminology," advocating for "relationship terminology" instead, to more accurately reflect the intricate network of social affiliations within this ancient civilization. By integrating philological expertise with anthropological insight, the study aims to delineate the distinction between "household" and family, underscoring the former's basis on physical proximity and functional interdependence, versus the latter's on blood and matrimonial connections. This research strives to illuminate the multifaceted roles of household units within Mesopotamian economic and social spheres, suggesting that these entities were pivotal in fostering cooperation and ensuring social cohesion through communal practices and rituals. Through rigorous analysis of legal documents and societal practices, the project seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of the norms that governed daily life, family obligations, and property transmission, thereby enriching our grasp of ancient societal constructs. Moreover, this research aspires to contribute to the field of Mesopotamian historiography, while simultaneously encouraging further interdisciplinary investigation in the domains of ancient history and anthropology. By presenting insights into the dynamics of family and society in ancient civilizations, the study underscores the relevance of Mesopotamian research in addressing broader academic and societal discussions, challenging contemporary perceptions of family, household, and community cohesion. In summary, this project not only seeks to shed light on the intricate fabric of Mesopotamian family and society during the Ur III period but also to pave the way for future research that bridges historical, philological, and anthropological studies.

Through a detailed and critical examination of primary sources and a thoughtful reconsideration of terminological frameworks, this study aspires to advance our understanding of ancient civilizations, contributing valuable insights into the enduring questions of social structure and human relationships.

Martinez-Garcia, Kepa

Fluvial processions. Resilience and Identity engraved in Seals

Time: Tuesday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P III

The aim of this paper is to discuss the iconography of seals involving fluvial processions during the Early Bronze Age in the Mesopotamian floodplain. Seals provide us with the opportunity to delve into specific features of these rites but also offer insights into the process of constructing territorial stability and the evolution of identities. Authority figures brought together folkways within urban communities of shared culture through participation in these public recurring events where they self-related with a particular tradition, deity, or temple. Perceived as mandatory, their high degree of formality and symbolism conveyed a sense of continuity with the past and communicated shared values. Intricate depictions of processions in addition to banquet scenes, animal sacrifices, and presentations before deities suggest that their social significance was fully assimilated into the communities. Supra-regional networks were thus intertwined through waterways, which represent life and fertility, generating cognitive maps. Through ideology and religious legitimacy, they vertebrated the territory, strengthened cultural identity, settled hierarchy between cities, and mitigated internal community discord. As for the evolution of identities, seal iconography indicates that, during the collapse of the Uruk structures, the so-called Big Men (but also women) performed ideologically charged solemnities. Associated banners relate the processions to the pan-regional Inanna cult in Uruk. From EDI onwards, the southern plain will strive to safeguard its identity through the continuity of iconography while a gradual differentiation occurs in the north, slowly displacing the former southern cultural hegemony. The distinct aesthetic of the seals from Kish to Eshnunna, along with the appearance of the "presentation of offerings before a triangular mound" scene, may indicate a rise in the influence of the Šamaš cult around Kiš, Sippar, and the Diyala region from EDI to EDIIIa. EDII Representations of the boat-god alongside figures without a divine headdress found from Nippur to Mari imply that northern rulers could potentially assume the role of the deity. Akkadian period seals throughout the floodplain reflect the highly standardised cultural expressions of northern Semitic communities. Despite being based

on the ED iconography, they no longer display any trace of community participation. Lastly, Ur III seals reject the rich style from the former period and try to recover ED symbols. From 2033 BC, along with the disappearance of eponyms related to sacred vessels in epigraphy, depictions of river processions on seals also disappeared.

Mattila, Raija

History of the State Archives of Assyria project: experiences from within

Time: Wednesday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

The project started 38 years ago. In 1986 the Academy of Finland granted initial funding for the project, which commenced under the name The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project initiated and directed by Simo Parpola. The name State Archives of Assyria Project was adopted when the project was a Centre of Excellence of the University of Helsinki during 1997–2001. The central aim of the project was two-fold: to compile an electronic corpus of all Neo-Assyrian texts and publish the Assyrian royal archives of Nineveh in critical text editions. This paper will view the project and its history based on experiences from within. According to the notes in my pocket calendar I received keys for our first project room on the 2nd of January 1986, and I worked for the project for several years. During the following years the State Archives of Assyria project made Helsinki a major training and research centre. Several internationally known scholars were employed in Helsinki. Hundreds of Assyriologists contributed to its events and publications. In 2001 the Rencontre was organized in Helsinki in cooperation with Estonian scholars. The extensive publication record of the project includes critical text editions, of which the last volume State Archives of Assyria 23 will appear this year, a series of monographs, a series for cuneiform texts, the Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, several conference volumes, the Helsinki Atlas of the Near East in the Neo-Assyrian Period, and an Assyrian-English-Assyrian dictionary. Since 2009 the publication program has been carried out by the Foundation for Finnish Assyriological Research, a foundation established by Simo Parpola.

May, Natalie M.

Ritual, Politics and the “Others:” Persians at Assyrian Court?

Time: Thursday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P I

Persians, a mighty Iranian people, recent nomads, were soon to replace Assyrians in ruling the world. Yet we hardly know anything about them before Cyrus’ conquest of Babylon. First representations of Persians seem to be displayed on palace reliefs of Ashurbanipal. But are these indeed Persians or just imitators of their appearance and ways of behaviour? My paper will propose a new interpretation of the enigmatic Assyrian reliefs representing people in “feather headdresses.” These reliefs show ritual processions and musical performances. I will argue that these representations reveal that the Assyrians closely knew their allies and adversaries’ habits. I will show that this knowledge was widely used in political technologies of the time. My investigation will suggest a restoration of reliefs’ sequence and explain their subject-matter. This task is complicated by the lack of information on the provenience of many of relief fragments. It will be demonstrated that not a single ethnic entity, but a number of various peoples are shown on Ashurbanipal’s reliefs participating in rituals and musical performances in feather headdress disguise. Identification of these reliefs’ subject matter is based on textual evidence, among it texts published by the Helsinki Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project. Textual evidence reveals political targets of visual representations beyond any doubt. In the reign of Ashurbanipal Assyrians became highly interested in the rising power of distant new neighbours. They tried to impact their relationship with Persians by ritual performances. Investigating the reliefs enable us to understand how this was done.

Mazow, Laura

The Debate Between Weaver and Fuller: A Re-Examination of At the Fullers UET 6/2, 414

Time: Friday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

A challenge for reconstructing ancient textile processing is interpreting references to crafts that are no longer practiced and whose specialized vocabulary is no longer understood. Reference to such an activity is found in the Old Babylonian cuneiform text *At the Fullers*. The text is traditionally read as a humorous dialogue between a fuller and a difficult customer that is also meant as didactic literature. The problem, however, is that many words are craft-specific and do not appear elsewhere or have a different common meaning. Furthermore, is the dialogue comedic because the directions are absurd, the instructions are provided out of order, or it uses non-conventional terminology—any of which would conflict with the text's presumed pedagogical purpose. In this research, ethnographic, ethnohistoric, and experimental studies support new interpretations of keywords that enable us to recognize three areas of principal concern in the final processing of a woven woolen textile: the fringe, the shrink, and the nap. The fuller's responsibility to control for shrinkage and texture is crucial to the textile's final shape, size, and feel. However, while the fulling process, which matts the woolen fibers, can result in undesirable felted fringe and a misshapen product, the amount of shrink and its impact on a textile's final shape is also dependent on wool type and sort, the tightness of both the spun yarn and the weave, and the desired finish. In *At the Fullers* UET 6/2, 414, there is much tension between the initial speaker, who I argue is a weaver and not a customer, and the fuller. Each has little regard for the other's expertise and yet each, ultimately, must work in tandem to produce a finished product. This tension creates some acerbic retorts that are both literally and figuratively funny, while at the same time instructing on those issues that would be of primary difficulty to someone learning the fulling craft. As they toss insults at each other, we gain witness to a theoretical conversation between interdependent craft specialists at the moment the responsibility for the product's outcome shifts from one to the other.

McDermott, Luke

Intertextuality in a Neo-Assyrian Literary Simile

Time: Tuesday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

Neo-Assyrian writing is replete with figurative expressions dependent on simile and metaphor. Such non-literal and comparative communicative techniques gesture to knowledge, concepts, and associations that exist outside of their immediate and literal context. As such, figurative language invites close intertextual analysis. This approach can illuminate both direct referentiality of figurative motifs between fixed texts, and the wider reservoir of cultural perception and meaning from which scholars, scribes, and creatives drew. The combination of allusive and metaphorical techniques is exemplified in *The Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince* (VAT 10057). The text is suffused with a rich array of figurative imagery and intertextual allusion. Indeed, it provides something of a dynamic compilation of such techniques bound together within a narrative. This paper is concerned with intertextuality within the figurative language of VAT 10057. In particular, it focuses on one conspicuous simile, which occurs as Nergal extols the virtues of a deceased king. He likens the land conquered by the dead monarch to string (r.23). The comparison may be related to an epithet of the sun god in the widely circulated Hymn to Šamaš. However, this general thematic similarity is overshadowed by an almost verbatim co-occurrence of the whole line in one text from Sultantepe, known as the Letter of Gilgamesh. Both texts appear to be of a fictive nature, and not directly instrumental or functional (in contrast to administrative letters or omen lists, for example). Both also are allusive towards the established, canonical literary tradition (most obviously the Epic of Gilgamesh). Questions raised by the observation of an intertextual relationship between these texts will be addressed here. Of these, an important consideration is the direction of literary borrowing taking place. Which text is alluding to which? Or, are both texts drawing on a third source? Can we engage in Intertextual Criticism, and build something of a “stemma” of motif in two texts for whose contextual information, such as precise dating, composer, and individual textual histories, are quite uncertain? Moreover, what would such an intertextual relationship tell us of the textual communities that were operating in the Late Neo-Assyrian world, and the wider historical context of first-millennium learned and creative textual production?

Menicatti, Lucrezia

Micro-Narratives in Babylonian Omen Texts. Case-Studies from the Adad Tablets of the Celestial Omen Series Enūma Anu Enlil

Time: Thursday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

This presentation explores the narrative elements embedded in the micro-structure of Babylonian divinatory texts, focusing on selected case-studies from the celestial divinatory series Enūma Anu Enlil, “When Anu and Enlil,” from the 1st millennium B.C. The texts discussed belong to the so-called Adad section, which comprises chapters 44-49 of the celestial omen series and concerns storms and other weather-related phenomena. In the case-studies under discussion, the omen protases employ colors and similes to describe atmospheric phenomena, and this talk first explores how the appearance of these elements in the omen protases shape themes and outcomes predicted in the omen apodoses. Second, it demonstrates that the omen apodoses construct a parallel narrative reflecting the variations in the recorded signs. This analysis reveals that the divinatory text unfolds on two narrative levels: horizontally, through the association between signs and predictions; and vertically, as observed signs evolve across the sequence of omen protases, linked with parallel thematic developments in the corresponding omen apodoses. This vertical progression within the apodoses’ sequence enhances the creation of a cohesive narrative. Ultimately, this study seeks to illuminate how these omen texts weave narratives about atmospheric phenomena in the omen protases, interconnecting them with parallel narratives about the human world in the omen apodoses.

Michel, Cécile
Brisch, Nicole,
Abrahami, Philippe
Quillien, Louise

Red Dyed Textiles and Red Dyes in Cuneiform Texts

Time: Friday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

The 2016 international conference and workshop “Dyes and Spices” (<https://vimeo.com/201152631>), which was organised within the International Research Network “Ancient Textiles from the Orient to the Mediterranean” (<https://www.mshmondes.cnrs.fr/groupements-de-recherche-internationaux/gdri-atom/>) by the “Centre for Textile Research” and took place in Copenhagen and Lejre (Denmark), inspired four Assyriologists to further research dyed textiles. Among the great variety of terms for colours, the red colour is one of the best documented in Mesopotamian texts, allowing a comprehensive study at different levels (materiality, economy, and symbolic). Our research opts for a diachronic and experimental approach. Focussing on the first aspect (materiality), it includes information on red textiles, red dyes, and dye recipes in cuneiform sources across three millennia. We will present the great variety of terms to express the different hues of red, which applies to a large range of realia and specially to coloured textiles. The red dyed textiles are obtained using dye plants, mineral and animal, some of which are well-attested in cuneiform texts. Other products such as mordants were used to fix the colour, and some texts give hints on the techniques used to dye woollen textiles. In order to test our interpretations of the cuneiform texts, we conducted experiments with natural dyes in a dye garden planted for the occasion by colleagues in Ardèche, in Southeastern France. This presentation will summarise the terminological study and the results obtained during the experiments.

Middeke-Conlin, Robert

Variety and Uniformity in the Old Babylonian Education

Time: Tuesday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P III

Often, education in Southern Mesopotamia during the Old Babylonian period is spoken of as a uniform system. The scribe was educated at the Eduba, learned in reading and writing on the one hand, and mathematics on the other. Curricula consisted of lexical lists, proverbs, and model contracts or metrological lists and tables, numerical lists and tables, and mathematical practice. We tend to speak of each Sumerian literary tablet and mathematical tablet found throughout Mesopotamia as if it were individually representative of the whole, even though we know this is not the case. In many cases this is symptomatic of the incredible amount of tablets available from one local, Nippur, and then the comparative paucity of tablets from the rest of the South. This presentation explores the variety of education and practices found throughout Mesopotamia. Focusing on a few examples, it will show variety in education, from different tablet types to different content on these tablets between scribal centers. Even the Eduba's universality will be put in doubt. Lexicality and metrology as well as literature and mathematical practice will all come together to present an image of knowledge in Mesopotamia: a tapestry of local knowledge and education forming a more global knowledge.

Mirelman, Sam

Concepts and Techniques of Literary Translation in Early Mesopotamia

Time: Friday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P I

It has long been debated whether some early Sumerian-Akkadian literary bilingual compositions are “true” translations, or parallel texts. In order to answer this question, it is necessary to consider wider concepts of translation, and their possible relevance for early Mesopotamia. For example, it is common in Assyriology to speak of a “true” translation as word-for-word, lexically derived equivalence. However, depending on our definition of the concept, other types of literary translation are also known from early Mesopotamia. Other relevant topics include the “direction” of translation, translationese (or “third code”) in Sumerian and Akkadian, and the general purpose of translation in education and scholarship, but also as a marker of authority and antiquity in royal inscriptions and other compositions.

Mittermayer, Catherine

The adaption of knowledge in the divinatory series Šumma ālu

Time: Wednesday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P III

To this day, the so-called canonical version of the divinatory series Šumma ālu ina mēlê šakin often combines regionally and chronologically divergent traditions, resulting in numerous inconsistencies in the textual reconstruction. This paper aims to identify the slightly older version of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu within the bulk of texts. He devoted the years 708–707 BCE to studying terrestrial omens and left behind a version of the Šumma ālu series which is 120 Tablets long, according to the highest number recorded in its colophons. His version can only be partially reconstructed at present. It will be compared with the slightly younger version from the time of Assurbanipal to demonstrate how knowledge was transmitted and adapted in specific contexts. Individual Tablets will be used to illustrate in detail the differences between the two traditions.

Mizzoni, Alejandro

The King and the Others. Power and Conflict in Iron Age Syria

Time: Thursday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

During the 10th to 8th centuries BC, a series of hierarchical polities emerged, expanded or collapsed across the northern Levant. The local kings founded new cities, extended their kingdoms at the expense of their neighbours and established relationships with the Assyrians, sometimes paying tribute to them and making subordination pacts, sometimes participating in anti-Assyrian coalitions. The consolidation of royal figures seems to have been related, in a great extent, to their key role in maintaining foreign relations and waging war in the context of an expanding empire, and secondary-state formation models have been proposed to account for these processes. However, local politics were not circumscribed to royalty. Inscriptions coming from the kingdoms of Arpad and Sam'al indicate the presence of local groups and personalities who are shown taking part in some decision making instances and who could get into conflict, or even open war, in the local contexts but also with external ramifications. These local groups and figures seem to have been articulated through family houses, including specific roles for female household members, as well as other kinds of collective power and social sectors; in some cases, the associated terminology stresses preeminence, including the use of terms usually related to kingship. This presentation will follow and compare the cases Arpad and Sam'al in order to discuss the mutual impacts between external and internal conflicts, as well as their influence in the shaping and transformation of local politics and power relations, and the articulations between royal figures and other preeminent groups or figures. The emerging picture allows to challenge simplistic views of secondary-state formation processes in Iron Age Syria and call for a more nuanced approach that takes into account both internal and external conflicts, superpositions between polities and the local power dynamics.

Mladenov, Kiril

“This fever has lingered inside the very bones”. Notes about the Akkadian medical tradition in the Babylonian Talmud

Time: Tuesday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P II

Medical passages in some of the Babylonian Talmud tractates, like Gittin and Šabbat, reveal Akkadian influence, showing that the Assyro-Babylonian healing tradition was still known and used at least in 3rd-4th century C.E, during the rule of the Sassanian dynasty. Many of these passages relate to Amoraim scholars living then, such as Abaye. In recent decades, the study of Akkadian medical tradition in the Talmud has been studied in a series of essential and innovative publications, notably those by M. Geller and L. Lehmhaus, who have shed new light on various aspects of medical knowledge amongst the Jews in Babylonia. My paper aims to study some of these Talmud passages in relation to the information in the Neo-Assyrian court letters from Nineveh and the Akkadian medical literature and propose new ideas pointing to the longevity of the Akkadian healing knowledge. In the correspondence between King Esarhaddon, his physicians, exorcists, and his family, we can find some interesting parallels in terminology and therapy application with paragraphs from the Talmud. For example, in Gittin, a feverish condition is translated in Aramaic *eš garmeī*, “fire (burning) of the bones.” Such an expression, which is connected to one of the king’s fever episodes, is found in Esarhaddon’s letter SAA 10 242. Other intriguing parallels in diagnostics and therapy prescriptions between the Talmud tractates, the royal letters and the Assyrian medical literature strengthen the impression of the vital role of the Assyro-Babylonian medical tradition amongst the Jews in Babylonia centuries after its creation.

Monamy, Elizabeth

The kings table - The interaction of social classes in terms of nutrition

Time: Friday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

A kingdom can only function and exist as long as all the pieces of the puzzle work together. How did society in the New Assyrian Empire interact to sustain the king? In this talk we will focus on the aspect of food and maintaining the balance between ensuring food supply and splendour and excess. We will look at themes that emphasise the role of the king as provider, but also explore how the provisioning of feasts was only possible through the other social classes. This interaction shows how the structure of Neo-Assyrian society was organised. Everyone was dependent on each other to a certain point and had to trust that everyone would do their bit for society. The food resources are presented here in such a way that the circuit from production to distribution can show who administered which food, who received it and who could or had to pass it on. Thanks to the many correspondences between the provinces and the central administration, but also thanks to the records of the tributes, it is possible to get a good picture of the administration of food resources in the Neo-Assyrian Empire. This is of primary importance in the question of the interaction of societal history.

Moore, Stephen

The solidarity of a shared craft: the reedworkers of Old Babylonian Sippar

Time: Friday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

The organization of skilled workers, artisans, and other specialists in the Old Babylonian period offers a particular perspective from which to explore life in groups. The fact of such organization is often assumed, inferred from titles or from markers of rank or experience. For example, Rivkah Harris, in her demography of Old Babylonian Sippar, already considered that the fullers (ašlākū) and reedworkers (atkuppû) were in some way organized (1975: 271, 272). Yet, it has been harder to answer the bigger questions of what such social organization might have consisted of and how such a group could navigate life within wider society. This paper seeks to address these questions. It does so by following a group of reedworkers from Old Babylonian Sippar across three generations. The reconstructed archive takes us beyond a family specializing in this craft to a community of reedworkers showing evidence of social organization and group identity. The interaction of the family and this wider group of reedworkers lets us see how such a group interacted with established norms of Old Babylonian society. It affected not only trade in reed products, but also social bonds of marriage, and could provide authority and accountability in legal settings, including the resolution of disputes.

Mora, Clelia

A special group of Hittite seals

Time: Friday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

A special group of Hittite seals Clelia Mora, University of Pavia Some Anatolian seals dating back to the pre-imperial Hittite period (15th-14th centuries BCE) show particular scenes on the edge, which seem to narrate events. We don't know if these scenes represented fable-type stories or real events, in any case the work of miniaturization of the figures is valuable and the result admirable (even if unfortunately the finds are often only partially preserved). This research examines and compares this type of finds, also proposing interpretations that relate these products to the historical-political period.

Moukarzel, Kabalan

The Neo-Babylonian Empire: Stages of Development and Systems of Control

Time: Thursday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P II

From its first conquests under Nabopolassar in 616 BCE until its defeat in 539 BCE under Nabonidus, the Neo-Babylonian Empire lasted near eighty years. The empire dominated the central parts of the Near East but its organization and functioning remains a problem, due to the poor sources' base. Under which political and military circumstances the expansion of this might state was developed? How the Neo-Babylonian kings exercised their power over the conquered nations? The present paper is an attempt to answer these questions from a historical point of view. In the development of the empire can be observed there stages. I. Stage of initial expansion — in Mesopotamia and Syro-Palestine, during the time of Nabopo-lassar and the first years of Nebuchadnezzar II. II. Stage of consolidation — in the lands of the Fertile Crescent, during most of Nebuchadnezzar's rule, added by the reigns of Amel-Marduk, Neriglissar, Labashi-Marduk and the first years of Nabonidus. III. Stage of final expansion — in North-Western Arabia, during most of Nabonidus' rule. Every stage is liable to more precise chronology which will be proposed. The dynamics of the territorial expansion was influenced by key factors like: the international relations in the Near East, the continuity in the policy of the Neo-Babylonian rulers, and the forms of control — direct or indirect, imposed on the conquered lands. The written evidence testifies about the application of several instruments for subjugation: conclusion of vassal treaties, extraction of tributes, conduction of mass deportations, spoliation of sacred objects, realization of annexations and military occupations. The instruments enumerated were used with different intensity in different parts of the empire, according to the strategic and tactical aims of the dominating power. In result of that the system of direct control was spread over the lands of Assyria and along the Middle Euphrates, whereas the system of indirect control affected the territories of Syro-Palestine and some parts of Asia Minor. The case of Arabia is a specific and deserves a special attention. In a historical perspective the Neo-Babylonian Empire was a formation stable enough. It fell only after an intervention of a foreign force — Persia, not as a consequence of internal struggles or successful revolts of the subjugated peoples.

Müller, Felix

The Creation of Venus

Time: Thursday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

The bilingual composition *egí maḥ ušú-ni ir₉-ra* (modern Exaltation of Innana-Ištar), which has been preserved on Assyrian and Babylonian clay tablets from the 1st millennium BC, narrates the successive elevation of Innana-Ishtar to the most powerful deity in the Mesopotamian pantheon through decisions of Anu, Enlil and Ea in the assembly of the gods. During the exaltation by the god Anu, the text turns from the transfer of power to an astral theme including a cosmic creation act which begins with the ordering of the stars and concludes with the creation of the most radiant star Venus. This section includes narrative material of Babylonian celestial science, e.g., *Enūma Anu Enlil* and *MUL.APIN*, which have already been analyzed by other scholars. However, neither the integrated myths nor their relation to the older and younger Sumerian and Akkadian tradition have been analyzed so far. Using the methodology of *hylistic analysis*, I will demonstrate that the transformation of Ishtar into an astral body is narrated through the combination of two myths. As a result, I will explain the relationship between these myths and their conditional relevance for the entire narrative. Furthermore, I will discuss texts which include same or similar narrative material to contextualize these myths within the Mesopotamian literary tradition.

Mzali, Sonia

The Goddess Ninsun : Mother of Sumerian Kingship

Time: Tuesday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

The goddess Ninsun is, among other things, known for being Gilgameš's mother as well as the divine mother of the Ur III kings. Some kings from the 2nd dynasty of Lagaš have also claimed her as their divine mother. The aim of this paper will be to explore how, when and why do the kings of the neo-sumerian period relate to the goddess Ninsun. This entails a philological analysis of two different types of texts: royal inscriptions and royal praise poetry. In both cases, these sources relay royal propaganda and, as such, shed light on the symbols and literary motifs used by royal authorities to describe themselves. In addition to these texts, a few neo-sumerian administrative tablets point to a symbolic filial link between the goddess Ninsun and the en-priests and priestesses. This could argue in favour of the theory that the en-priesthood stems from archaic Sumerian kingship. By cross-examining the evidence, the aim of this study will be to highlight how the goddess Ninsun, and by extension her divine family, have become a staple of neo-sumerian kingship and en-ship by being symbols of archaic Sumerian kingship.

Nebiolo, Francesco

Violence, Order, and Communities: The Psychological Involvements of Violence as Legal Punishment in the Old Babylonian Documentation.

Time: Thursday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P II

The use of legal violence as a punishment for crimes considered of greater severity is a recurrent theme in the history of law and social order. In Mesopotamian jurisprudence violence as a means of punishment assumed different forms, not only in relation to the committed crime, but also to the desired impact on society. Evidences of corporal punishments are not limited to Law Collections, and the archival documentation attests that the practice was widespread. In particular circumstances, violence becomes a legitimate means for the maintenance of legal order, whether it is actually exercised or only feared. The management of guilt and punishment passes through precise social codes that act on the individual and the community to which the culprit belongs. Corporal punishment, beyond the physical violence inflicted upon the perpetrator, presents aspects of psychological violence directly linked to the social reference group's morality. The Old-Babylonian documentation from northern Mesopotamia shows the differences in the conception and use of violence in the legal sphere, as well as the interaction between different legal traditions in terms of corporal punishment.

Nett, Seraina

The é bur-sag and the Administration of Regular Offerings in Ur III Girsu

Time: Friday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P III

During the Early Dynastic period and the reign of the Third Dynasty of Ur, the (é) bur-sag in Girsu functioned as an institution administering regular offerings to the gods (sá-du¹¹). This institution, so far only attested at Girsu, already appears in Urukagina's inscriptions as the building where the offerings are delivered. The term is also found directly or indirectly referenced in approximately one hundred documentary texts from Ur III Girsu. This paper aims to discuss the available evidence for the functioning and operation of the bur-sag as an institution, drawing primarily on the documentary evidence from the Ur III period (c. 2112–2004 BCE). Following an initial examination of the available evidence and a discussion of the terminology and the bur-sag institution in a broader context, the paper will provide an in-depth analysis of the deities and specific goods associated with the regular offerings mentioned in the bur-sag dossier. Subsequently, an analysis of the prosopography and social networks of the three individuals holding the title 'overseer of the bur-sag', namely, Ur-Lamma, Ma-an-sum, and Lú-me-lám, aims to shed light on the administrative structure and the individuals connected to the institution, portraying them as social and economic actors. By addressing the bur-sag dossier in its entirety, the paper hopes to shed light on the inner workings of this institution, and at the same time to further our understanding of the administration and redistribution of offerings during the reign of the Third Dynasty of Ur in more general terms.

Nicolet, Grégoire

Organization of lexical list entries in the school tablets from Chantier K at Mari

Time: Friday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P II

Ternary patterns underlie the organization of many lexical lists, such as TU-TA-TI during the Old Babylonian period, and later Antagal and Erimḫus. In the case of personal name lists, Benno Landsberger had even dubbed these triads *mnemotechnische[n] Dreiergruppen*. Without considering graphic or phonetic associations, this presentation will focus on the reasons that led to particular associations of entries on the lexical tablets from Chantier K at Mari by examining the organizational paradigms and the principles of conceptual association (or associations resulting from traditional conventions). Buns (Type IV tablets) are a privileged medium for the study of conceptual associations since they reflect a didactic and deliberate choice to place three entries together. Some ternary patterns also reveal that the empirical approach was taught to students very early during their curriculum.

Niederreiter, Zoltan

Representations of leopards in Middle Assyrian art

Time: Friday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

My paper sheds light on the leopard: a secret and solitary felid not only in life but also in Mesopotamian art, in that, while present in ancient Mesopotamia, it hardly appears in the sources and is even less often mentioned in Assyriological research. I will primarily focus on two cylinder seals (one previously unpublished) which show the presence of leopards in the pictorial world of the Middle Assyrian period.

Nielsen, John

Imagining Babylonia: Contemplating Nation in a Non-Modern Context

Time: Monday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P I

The concepts of nation and nationalism are generally regarded as modern phenomena, national identity being reliant on print capitalism, mass media and communication, and publication to exist. Nation, in this sense, is entirely alien to the ancient world, and yet historians routinely use language that treats ancient states as nations, Babylonia being perhaps the best example. As is routinely pointed out, there was never a native term for Babylonia or Babylonian, but even though such terms did not exist, the question can be asked: did there exist amidst the many local identities that were present within southern Mesopotamia the ability to conceptualize or imagine a community that transcended the particular and embodied something resembling “Babylonia” even if the word did not exist? Babylonia in the first millennium BCE was comprised of a diversity of distinct urban and tribal identities and the delineations between these identities were not always clear, and yet, it can be argued, they formed a matrix of intersecting interests reinforced by social, historical, cultural, administrative, and economic norms and practices. The polity that cohered is what we identify as Babylonia. We will not argue for a Babylonian nation in the modern sense, but we will examine if the necessary elements upon which national identity was built (following Benedict Anderson) were present. We will also draw comparisons with national identities that emerged in response to encounters with modernity and have therefore been denied legitimacy in some circles, most notably the Uyghurs, but others as well. Finally, we will argue that ancient historians are uniquely positioned to address the mythology of ethnic homogeneity that has so often plagued the concept of nation. Both historically and currently, print capitalism has created and privileged a dominant narrative of a singular identity when defining the nation. As historians, we have the ability to peel back what I would argue is just a veneer created by print capitalism that insists on a clear delineation between the pre-modern and modern. Recognizing that a diversity of identities existed in Babylonia in the early first millennium (as well as in so many other societies from the ancient to the pre-modern world) and that these multiple constituencies intersected,

not in their entirety, but in at least elements of a shared identity and historical consciousness can present a valuable counter-narrative to modernist definitions of nation.

Nishiyama, Shin'ichi

Yasin Tepe Archaeological Project: Results between 2022 and 2023

Time: Thursday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P I

Since 2016, Yasin Tepe Archaeological Project has been conducting archaeological excavations at Yasin Tepe located in the Shahrizor Plain, Sulaymaniyah Governorate, Iraq Kurdistan. Yasin Tepe is considered by some scholars as a major Assyrian outpost along the western Zagros piedmont, namely Dûr-Aššur. Although the ancient name is not apparent yet, so far, we are uncovering the major Assyrian period (8-7th centuries BCE) settlement in the lower town area. The paper aimed to present the major excavation results between 2022 and 2023. The 2022 season was conducted two years after the hiatus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The season discovered a cemetery area specifically allocated to child burial, an area of religious structures, and the prehistoric occupations in the acropolis mound. The 2023 season revealed the outer rim of the lower town settlement, the elite residence area, and a major Bronze Age settlement in the acropolis mound. In addition, we have conducted a geophysical survey in the lower town as well as in the vicinity of the site during the 2023 season.

Ong, Matthew

Developing a high-level linguistic annotation pipeline for Akkadian

Time: Tuesday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

We present current work in developing a semi-automated annotation pipeline for Akkadian that illustrates new possibilities for corpus research based on machine learning and semantic web technologies. Our pipeline consists of two components: one which provides morpho-syntactic parses for an input corpus and the other which provides semantic frame parses. Both of these components are integrated into a Wikibase project that facilitates searches across both morpho-syntactic and semantic frame annotations via sparql queries. Using the methods outlined in this paper, Assyriologists can create high-level linguistic annotations for their own corpus and search among those annotations with relative ease. Instructors of Akkadian may also find parts of this pipeline useful for showing students specific grammatical or semantic patterns based on actual Akkadian corpora. Initial parts of the morpho-syntactic component were previously discussed in Ong and Gordin 2024. Here we present additions to that component, including a morpho-syntactic parser trained on a substantially larger data set as well as a trainable lemmatizer modified from Sahala and Lindén 2023. The semantic frame annotator and Wikibase project are also new.

Orosz, Adrienn

Three Ivory Frontlets from Nimrud Featuring the Figure of Bes

Time: Monday 15:30–16:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

My study focuses on three ivory frontlets, IM 79576, IM 79579, and IM 79580, discovered in Nimrud (ancient Kalhu, Northwest Palace, Residential Wing, Court AJ, Well AJ) in 1975. All three artifacts, broken into two halves, exhibit a distinctive composite iconographic program. The upper portions show a male figure in profile, wearing a helmet, a short kilt with a belt, striding from left to right, and carrying a strung bow and short spear. Meanwhile, the lower sections feature the horned figure of the Egyptian god Bes, his head en face, body partially in profile, walking from left to right, clad in a long-sleeved garment with a front-open skirt. Bes displays characteristic leonine features with his tongue out, bent arms, and fists held in front of his chest, thumbs touching. Previous interpretations by Safar & Al-Iraqi (1987), Wicke (1999), Gubel (2005), and Herrmann, Laidlaw & Coffey (2009) identified the upper figure as both Reshef and a soldier, and the lower figure as the Sidonian form of Bes. However, these interpretations lacked exact parallels and left the iconographic program unexplained. My paper presents parallels to the horned figure of Bes, offers an explanation for the combination of the two figures on the frontlets, proposes an alternative place of origin, and examines what this intriguing iconographic program might reveal about the identity of the owner of the objects.

Ossendrijver, Mathieu

Waerzeggers, Caroline

**Astronomy and the innovation of historical method in late first-millennium
BCE Babylon**

Time: Wednesday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P III

The Babylonian astral sciences are usually perceived of as future-oriented disciplines, but much astronomical research was historical in nature. After all, the development of predictive methods was only possible by studying recurring patterns in reports of past observations. In this paper, we will argue that scholars, active at the Esagil temple of Babylon in the final centuries of the first millennium BCE, applied their astronomical knowledge to study the past from a new angle. Historical astronomy entailed querying archival reports of ancient observations as well as making backward calculations of celestial phenomena using periodic schemes. After discussing relevant works, we will suggest that Babylonian astronomer-historians obtained at least three new insights in this way. First, by retro-calculating celestial phenomena they were able to explain events that had taken place in history as instances of a recurrent scheme. Second, they used retrospective astronomy to propose (new) dates for historical events that were part of the tradition, thus revising and improving received knowledge. And third, they used their knowledge of historical events to perfect their predictive practices.

Otto, Adelheid

Where the Ur III-period craftsmen of Ur planned their buildings: A newly discovered architectural office in Ur.

Time: Wednesday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P I

On the southern edge of the main mound of Ur, an extraordinary Ur III building was excavated in 2019 and 2022 by a team from LMU Munich as part of the new Ur project by E. Stone and W.B. Hafford. Its finds reveal its function: a large tablet with the sketch of a house plan, a bowl full of tablets dealing with the construction of a new building, and further objects with connections to Meluhha and other international destinations prove that here, on the outskirts of the city, was situated an economic area that was both a trade centre for goods and an urban planning office of architects in the Ur III period.

Ouimet, Madeline

"Thus Spoken Before the Witnesses": Social Networks and Legal Landscapes at Late Bronze Age Nuzi

Time: Tuesday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

The bountiful cuneiform corpus and broad architectural exposures from Late Bronze Age Nuzi, or Yorghan Tepe in Iraqi Kurdistan, have formed the basis of many studies on social, economic, and legal life at the site. However, despite the granularity of its data to do so, Nuzi has not yet been subjected to more complex statistical analyses of social interaction or of relationships between society and space. In this study, I explore the spatial and social patterns of one particular form of interaction: witnessing and being witnessed in the Nuzi legal system. Given that witnessing inherently invokes social networks, this study sees Nuzi's legal system as necessarily enmeshed in the social landscape, rather than viewing the social, the legal, or the political as truly distinguishable experiences. By means of statistical social network analysis integrated with an archaeological analysis of space in urban households, the purpose of this work is to investigate how socio-legal relationships, specifically those of witnessing, interacted with the physical, built contexts within which they were lived. Focusing on Nuzi's Eastern Area, this case study combines textual and archaeological evidence. Cuneiform legal documents provide the identities of individuals participating in legal transactions and their relations to one another through witnessing, drawing a web of connections: who witnessed for whom? These connections are subjected to network analysis using the statistical computing environment R. Aided by digitization in GIS, the built environment provides a web of spatial connections, similarly mappable as a network via space syntax. The relationships between spaces can serve as a means for understanding social interaction in the language of a spectrum between public and private, seen and unseen – witnessed and unwitnessed. Archaeology thus provides the spatial topology and cuneiform texts the social topology of the witnessing network. This investigation finds that the importance of witnesses is not merely as a form of evidence in the court room but as beings whose actions change the social worlds around them, upholding – or denying – the structural cohesion of the networks in which they participate. The multiple kinds of witnessing or observing in which they engage form a protracted process of establishing

legality: the process of enfolding, preserving, and unfolding knowledge across time. The built environment on at least two distinct scales – the household and the inter-urban landscape – serves to spatially circumscribe the observability of archives, however, entailing a circumscription of some actors' access to legal power.

Ouyang, Xiaoli

From Inscribed Objects to Administrative Records: Votive Gifts from the Ur III Umma

Time: Friday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P III

It is a long-standing tradition in Mesopotamia to dedicate artefacts to gods as votive gifts (Sumerian *a ru-a*). In her 1991 book *Mesopotamische Weihgaben der fröhdynastischen bis altbabylonischen Zeit* (Heidelberger Orientverlag), Eva Braun-Holzinger studies this type of artefacts systematically and classifies them into major categories as follows: stone mace-heads, metal weapons, vessels, stands, statues, plaques, animal figurines, stelae, sockets, seals, and beads. They bear inscriptions according to which they were often dedicated by the king, sometimes also by his family members or high-ranking officials, to important deities for the livelihood and welfare of the king himself. A different scenario of votive gifts, however, emerges from the provincial archive of Umma, the second largest province in the Ur III period. The administrative texts designate votive gifts as *mu-DU* + divine name, literally “delivery for god so-and-so”. They came from a much bigger group of devotees with diverse socio-economic backgrounds instead of just the king and his inner circle. Many married women appeared to make donations as well. The votive gifts display far more varieties and, in addition to the categories identified above, feature workers (men, women, children), real estate (orchards and house-lots), livestock (sheep and cattle), food (lard, sesame oil, barley), and textiles. In the case of vessels and jewelry items, they seem to have far more diversity in form and material as documented in administrative texts than the objects preserved until today. Moreover, the administrative records make it possible to reconstruct the procedure of management concerning the gifts and identify the personnel in charge. All this information has been lost in the case of inscribed votive gifts retrieved by archeology. The inscribed objects identified as votive gifts and the votive gifts documented in administrative records of a local, provincial archive complement each other and contribute to a balanced view of the votive gifts. The gifts were not just dedicated by or for the king; people of different gender and socio-economic status may have been able to do it as well. The dedication of votive gifts was practiced more widely than their archaeological discovery may suggest.

Pagé-Perron, Émilie

Rattenborg, Rune

Dahl, Jacob L.

Lafont, Bertrand

Renn, Jürgen

We got cuneiform, do you? How to collaborate on the CDLI Framework

Time: Thursday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

In this presentation, we will give an overview of long-provided and new features of the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI) with the goal of explicating how each and everyone (from an interested public to scholars) can make the CDLI their own; for research, teaching, and for general access to artifacts inscribed with the cuneiform script. We will first briefly scope the datasets preserved at the CDLI, including geographic data, and will follow with an overview of the features and tools available on the CDLI platform and in our code repositories. Finally, we will expose how one can procure data from CDLI and how to submit new, or update, information at the CDLI. We will further describe how this can be integrated into a research or teaching workflow, including advanced computational research using images, text, or linguistic annotations. Among other features, we will showcase our crowdsourcing pipeline, including the capacity to submit bibliographic references, linguistic annotations, and image annotations. We will additionally show how to personalise one's profile on CDLI and discover contribution credits throughout the interface. We will wrap up by highlighting the impact and potential of using CDLI for Assyriological research and beyond.

Paladre, Clelia

Cylinder seals from the proto-Elamite phenomenon: images of power and administrative tools, but in whose hands?

Time: Friday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

As soon as they were invented, around 3400 B.C.E., cylinder seals were used as a complex marking system within various practices including management of goods and commodities. Thus, cylinder seals are link to socio-economic and political entities and beyond administrative tools, they can be considered as true « technologies of power ». Images they carry, together with script, numeral notations or incised marks, were a part of an intra-connected visual system that enable the transfer of information. They must have been varied, but somehow included the reflection of the holders of this power, turning the seals into markers of social status and identity. Focusing on Iran and the so-called proto-Elamite phenomenon at the end of the 4th millennium B.C.E., we will try to understand what organization is reflected in the iconographic program of the seals, and who are the elites behind their use, at a time when multiple Iranian societies, from Khuzestan to Seistan, seem to be linked by a common culture.

Pallavidini, Marta

Another failed reform? The so-called Parallel Text of the Hittite Law Collection

Time: Wednesday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P II

The Hittite Law Collection has been the object of several editions and a significant number of studies, mostly dedicated to juridical content of the text, its formulations, its general meaning. The Hittite law collection is traditionally considered composed by two series: “if a man” and “if a vine” and each of the series has been transmitted by several manuscripts, dating from the Old-Hittite period until the late Empire. Among the 29 manuscripts of the series “if a man” (CTH 291) listed by the Hethitologie Portal Mainz, one – KBo 6.4 (CTH 291.III) transmits a different text than the others. It is the so-called Parallel Text (PT); it contains approximately 50 paragraphs that are mostly very close to the “Standard Text” of the Law Collection. Yet, the Parallel Text shows also significant differences in the content and some elements that point to the idea that the text is a re-elaboration of the Standard Text can be identify. This paper aims to discuss the similarities and differences between the Standard Text and the Parallel Text, but also to underline the peculiarities of the latter. Specifically, I will try to answer the question whether the text can represent a sort of reform that did not succeeded and to explore the reason(s) why that happened. Furthermore, it will be reflected on the purpose(s) and origin of the Parallel Text as well as on its meaning in the Überlieferungsgeschichte of the manuscripts of the Hittite Law Collection and – more broadly - on the significance of the Law Collection in the Hittite society.

Paoletti, Paola

Managing - and managers of - oils and fats in the Ur III state: recent results in light of the i₃MesopOil project

Time: Friday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P III

Oils and fats penetrated almost all spheres of ancient Mesopotamian society, be it crafts, healthcare, cult and diet, as well as all social levels, from the very bottom to the very top of the society. Vegetable oils and animal fats served to anoint the body and had a protective, detergent and healing function. But they also played a crucial role in many crafts, such as the textile, wood, metal and leather industries. Last but not least, they were often used in cultic practices, such as the anointing of cultic objects or representing a valuable gift for guests during festivals. Eventually, butter was prized as an exquisite nourishment for both deities and members of the elites. We can, therefore, say with no doubt that, in light of the results of the i₃MesopOil project, it is now impossible to conceive the ancient Mesopotamian society without oils (and fats), as it is indeed the case for our modern one. But how could, for example, a fuller obtain the regular amount of fat needed to treat the textiles he is bound to manufacture or the oil blender those oils and fats he required to produce his precious scented oils? Or more in general: how could the state guarantee the constant supply of the much-needed oils and fats for crafts, daily body and healthcare, cult, etc.? In my talk, I would like to enlighten the role of those officials that, on behalf of the state or provincial administration, dealt with various oils and fats, herewith ensuring their constant circulation within the Ur III state and the supply to all those spheres of the society that regularly needed them. For this purpose, I will consider Sumerian administrative sources of the Ur III period (21st c. BCE), mainly from the provinces of Umma and Ĝirsu, as they offer the most exemplary piece of evidence.

Pappi, Cinzia
Costanza, Coppini

Synchroworlds: Synchronizing Polities in the Second Millennium BCE in Northern Mesopotamia

Time: Wednesday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P I

The project “Synchroworlds”, developed within the research agenda of the Einstein Center Chronoi Berlin, has the aim to investigate the temporal intersections of material production, urban fabric, and epigraphic data, characterizing the cultural landscape of northern Mesopotamia in the Middle and Late Bronze Age. The project, based on a selection of significant sites, is in this first stage, is aimed to provide a methods and models applicable to a larger dataset. This paper will discuss some examples of synchronicities and their possible graphic representations. The selected elements of synchronization, chosen among a number of chrono-markers, e.g. material culture, architectural models, and institutional elements, initially collected in a dedicated geo-database, provides so far the main dataset to develop models of synchronicities. In particular, the paper will present the project updates, based on the cross-referenced analysis on materials associated to dated cuneiform archives at Tell Leilan and Tell al-Rimah, both providing an ideal record, consisting of written sources and material culture within the chronological frame of the 2nd millennium BCE.

Paulus, Susanne

Farm to Table – Organizing Knowledge in Kassite Bookkeeping

Time: Friday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P II

Archival documents from the Kassite period in Babylonia predominantly concern the administration of grain. At the first glance simple process, the distribution from barley produced in rural villages of to dependent workers in Nippur during the 14th–13th century BCE, created an impressive “clay” trail. Documents range from small tablets with individual transactions, to large scale records and ledgers covering several months to years. Analyzing the form and structure of documents from the "Archiv des Speicher"s and the archive(s) of the governor, the šandabakku, at Nippur, this talk aims to elucidate how data concerning expenses and disbursement was organized and recorded. Special attention will be given to elements of spatial information included in the records. The ultimate objective is to delve into the broader question of the purpose behind preserving and organizing knowledge in ways that allows to trace grain from farm to table. Potential answers may encompass long term planning and risk management driven by the underlying legal and economic obligations.

Pedersen, Olof

New evidence for the Ishtar Gate and the Ziggurat in Babylon used for new interpretations and digital reconstructions

Time: Tuesday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

Ishtar Gate: North of the Ishtar Gate in Babylon, a supporting wall from 1959 had started to collapse and has now been replaced by a new construction by WMF. During the work more of the ancient street levels were exposed than ever before. This gives new evidence about the construction of the Processional Way and the Ishtar Gate during Nebuchadnezzar II. The archaeological evidence combined with cuneiform texts is integrated in a digital model of the area of the Ishtar Gate. Etemenanki: After the finding circumstances finally have been revealed, The Tower of Babylon stele found in Babylon in the early 1990s, but illegally exported, is now back in Iraq. A detailed inspection of the picture of the ziggurat on the stele shows new evidence for the construction agreeing with the remains of the lowest preserved part of the ziggurat in Babylon and the lower and middle parts of the parallel ziggurat in Borsippa. Possible detailed interpretations will be discussed using a digital model.

Pfoh, Emanuel

Patronage Relationships and Social Network Analysis: Insights, Potentials and Limitations for the Study of Ancient Near Eastern Kingship

Time: Thursday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

Interpersonal relationships within a hierarchical framework of socio-political organization constitute a usual and common feature of kingship manifestations attested during the greater part of the recorded history of the ancient Near East (from ca. 3000 to 300 BCE). In effect, both kings and queens, together with other members of the elite, inscribe their political performance firstly into sets of kinship and descent networks—of which the political dynasty in power is a clear expression—although they are equally affected by other factors, like gender and age conditions, by the authority that these conditions potentially enable for the practice of politics, and lastly by the more impersonal characteristics related to the management of the polity they command. Within this context and this historical situation, the concept of patronage relationships, as drawn from ethnographic research at different locations in the world, can heuristically be deployed to analyse, interpret and describe some recorded modes of political domination and subordination involving interpersonal bonds and ties, further clarifying the means through which prestige, authority and power are performed and reproduced in ancient Near Eastern society. Finally, and in connection with the ties of unbalanced political reciprocity that patronage networks produce, we will explore the potential usefulness (and limitations) of Social Network Analysis for analysing and interpreting the aforementioned hierarchical constructions of monarchic power in the ancient Near East.

Pilloni, Alessia

Multilayered Directionality of Astronomical Knowledge Transfer in the Late Babylonian Period

Time: Wednesday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P III

Astronomical and astrological cuneiform texts witness to the extraordinary intellectual achievements of Babylonian scholars of the late first millennium BC. This is the result of a process based on celestial observation and mathematical modeling started at least two millennia earlier. By the late fourth century BC, several methods for calculating astronomical phenomena using mathematical procedures had been developed in Babylonia. The mathematical astronomical texts, as well as the other texts of the late Babylonian astral tradition, come from the two cities of Babylon and Uruk. Despite the considerably smaller number of tablets sourced from Uruk, most of the planetary and lunar systems of algorithms are attested in the corpora of both cities, which suggests that the communities of scholars active in these two cities were in contact. What remains to be clarified is the directionality of knowledge transmission, namely, in which city or in which community of astronomers certain systems, terminologies or features were first invented, where and by whom they were adopted, and how they were adapted. This research question has already been addressed by some scholars (Britton 2007, Brown 2000, Robson 2008, Steele 2016), who have come to different conclusions, for instance, on the invention and unidirectional transmission of the two main mathematical astronomical systems, named “A” and “B”. However, the process is likely to be more complex, and the directionality of transmission of a certain concept or system may have had multiple layers, and not just from one community of astronomers in one city to the other one. The process of creating the astral corpus lasted about four centuries, a time span in which different communities of astronomers followed one another, inheriting concepts from the previous generations, and perhaps traveling between Uruk and Babylon to learn new things and in turn pass on others. In this paper, I will present some case studies and possible approaches that allow for a reevaluation of the process of production and transfer of astronomical knowledge.

Poli, Paola

Seals, Sealings, People from the Tell Masaikh-Kar-Assurnasirpal

Time: Friday 16:00–16:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

Tell Masaikh, identified as Kar-Assurnasirpal (the "Port of Assurnasirpal), is located on the left bank of the lower Middle Euphrates, about 5 Km upstream from ancient Terqa. Regular excavations started in 1996, when an international mission directed by M.G. Masetti Rouault (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes) undertook a program of excavations that lasted until 2010, when the rise of the war in Syria has stopped the possibility to work there. During the excavation a collection of about one hundred and fifty seals and sealings was brought to light on the site. The material is rich in the iconographic repertoire, testifying to the presence of different cultural and artistic influences active in the Neo-Assyrian colony. The goal of this contribution is to present a classification of the main themes attested on the glyptic material and, starting from the iconography, to look for a possible links between the image and the position or the social role of the seal's owner.

Pottorf, Andrew

Subsistence and Tenant Lands in Ur III Umma

Time: Friday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P III

The Ur III period is well known among Assyriologists and other scholars for its extensive administrative documentation. Such documentation includes a wide variety of details pertaining to subsistence and tenant lands, especially in Umma. This presentation provides details on what these lands were used for, who had access to them, as well as their sizes and yields per individual according to location and year. Individuals with subsistence land received their entire yields, whereas those with tenant land only retained about half their yields due to rental fees. While most male citizens and about half of the serflike UN-il2 had access to subsistence land, citizens had significantly more access to tenant land. Besides this uneven access, citizens tended to receive more subsistence land, which, in combination with tenant land, granted them more economic autonomy and stability. Access to subsistence land was not just dependent on whether individuals were citizens or UN-il2 but also their occupations. Though mostly men had access to these lands, female citizens could also acquire subsistence and tenant lands. Overall, this presentation highlights correlations between the social hierarchy and economic inequality of Ur III Umma, notably with regard to its subsistence and tenant lands.

Przyłęcka, Karolina

Erotic glyptics and its iconographic elements - what do they tell us?

Time: Thursday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P I

The purpose of this presentation is to provide an iconographic analysis of the thirty-six erotic seals dating from the Uruk to the Old Babylonian period. Firstly, their chronological appearance will be discussed as there are periods when the amount of erotic glyptics highly increases. Subsequently, the recurring sexual motifs will be presented, that is, the sexual positions of the depicted figures as well as their other activities that they indulge in. In addition, the seals which differ from the most common canons of glyptic erotica, but they still could be classified as sexual ones will be shown as they are exceptional from the iconographic perspective. All the iconographic elements will be analyzed, for instance the co-occurrence of scenes of sexual intercourse and animals. Special attention will be paid to the possible meanings that animals can provide in relation to erotic motifs. The appearance of rosettes will also be discussed, as they are most likely a symbol of the goddess Inanna/Ishtar who has clear links to sexuality and prostitution. The aim of this analysis is to make an attempt to better understand the Mesopotamian sexuality and its meaning for the ancient people.

Quillien, Louise

Recent Research on Textiles Terminologies within the Network COST EuroWeb (2020-2024)

Time: Friday 9:00-9:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

The Euroweb project (EuroWeb Europe through Textiles: Network for an integrated and interdisciplinary Humanities, COST Action CA 19131) gather a network of researchers studying the production, trade, meanings, consumption and reuse of textiles in history. As part of this project led by Prof. Agata Ulanowska, which runs from 2020 to 2024, I coordinate the working group on textile and clothing terminologies. Studies on textile terminology in the ancient languages have been very dynamic in recent years, as it is shown by the publication of the two volumes: Michel & Nosch 2010 (Textile Terminologies in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean from the Third to the First Millennia BC) and Gaspa, Michel & Nosch 2017 (Textile Terminologies from the Orient to the Mediterranean and Europe, 1000 BC to 1000 AD). These publications formed the basis of the research carried out in the framework of the EuroWeb project, which focused on the following issues : how ancient vocabularies related to textiles and clothing are constructed and organised? How to translate and present these lexicons in publications? How terms move from one language to another through loanwords? What can be gained from studying ancient documents containing lists of terms (lists and inventories of textiles), and what information can be extracted from them? In this paper, I will present the research carried out by the working group and develop some case studies drawn from my own research on the Neo-Babylonian vocabulary. Beyond textiles, the collective work done in the framework of EuroWeb may be of interest for the epigraphists committed to translating the terms used to describe material realities as accurately as possible.

Rainford, Samantha

Following the Footsteps: “Feet of Clay” and Travelling Scholars at Late Bronze Age Emar

Time: Tuesday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P III

The so-called “clay feet” from the Late Bronze Age city of Emar have piqued the interest of Assyriologists since their discovery in 1972. There are three clay foot impressions, each one inscribed with the name of the child to whom the imprint belongs. All three are sealed by witnesses. The accompanying legal document records the sale of the children into slavery by their parents during a year of famine to a certain Ba’lu-malik. As the diviner of the city of Emar, he was an erudite specialist dynamically involved in the city’s religious life. Ba’lu-malik was also active in the only scribal school presently known at Emar, first as a student, then as a teacher. He is featured prominently in the texts found in the building M-1, also known as the diviner’s archive, which was the location of operations for the prominent Hittite-appointed diviner family. It has been previously assumed that this practice would have been common because of the frequency of documents that detail the purchase or transfer of children in greater Mesopotamia, and yet, there are remarkably few attestations of foot impressions to support this claim. In fact, the only extant evidence of inscribed clay foot impressions from the second millennium are those from Emar. Textual references are likewise scant during this time. More significantly, not one of these texts was found in the building M-1, which also housed the scribal school where Ba’lu-malik and others were active. The issue of how and why Emar’s diviner-scholar came to employ this idea in a transaction where he is the buyer has received little attention. According to Mesopotamian scribal texts, clay foot impressions were made when claiming a foundling. The children at Emar, however, were not abandoned. Through an analysis of the Mesopotamian scribal curricula and lexical list traditions, this paper will postulate how the practice of making clay foot impressions to claim foundlings arrived at Emar. Building on previous scholarship that observed the employ of foreign teachers in Late Bronze Age Syria, I will suggest that a certain foreign scholar was the vehicle by which the idea to impress feet into clay came to Emar’s diviner, who then adapted the treatment of foundlings to what he perceived was a comparable legal scenario. The “clay feet” thus offer us a glimpse into the relationship between scribal knowledge and legal practice.

Ramazzotti, Marco

Marshlands, Islands and Marine Coasts. Social complexities, tribal alliances and human mobility between Southern Mesopotamia and Eastern, South-Eastern Arabia during the 3rd and 2nd millennium BCE.

Time: Tuesday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P III

The complex and seldom-conflictual relationships between (semi)nomadic human communities and settled societies, including urban communities have shaped human history since the earliest phases of sedentism. The ‘alternative’ ways to social complexity experienced by the nomads due to the intrinsic need to create ephemeral settlements left behind a light and sparse archaeological record. It is often hard to interpret, and is mostly made of funerary complexes. Nonetheless, the importance and the contribution to our history made by ‘liquid and mobile societies’ is undeniable. Through the use of an interdisciplinary (archaeological, historical, and geographical) approach the contribution aims to investigate the socio-economic morphology and political-territorial organization of the half-nomadic and nomadic communities that occupied the area between south-eastern Arabia and southern Mesopotamia in the third and second millennium BCE. According to the ancient Near East epigraphic and literary tradition, these ‘lands’ and landscapes were inhabited by mobile groups in contact with each other but with different identities and territorial borders; their intermittent appearance between the south-eastern Arabian Peninsula and southern Mesopotamia was related to the most significant macro-economic processes and political events of ancient Near East’s third and second millennia history, such as the formations of the so-called ‘secondary cities’, the collapse of the ‘first world empire’, the renaissance of ‘territorial states’ and the ‘spread of nomads and half-nomads’ tribes along the southwestern fringes of Eurasia.

Rauchhaus, Felix

Making Mothers in Presargonic Ĝirsu Visible

Time: Wednesday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

The documentation of Presargonic Ĝirsu (Middle of the Third Millennium BCE) primarily records male figures, leaving the roles and contributions of women, particularly mothers, largely invisible. This bias is evident in the record of the communal organization Emunus/Emi, which most frequently names men as the acting person and in other roles on almost any recorded occasion. The Presargonic society almost exclusively filled leading positions with men. Also, the Emunus maintained about three times more men than women. Therefore, a substantial part of the female population is not recorded directly. At first glance, the texts say almost nothing about these women, especially being mothers. In the Emunus's documentation, women appear primarily as poorly paid subordinated working maids in activities like textile production, carrying, milling, or care. Otherwise, women from higher social reaches commonly occur as the wife of another man, for example, in the context of festive ceremonies and gift exchanges or as the wife of the ruler. Women almost only appeared as mothers when low-income working maids received barley and wool to provide for their infants. This paper seeks to shed light on the overlooked roles, activities, and responsibilities of mothers in Presargonic Ĝirsu, regardless of whether they were documented or not. Combining the information about occupations filled with mothers, that income like barley and wool was still unprocessed, and demographic data, a visualization of their paid and unpaid labor is achieved. Significant disparities in the role and work of mothers can be found by differentiating mothers according to their economic standing. Low-household-income mothers suffered from far higher strain than mothers at the top of the economic pyramid who could consult additional labor force to ease their workload. Furthermore, this paper touches upon the moment when becoming a mother was celebrated and valued within Presargonic society, providing insight into cultural attitudes towards childbirth and motherhood. By uncovering the nuanced circumstances of being mothers, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics in ancient Mesopotamia.

Reinikainen, Samuel

Taming the hunter

Time: Monday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

The defacement of the wall panels which decorated the interiors of the Neo-Assyrian palaces has been central to the scholarly discussion on iconoclasm in ancient Western Asia. One avenue which has however not been diligently investigated, is the defacement of the lion hunting scenes of Ashurbanipal, in the North Palace at Nineveh. In this presentation, 3D models and close-up shots captured by the author are used to illustrate how these scenes were misappropriated by iconoclasts. It is considered which parts of the scenes were targeted, and just as importantly, but often forgotten, which parts were spared defacement. When considered together, they give us insight into the messages communicated through the iconoclasm. It is argued that the defacement of the lion hunt reliefs was a subtle affair, as opposed to wanton acts of vandalism. Furthermore, the defacement was performed with at least attention to, if not awareness of the scenes depicted in the reliefs. While we can question the “fairness” of the royal Assyrian hunts from the point of view of the hunted, the lion hunt reliefs did at some level showcase a hunt, not a butchering. In the same vein, the defacement of animals in the lion hunt reliefs was confined to wild animals in the process of being actively dominated by the royal hunter or his party. The marks of damage cluster around the royal hunter, his most proximal party members, and the lions he is restraining. Similarities in the defacement of felled lions and the royal hunting party suggest a link between these representations.

Rendu Loisel, Anne-Caroline

Sense and Sensibility. Is there a hierarchy of the human senses in the cuneiform sources?

Time: Friday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P II

For decades, historians, anthropologists, and neuroscientists have questioned the relevance of the Aristotelian model of the five senses. Senses are not limited to hearing, sight, smell, touch and taste; we can add also, for instance, movement, pain, balance, and temperature. Sumero-Akkadian cultures are no exceptions. Thanks to metaphors and comparisons, sensations are invested with cultural concepts and values. For example, one may think about the royal epithet attributing a “broad ear” (neštug daġal) to the king able to listen to the gods and their wills. Senses are frequently mentioned in a binary composition (such as “to see and to hear”), but not only. The perceptual complexity includes also nuances within all these sensory experiences, according to the Sumerian and Akkadian vocabulary, and its enumeration among (divinatory or lexical) lists. There are many ways of seeing, hearing, touching, moving and so on. In this paper, I will explore selected passages in Sumerian-Akkadian documentation (with emphasis on Akkadian texts from the 1st millennium BC), where different sensations are enumerated in the same composition, whether it is divinatory, literary, or lexical. All the sensory functions of the body can be listed, but it can also be a list of different sensations of the same perceptual domain (different noises, different smells, etc.). These lists suggest the existence of an organization, an order attributed to the human perception by Mesopotamian scholars: is there a hierarchy of sensations? How can we reconstruct it among such a wide variety of sources? What are the cultural principles and criteria at work in establishing this/these possible classification(s)?

Renzi-Sepe, Maria Teresa

Some Ideas on How to Explore Intertextuality in Mesopotamian Celestial Omens

Time: Tuesday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P II

The concept of intertextuality is a highly versatile one, indicating the various ways in which each text is connected to and can decode the meaning of other texts. It can be a valuable tool for identifying how cuneiform texts communicated with each other, despite often lacking explanations of their origin or meaning for the reader. My contribution aims to apply intertextuality – primarily drawing upon the terminology from Genette’s theory of transtextuality – to explore the conceptualization of celestial bodies in ancient Mesopotamia as depicted in first millennium BCE celestial omens. This exploration will be attempted through two case studies, both beginning with *Enūma Anu Enlil* as the focal point from which to investigate relationships with other texts. The first case study will be based on my recently published book, “The Perception of the Pleiades in Mesopotamian Culture,” which aimed to discuss how the Pleiades were perceived in Mesopotamia, focusing on their significance, function, and related linguistic expressions. I will endeavor to identify instances of intertextuality across different genres of texts (i.e., hand-lifting prayers, mythological narrative, royal inscriptions, and celestial omens) to shed light on the interaction between the Pleiades and the *Sebettu*, or the “Seven” of Mesopotamian mythology. The second case study will draw from *Enūma Anu Enlil* tablet 55, a tablet on celestial omens concerning fixed stars, the reconstruction of which I am currently undertaking as part of my project hosted in Berlin by the ERC “ZODIAC – Ancient Astral Science in Transformation.” In doing so, I will take the opportunity to discuss instances of intertextuality that I was able to identify by reconstructing the tablet; for instance, many of its entries are found in the early first millennium BC astral compendia *MUL.APIN*.

Robson, Eleanor

Bidirectional script functionality: opening Oracc to Middle Eastern users

Time: Wednesday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

Since its inception in 2010, Oracc has always aimed to be as Open as possible, in as many ways as possible. Over the past few years, working with the Nahrein Network and the Advanced Research Computing team at University College London, we have been updating our tools and resources to accommodate users of right-to-left scripts such as Arabic and Hebrew. In this talk I will demonstrate our progress so far, framed in a wider discussion of the ethics and practice of knowledge equity within the discipline. Finally, I shall ask what more we could and should collectively be doing to make Assyriology more welcoming and inclusive in the countries from which our source material originates.

Romach, Avital

The Neo Assyrian Land Sale Documents from Dur-Katlimmu: A Stylometric Analysis of Their Scribal Features

Time: Wednesday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

During the early years of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II, Urdu-Nabû, an Assyrian scribe who was active in the city of Dur-Katlimmu, wrote down land sale documents in Assyrian style, using the Neo-Assyrian script and formulaic conventions. This paper will provide an in-depth study of the scribal and orthographical features that characterize his four late provincial documents, and compare them to those found in the hundreds of other Neo-Assyrian land sale documents known so far. The paper is based on a quantitative stylometric analysis of Neo-Assyrian scribal habits, focusing on land sale documents from the center and the provinces of the empire. These were lemmatized and made available through the Archival Texts of the Assyrian Empire (ATAE) project (and are accessible on ORACC). I use Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency (TF-IDF) scores and t-distributed Stochastic Neighbor Embedding (t-SNE) to visualize and cluster texts according to their scribal features. This is used as an initial “road map” for further in-depth exploration. The process provides a comparative corpus of spelling variants in specific sections of the documents that are not easily detectable when reading closely, as some of the variants occur in the most common Akkadian words. Assessing scribal idiosyncrasies in this manner reveals distinct geographical and chronological variations, attesting to local scribal conventions in the Neo-Assyrian administration. It helps contextualize the four late Assyrian land sale documents from Dur-Katlimmu by bringing to light additional orthographical oddities. The code, results, and annotations performed on the corpus will be made accessible on the open access platforms GitHub and Zenodo. In the spirit of the workshop’s theme this year, it is important to emphasize that a study such as this could not have taken place without the work of many before me to digitize and lemmatize the Neo-Assyrian corpus. I add to it not only the above analyses, but also an additional layer of annotation of the legal sections within the documents, to allow for reproducibility and further research.

Romano, Licia

Festa, Giulia

SLOW SUMER Project. Repair reuse and recycle in third mill. BC Southern Mesopotamia

Time: Thursday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P III

The paper will introduce the preliminary results of the Project “SLOW SUMER. Repair, Reuse, Recycling and Southern Mesopotamian Society in the Changing World of 2500-2000 BC” financed under the PRIN 2022 scheme of the Italian Ministry of University and Research. Sumer has long been recognized as a hub of innovation, central to the Neolithic and urban revolutions in the Near East, and pivotal in technological advancements, notably the development of writing. The reinvestment of surplus agricultural resources facilitated the emergence of a highly structured society and the first forms of administration. The growing specialisation of some sections of the population led to important innovations such as the fast potter’s wheel, used for mass production of pottery vessels. Historical and archaeological studies of Sumer predominantly emphasize its rapid economic growth, often overlooking the importance of repair, reuse, and recycling practices within Southern Mesopotamian material culture, particularly during periods of significant societal transformation. Despite the region's favourable conditions for intensive agriculture, the procurement of essential resources like wood, stone, and metals remained a persistent challenge. This scarcity not only necessitated extensive trade networks but also influenced the composition and lifespan of objects, particularly those crafted from exotic materials. While existing evidence primarily suggests that repair, reuse, and recycling were prevalent in lower-class domestic settings, indications imply that these practices extended to higher levels of society, affecting social, political, and religious dynamics. The SLOW SUMER project aims to analyse these practices in Sumerian society between 2500-2000 BC from an interdisciplinary perspective, thereby enhancing our understanding of these behaviours.

Rositani, Annunziata

Verderame, Lorenzo

Mama said ... The Role of Mother in Mesopotamian Literatures

Time: Wednesday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

The paper examines the figure of the mother in Sumerian and Akkadian literature from two different perspectives. First, it discusses the role of Nisaba in Enlil and Sud, of the mother of Martu in The Marriage of Martu, and of Ninsun in the Epic of Gilgameš. It analyzes their function as their sons' counsellors and their role in the deployment of the narration. Second, it considers the so-called "didactic" and "wisdom" literature. It discusses the features of motherhood that emerge from Proverbs, Counsels, Instructions, Dialogues (especially The Bird and the Fish), and in the poems of the Righteous Sufferer cycle. In the conclusions, it discusses the question of the absence of the father and, on the contrary, the preeminence of the mother in Mesopotamian literature.

Rubin, Zachary

Gansell, Amy

Nabû and Tašmētu in Late Assyrian Royal Identity and Elite Culture

Time: Friday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

Over the course of the Neo-Assyrian period, the Babylonian scribal god Nabû and his original consort Tašmētu gained overwhelming prominence in Assyrian religion. This trend culminated during the late reign of Esarhaddon and the reign of Ashurbanipal, when the divine couple played a prominent role in the Assyrian royal image. This paper draws from the correspondence of the Assyrian court, royal hymnic literature, and royal iconography to explore the significance of the co-optation of Nabû and Tašmētu, both within Neo-Assyrian internal politics and in broader developments in Mesopotamian religion. Notable examples include the loyalty oath ceremony that Esarhaddon instituted for himself and his crown prince Ashurbanipal, which involved a marriage ceremony of Nabû and Tašmētu and a procession of the statue of Nabû through the city; the names of Assyrian queens Tašmētu-šarrat and Ana-Tašmētu-taklak; sacrifices to Tašmētu performed by Queen Mother Naqi'a/Zakūtu; the copying of a Babylonian dedicatory inscription to Nabû by Assyrian court scholar Urad-Gula; and the identification of Nabû with the unique title of *mār šarri ilāni*, "crown prince of the gods." Through these examples, this paper argues that the royal family and the scholars of their inner circles sought to equate the Assyrian king and queen with Nabû and Tašmētu, even though these gods previously had no real significance to Assyrian king- or queenship. It suggests that the royal court seized on the newfound popularity of Nabû and Tašmētu among the Assyrian populace—and especially among the administrative elites, who strategically revered the divine couple—as means of legitimizing the royal power of Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal, and their families."

Rumi Gutierrez, Ana Belen

Hellenizing the Pharaohs: Greek settlements leading to Ptolemaic dynastic rulership.

Time: Friday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

Interrelations in the Ancient Mediterranean were essential to trading and political relationships among the different civilizations. Known are the Greek colonies founded along the Mediterranean Sea. These settlements in Egypt started with the foundation of Naukratis as a trading post, but ended with multiple cities named after the rulers of the last pharaonic dynasty, the Ptolemies. In the almost 7 centuries between said foundation and the death of the infamous Cleopatra VII, other cities have been built following the Greek pattern and ensuring the Hellenic continuation. Through the presentation and analysis of three main Greek settlements in Egypt, this research will aim to show the gradual hellenization of Egypt that eventually led to the inclusion and acceptance of the Ptolemaic dynasty in the pharaonic tradition. To do so, three main Greek settlements will be presented; Naukratis (the first in Egypt), Alexandria (the major port city and hub, founded by the precursor of the Ptolemaic dynasty, Alexander the Great) and Ptolemais. These three settlements correspond to distinctive periods in history and show a strong argumentative and chronological line, and how this provided the Ptolemies an important tool in their quest to ensure the Egyptian rulership. While Naukratis presents the introduction of the Greeks in Egypt (soon followed by Thonis-Heracleion), Alexandria is the first step to a future Hellenized Egypt, with a new city built following the Greek patterns. It is important to notice the role that Alexander the Great played in the first years of (indirect) Ptolemaic dominion. City foundation and Greek settlements provided Ptolemy I, and soon after his descendants, with a powerful and useful tool to ensure their control of the government and establish a successful Hellenistic rulership. Ptolemais was the first of many Ptolemaic cities to come, and it was already an important metropolis (Strabo 17.1.42).

Sáenz, Luis
Altaweel, Mark
Gordin, Shai

A Forensic Approach to Tablets: A New 3D Scanning Initiative and Open Dataset

Time: Tuesday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

This presentation outlines the results of a new 3D scanning project of cuneiform tablets in several Near Eastern museum collections. The project employed the Hexagon SmartScan 3D scanner, a fast, highly accurate optical 3D scanner that uses non-contact structured light technology. This technology allows for rapid data acquisition with high detail in challenging conditions, producing precision 3D models. This is particularly beneficial for extracting fine details such as impressed characters, seals, and even fingerprints from cuneiform inscribed artifacts. The data processing was managed through GigaMesh, an open-source software framework developed specifically for handling the large meshes resulting from 3D scans of cuneiform tablets. GigaMesh facilitates the quick and easy display, processing, and visualization of high-resolution 3D models, proving to be successful in managing a substantial collection of cuneiform tablets. The project aimed to scan as many inscribed artifacts as possible within a short timeframe, covering a wide range of periods. The goals included producing detailed 3D models for feature extraction, developing a streamlined method for handling large 3D datasets, and validating the effectiveness of this methodology in a museum setting. The resulting open access dataset presented in this talk includes cleaned 3D models (in PLY format), which show improvements in sign readings, measurement of fingerprints, and better visualization of seal impressions. We discuss the process of cataloging and publishing the data as Open Archaeological Data. We also present planned tutorials for scanning and using GigaMesh, and exploring further research opportunities such as a comparative analysis of 3D vs. 2D geometric morphometrics to contribute to digital paleography.

Sahala, Aleksi

Uru and uru_2 in the lamentation over the destruction of Ur: A statistical approach

Time: Monday 16:30–17:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

Although in most cases the distinction between Emesal and Emegir spellings of words are well understood, the status of the word “city” is not entirely clear regardless of its high frequency in Emesal lamentations. For example, in Samet’s (2014) edition of the lamentation over the destruction of Ur, neither of these spellings are not associated with Emesal. Although Samet does not discuss this issue, it seems that in this edition this is considered to be a mere Emegir spelling variation. In this paper, we study the distribution of uru_2 and uru in the surviving manuscripts of the lamentation over the destruction of Ur. We first align the manuscripts on a word level and then computationally analyze these alignments in attempt to visualize, whether the distribution of these two spelling variants follow similar patterns with the variation between well established and unambiguous Emesal and Emegir words. By overlaying these two observations, we aim to see whether the spelling uru_2 is used more commonly in Emesal heavy parts of the lamentation. We show, that at least in the lamentation over the destruction of Ur, the variation between these two spellings is two-fold. A few manuscripts show clear scribal preference over a certain spelling, which may originate from a regional spelling variation, but in general, the manuscripts tend to favor the spelling uru_2 in Emesal contexts over the spelling uru , indicating that the scribes perhaps associated it more closely with Emesal than the main dialect.

Sallaberger, Walther

Aḫum, the Amorite: Steering the Polity of Umma in Turbulent Times

Time: Wednesday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P I

As Nawala Al-Mutawalli has shown in her paper, the Iraqi excavations at Umma from 1999 to 2002 succeeded in discovering the Shara Temple and administrative buildings in the city centre. The cuneiform artefacts detected date to a large part to the Early Old Babylonian period (c. 1897 to 1870 BCE) and are mostly administrative documents, whereby both bullae and tablets were found. The evidence from two findspots, the temple of the city-god Shara and the administrative building in the Main Tell area, can be combined to understand the basic structure of Umma as the centre of a second-rank polity in this turbulent period. First, the texts inform us about the internal structure of the city, regarding the temples and cults, and the central personages. The compact sequence of year-dates over two decades furthermore illustrates how the city of Umma with its hinterland acted as a small polity in a period of constant military expeditions and changing alliances, being partly independent, partly a city in the kingdom of Larsa. The fate of Umma can best be followed by focusing on the prominent figure during these years: Aḫum, an Amorite chieftain, and the apparent leader of Umma in turbulent times. The story of Aḫum may perhaps become another example of the change in the social setup of Babylonia after the fall of the Ur III empire. What makes his story so special is that it plays in the southern alluvium. Aḫum is known from his seal impressions, from year dates, from administrative notes, and, of course, from the letters he has written to other members of the Umma administration. (The archaeological evidence allows a good understanding of where the early lootings of the 1890ies must have concentrated.) Aḫum's family had Amorite names, whereas otherwise in Umma most people bore Akkadian, and only a few Sumerian names. It soon becomes apparent that Aḫum was not only a military leader, but also very much involved in the city administration, acting as a local ruler, but not opposing a local king. The series of cuneiform artefacts over 27 years demonstrates that Aḫum was successful in steering the little polity of Umma.

Schmidt, Katharina

The Kingdom of Ammon between Empire and Local Interests

Time: Thursday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P II

The Iron Age kingdom of Ammon is one of several independent polities that emerged in the early first millennium BCE in the Southern Levant after the demise of Egyptian supremacy. The Ammonite king faced the challenge of asserting the kingdom's independence and stability while navigating relationships with the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The archaeological remains of the ancient polity of Ammon demonstrate its coherence and its difference from the southern neighbours Moab and Edom. On the other hand, the role of a vassal state of Assyria is reflected in the material culture as well. This presentation focuses on the site where Ammonite kingship is concentrated: the Citadel of Amman. A new research initiative collaboratively undertaken by the University of Münster, the German Archaeological Institute, and international partners, the "Amman Archaeological Project (ammap)" aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the material culture of the Iron Age Kingdom of Ammon. One of the sub-projects includes the excavation of the Ammonite residence on the Citadel, which will be the specific focus of this presentation. The presentation draws on material excavated in the 1980s by a Franco-Jordanian team and includes recently excavated material by the ammap-excavation project. The detailed analysis of architectural features, artifacts, and the spatial organization of the site sheds light on the strategies employed by the Ammonite elite within the interplay of imperial and local power dynamics.

Schmitt, Aaron

Results of the 2022 and 2023 excavation seasons in Ashurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh, Tell Kuyuncik (Mosul, Irak)

Time: Tuesday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

In 2022, we resumed fieldwork in the area of Ashurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh, Tell Kuyuncik, and we conducted a second season in 2023, all under the umbrella of the Heidelberg University Nineveh Project initiated in 2018. In this paper, I will present the most important results of the two first excavation seasons. Focusing on both already excavated and until then untouched areas, our fieldwork has already produced a number of unexpected and exciting finds, which provide us with a plethora of new information about the North Palace and the post-Assyrian settlement of Tell Kuyuncik. Both aspects will be addressed in the lecture.

Scurlock, JoAnn

Which God got the Good Knee?: Re-examination of the History of Southern Mesopotamia from the Lagash/Umma conflict to the beginning of Ur III.

Time: Thursday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P III

Much work has been done on the history of this period but with little if any attention paid to the role that local divinities played in the political events of the period. This paper attempts to remedy this situation by specifically focusing on these divine actors whose relationships with each other and with the gods of neighboring Zagros as well as those of both lowland and highland Elam will surprise. Spoiler alert—it depends on whom you ask.

Sharlach, Tonia

The Brink of the Collapse: Economic Decision Making about Common Pool Resources in the Southern Provinces of the Ur III State

Time: Monday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P II

The Brink of the Collapse: Economic Decision Making about Common Pool Resources in the Southern Provinces of the Ur III State.” Tonia Sharlach, Oklahoma State University The ecological collapse of much of southern Babylonia around 2000 B.C. was a clear contributing factor to the fall of the Third Dynasty of Ur in the reign of Ibbi-Sin. Salinity buildup on arable land and consequent failure of the barley crop have been well studied in previous scholarship. This paper attempts to shed new light on the problems in the Lagash and Umma provinces with three new approaches. First, what was the effect of the rising salinity on animal populations drinking saline water? Texts from Umma, for example, seem to show increasing ill health among cattle populations in the years leading up to the fields’ collapse, which comports well with what agricultural authorities have observed elsewhere in the world when salinity levels are rising. Second, can we see local communities adjusting their economic decision making in response to changing ecology? For example, as yields of fish fell in Lagash and Umma, did local communities attempt to intensify production by hiring more fisherman to try to make up the difference? Finally, the paper will suggest that modern economic theories about boom and bust cycles, feedback loops and common pool resources can help us understand the economic ramifications of this ecological crisis of the late Ur III period.

Silverman, Jason

Issues in Open Access Publishing for the Ancient World

Time: Wednesday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

AABNER is a diamond open access journal that includes Assyriology in its remit. The editors see digital publishing and open access as an opportunity to redress systemic issues in academic research. Current Open Access policies, however, have made the goal of our non-profit model difficult to implement. This paper will discuss some of the benefits and issues around Open access publishing with particular reference to the situation of AABNER and for study of the ANE.

Simon, Zsolt

Why Bīt-Purutaš?

Time: Wednesday 12:00-12:30

Venue: Porthania P II

As is well known, Sargon II refers to a political entity in Tabal as Bīt-Purutaš. The origin of this designation, which is not attested (yet) in the local, Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions, is unknown. The traditional theory connects it with the unidentified toponym Pa+ra/i-zax/zux?-tax in the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription of TOPADA (see the refs. in S. Aro, *Tabal*, Helsinki, 1998, 98 n. 574; most recently M. Weeden, *Iraq* 72, 2010, 59 n. 115), but whichever formal interpretation of this spelling is chosen, this identification is not possible on formal grounds. In this talk I propose that Neo-Assyrian naming customs and the analysis of the Neo-Assyrian spellings provide a clue. As it was pointed out already several times in the literature (Aro, *op. cit.* 97-98 with refs., most recently A.M. Bagg, *OLA* 216, 125 n. 448), the usage of Bīt- and the presence of the personal marker for Purutaš in some cases imply a personal name, not a toponym, representing a former local powerful leader, who may or may not be the ancestor/founder of the local dynasty. This squares well with the fact that Ambaris, the ruler of Bīt-Purutaš, belonged to a new dynasty. That said, the underlying personal name has not been identified. However, I will argue that all spelling variants (Purutaš, Purutiš, Puritiš, Purtaš, Paruta; cf. Hawkins, *CHLI* I, 427 n. 40 and *RGTC* 7/1, 52) are demonstrably compatible with a well-attested Luwian name, PRAE-tas [P(a)ritas] (note that the first attested member of this dynasty, Ḫullî, has a perfect Luwian name). The spelling variations are caused by the entanglement of Luwian morphophonology (i-mutation as well as an i/u oscillation after a rhotic consonant, on which see esp. E Rieken – I. Yakubovich, *Fs. Hawkins*, 204-205, 213-214) and Neo-Assyrian phonetics (syncope of the unstressed open syllable in a sequence of three open syllables as well as the a > u change in closed syllables ending in r and frequently after a labial, see esp. M. Luukko, *SAAS* 16, 84-85, 93). In other words, the Assyrians referred to this state by using the name of a notable earlier local leader, presumably an ancestor of the new dynasty, PRAE-tas.

Smidt, Gustav Ryberg

Seeing Marad tablets in a new light – combining digital and analogue approaches to publishing tablets

Time: Tuesday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

Many Old Babylonian documentary tablets from the Royal Museum of Art and History (RMAH) in Brussels were published by Speleers in 1925. Within the CUNE-IIIF-ORM project we will study many of the tablets he already published and some that are unpublished. These tablets will be the test bed for a trident of digital approaches within our project: Natural Language Processing, Optical Character Recognition and Digital Publishing. The latter will be presented in this paper. To showcase advances in digital text editions and their relation to traditional publications, we will zoom in on the Old Babylonian Marad tablets from the RMAH. The site has recently been excavated by Iraqi scholars and a significant number of tablets have been found there in situ. With this new data we have a unique chance to recontextualize the RMAH corpus and other Marad tablets from numerous collections around the world. To ensure that a new and fuller picture of Marad in the Old Babylonian period can be drawn, we need openness of data. Our methods will increase the data output, the possibilities for data revisions, i.e. enhancing data quality, and the data accessibility. We will build on the existing International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) to create a test case that can be reduplicated. The IIIF supports a high-resolution and high-functional image Application Programming Interface (API), image annotations and textual content. This data can be changed as new information comes to light or when new and relevant linked data is available. In the end, the data structure can be copied, and the data exported. With all this information, we hope to be able to better understand the documentary texts in the RMAH and what they say about Marad. Speleers, Louis. *Recueil Des Inscriptions de l'Asie Antérieure Des Musées Royaux Du Cinquantenaire à Bruxelles. Textes Sumériens, Babyloniens et Assyriens*. Brussels: Vanderpoorten et Co., 1925.

Song, Yu

Epistemic Education of Human Nature in Nippur Edubba: Lu2 = azlag2 and its Intertextuality in the Curriculum

Time: Monday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

This paper explores the emergence and evolution of a lexical list, Lu2 = azlag2. The analysis spans various periods, including the Early Dynastic period, highlighting the development of distinct versions such as ED Lu A, Lu B, and Lu E. Significantly, during the Old Babylonian period, two noteworthy Lu lists, Lu2 = ša and Lu2 = azlag2, surfaced. While the former focuses on human professions, the latter diverges by delving into human nature rather than professional roles. Lu2 = azlag2 stands out due to three key characteristics. Firstly, it distinguishes itself by predominantly featuring entries describing psychological traits, bodily characteristics, and administrative or religious positions, deviating from the profession-centric approach of its predecessors. The categorization in Lu2 = azlag2 is value-oriented, with a notable presence of insulting entries not found in other Lu lists. Secondly, its bilingual nature marks it as one of the earliest bilingual texts, shedding light on the development of bilingualism during the Old Babylonian period and suggesting a potential educational focus on Sumerian rhetoric. Thirdly, the list exhibits intense intertextuality with other educational genres of the curriculum, particularly Sumerian proverbs and school disputations. This paper contends that Lu2 = azlag2 serves as an epistemic list of human nature, offering a unique perspective on the ancient Mesopotamian understanding of "Lu." The bilingualism and intertextuality observed in this list indicate a broader educational purpose, suggesting that the exploration of human nature went beyond mere writing instruction. The paper proposes that Lu2 = azlag2 could have been intended for educational purposes, contributing to performative rhetoric and enhancing the nuanced comprehension of the concept of "Lu" in ancient Mesopotamia.

SooHoo, Anthony

The Adê-oath and Royal Violence in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs and Annals

Time: Tuesday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

The violation of the adê-oath resulting in the military response of the Neo-Assyrian ruler is a theme in the royal inscriptions, especially of the Sargonid Period. This presentation will argue that some of the accounts of royal violence in the reliefs and inscriptions can be explained as enactments of the curses in the adê-oaths. The intertextual and intermedial connections provide a narrative to interpret and justify the violence by portraying it as a divine response to breaking an oath. The case studies examined in this presentation can help us refine criteria for identifying intertextuality or intermediality in ancient Near Eastern sources. They also provide a window into how scribes employed intertextuality or intermediality connections in the service of royal power and self-presentation.

Spunaugle, Adrienne

Land management practices: migration and empire

Time: Tuesday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

This is the second of a series of workshops that seeks to reframe how we perceive migrant and mobile elements of society to emphasize their deep connection to more sedentary populations. In premodern societies, multiple land use practices were employed based on regional and local landscape. For the ancient regions of the Eastern Mediterranean and Southwest Asia especially, various migration practices were enmeshed with sedentarism. Agropastoralism, transhumance, and nomadic populations maintained long-established traditions of operating outside the governance of city-based administrations without cutting ties entirely. Both the city and the migrant relied upon the other through contractual obligations, kinship ties, etc. Additionally, administrations routinely employed settler colonialism, colonization, and deportation schemes to manage the lands under their patronage. Our continued focus on the settled and settlements to the exclusion of migration practices only provides a limited view of the lived experience and lifeways of the ancient peoples.

Although scholarship on nonsedentary elements is easily found for prehistoric through the Early Bronze Age, it is difficult to find for the age of empires during the first millennium BCE. Early anthropological theories about the evolutionary development of civilization and complex societies (e.g., Childe, etc.) still undergird scholars' presentations of the ancient Near East on a broad level. When addressed at all, migration practices are treated as marginal lifeways rather than the long established and regularly utilized land management techniques they were.

To challenge this state of research, we seek to examine four main migration practices through various case studies from Eastern Mediterranean, Egyptian, and Southwest Asian regions from roughly 1200 – 0 BCE—from the early Iron Age through the early Roman Empire. The four main migration practices to be addressed include: short-range (agropastoralism, transhumance, labor, trade, etc), long-range (pastoral nomadism, labor, trade, etc.), (settler) colonialism/colonization, and imperially coerced migration.

The aim in this workshop is to achieve a comprehensive discussion in which different aspects of migration are not simply juxtaposed but are brought together in dialogue. Investigating other societies' similar practices in order to illustrate the differences with the particular practice of our focus society often illuminates elements otherwise glossed over.

Steinmeyer, Nathan

Society on the Edge: A Social Network Analysis of the Central Babylonian Fortress of Dūr-Abiešuḫ in the Late Old Babylonian Period (1711–1595 BCE).

Time: Monday 16:30–17:00

Venue: Porthania P III

This paper presents a social network analysis of Dūr-Abiešuḫ – a fortress in central Babylonia – to elucidate questions of social stratification and habitus formation during the Late Old Babylonian Period (1711–1595 BCE). Despite the importance of this period in the history of the ancient Near East, little is truly known about its main features. This is especially true of topics such as the social, economic, and even ethnic makeup of settlements and fortresses beyond the confines of the major political strongholds of northern Babylonia. The corpus of Dūr-Abiešuḫ sheds light on the daily activities within the fortress and provides evidence of the interactions of individuals from many different professions and spheres of influence, including generals and their soldiers, prebendaries, diviners, shepherds, priests, and others. A social network analysis of the fortresses thus allows us to ask several questions: how did these people interact with each other; what socio-economic relations existed within the fortress; how did the geopolitical situation of the time impact and shape these relationships; and so on. A preliminary examination of the corpus reveals a bipartite distribution of social relations in the fortress between those associated with the military and those associated with the Nippur cult. While this distribution is partly influenced by the specific archives of the corpus, many intriguing features of the fortress's social organization are still to be teased out of the data. For example, while diviners are present across the entire timespan of the corpus, they have so far only been attested in what can be considered militaristic (or security) contexts, possibly evidencing a shift in the social function of this class of experts due to the geo-political strife in which the fortress found itself.

Stökl, Jonathan

Prophetic Intertexts: Reflections on Texts Between Author, Text and Reader

Time: Tuesday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

This paper will investigate potential uses of intertextuality—or better intertextualities—broadly conceived in the study of Neo-Assyrian prophetic texts. For a long time, scholars have speculated about the purpose of the two famous Sammeltafeln SAA 9 1 and 2, and to some extent 3. Many have suggested that they were used as a repository to be used in the composition of later text. Most recently Martti Nissinen—basing himself on suggestions by Simo Parpola in his famous edition of the prophetic texts has worked out a broad model of this intertextual model of authorial intent. While Parpola’s model in the form that it is worked out by Nissinen is principally plausible elements of historical speculation perforce remain in place, which may lead to some scholars not to accept this Helsinki-based model. This model relies on a historical and authorial intent model of intertextuality. I want to suggest going back to Julia Kristeva’s early work on intertextuality which has a narrower understanding of the term as based in the reader and not the author—it is the reader who creates the intertextuality in the act of reading, with other texts that that they know. The difference in perspective brought in by Kristeva relies on her persuasion of the fundamental unknowability of authorial intent (expressed so evocatively in Roland Barthes’s essay title ‘La mort de l’auteur’). In the final third of the paper I will suggest a productive reconciliation of both perspectives.

Suliman, Rita

The Iconography of the Moon God in Mesopotamia from the Third to the First Millennium B.C.

Time: Friday 16:30–17:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

In ancient Mesopotamia, each deity had its attribute and symbol. Iconographic representations and textual sources provide ample evidence for connecting individual gods with their attributes and symbols. The Moon God, Nanna-Sîn, was one of the most important deities in the Mesopotamian pantheon, and we can identify his anthropomorphic depictions with the help of his attributes. Throughout Mesopotamian history, Nanna-Sîn is typically depicted with the Moon crescent, but sometimes he appears standing or sitting on a bull or a mountain. One of his attributes, the bull, evolved in the first millennium B.C. into a mixed creature, whereas the crescent with or without a standard had continued to be his main attribute over three millennia. This Presentation provides a detailed discussion of the attributes accompanying the anthropomorphic representations of the Moon God in Mesopotamia from the third to the first millennium BC. We will examine the different attributes and trace them through three millennia. Our goal is, on the one hand, to identify different trends in the iconographic tradition of this important god and, on the other hand, to see how these trends continued and evolved over time. Our source material includes anthropomorphic depictions of the Moon God (Nanna-Sîn) on cylinder seals, stone steles and rock reliefs.

Surdi, Mirko
Fassi, Francesco
Fiorillo, Fausta

High-resolution 3D scanning for the analysis of reed-stylus fiber impressions on cuneiform tablets: a new diagnostic method to recognize joins

Time: Tuesday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

In recent years, the adoption of three-dimensional (3D) modeling techniques for documenting and analyzing cuneiform tablets has significantly increased. 3D models offer several advantages, enabling users to manipulate the orientation of a tablet digital reconstruction, modify lighting conditions, and enhance the visibility of morphological details. Moreover, the creation of digital replicas has facilitated the geometric examination of cuneiform wedges, assisting in the recognition of scribal handwriting and joins. Yet the examination of a crucial element has often been overlooked: the fibrous impressions left by the reed stylus on the left-hand side of the wedges. The intricate details of these fibrous impressions are challenging to capture due to their microscopic scale, presenting a significant obstacle for conventional 3D measurement technologies. To address this issue, our research employed and compared three advanced high-resolution scanners from LMI Technologies on a group of cuneiform tablets from Ghent University's collection. The first scanner, the Gocator 3504, is a 3D snapshot sensor based on a structured light system, offering a 6.7-7.1 μm XY nominal resolution and 0.2 μm Z nominal repeatability. The second scanner, the Gocator G5512, is a line confocal sensor, providing even greater accuracy with a 6.5 μm XY nominal resolution, 0.72 μm Z nominal resolution, and 0.2 μm Z nominal repeatability. The third scanner, the Gocator 2629, is a 3D laser line profiler, which, while faster, offers a less precise XY nominal resolution of 18-23 μm and a Z nominal repeatability of 0.3 μm . This scanner was particularly effective for quickly capturing larger areas of tablets that feature dense cuneiform inscriptions. An initial observation is that fiber impressions might display morphological details that make them as distinctive as human fingerprints, with each stylus leaving a unique mark. Accordingly, the analysis of these fibrous impressions could serve as a novel and supplementary diagnostic method to confirm joins, thereby determining if fragments of cuneiform tablets share the same fibrous pattern of the wedges, indicating they were impressed with the same stylus and are (possibly) part of the same document. This methodology could assist in addressing key questions in future research, such as

determining whether a tablet was consistently written with the same stylus, understanding the implications of multiple styluses used on a single tablet, and assessing the feasibility of grouping documents by stylus impressions. Exploring these questions may enhance our understanding of cuneiform tablet scribal practices.

Svärd, Saana

Assyriology and Interdisciplinarity: Centre of Excellence "Ancient Near Eastern Empires"

Time: Wednesday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

This short presentation by the director of the Centre will outline history, aims, current state and plans of the Centre of Excellence in Ancient Near Eastern Empires, funded by the Academy of Finland from 2018 to end of 2025. Goals of ANEE relate to its main research question: How do changing imperial dynamics impact social group identities and lifeways over a long period of time? The chronological focus of the Centre starts from the Neo-Assyrian period and continues up to the start of the Common Era. Furthermore, ANEE's goals include developing new methodologies as well as new knowledge. Interdisciplinary and collaborative work among its circa 40 researchers is an integral part of ANEE work and necessary for research on these topics. This presentation will outline how ANEE aims relate to the Assyriological tradition in Helsinki and outlines in broad terms some of its potential impact.

Sövegjarto, Szilvia

Evolutionary Pathways of Colophons: Patterns and Trends in the Third Millennium BCE

Time: Thursday 14:00–14:30

Venue: Porthania P III

The tradition of appending scribal remarks, known as colophons, to manuscripts dates back to the mid-third millennium BCE and persisted until the end of the cuneiform tradition. Unlike conventional elements, colophons were freely added components providing various meta-information such as the composition's length, the scribe's identity, location or condition of the source, and production place and date. These annotations, present in manuscripts ranging from apprentice exercises to master copies, are integral to manuscript culture, closely intertwined with manuscript production and literary activity. In cuneiform manuscript cultures, colophons are closely tied to the manuscript itself, unlike in the case of e.g. medieval codices. They were almost invariably produced during the same writing process and by the same scribes as the manuscripts they accompany. As they were typically not copied together with the main text, colophons represent unique elements within manuscripts. Consequently, they shed light on manuscript production, literary activity, and, in some cases, reveal the cultural and institutional context surrounding these endeavors. The proposed paper focuses on the Uruk IV/III, Early Dynastic I/II and IIIa, Agade, and Ur III periods, spanning nearly a millennium of manuscript production. While the primary focus lies on literary and lexical manuscripts, this investigation also encompasses similar phenomena observed in inscribed artifacts. I will provide an overview of patterns and trends in both form and content, reflecting the transition from collective to individual manuscript production and demonstrating adaptation to evolving lexical and literary traditions. Through this analysis, we gain insights into how colophons adapted to the shifting social, cultural, and institutional landscapes of ancient Mesopotamia, offering valuable clues about the dynamics of literary and scholarly activities during this pivotal era.

Talebi, Elham

The Coalition of the Diviner, Monarch, and Populace: Eclipse Ceremonies in Mesopotamian Culture during the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Periods

Time: Tuesday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P I

The Coalition of the Diviner, Monarch, and Populace: Eclipse Ceremonies in Mesopotamian Culture during the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Periods In Mesopotamian culture, eclipses were viewed as ominous omens indicating divine displeasure, instilling fear and anticipation of forthcoming challenges for the city, ruler, and populace. Elaborate ceremonies and rituals were meticulously orchestrated to appease the gods and safeguard against harm, emphasizing the essential interconnectedness between the diviner, monarch, and community. The Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian eras witnessed a notable surge in astronomical interest among Mesopotamians, underscoring its pivotal significance in religious, political, and societal spheres. This study delves into the observance of eclipses during these periods, encompassing both solar and lunar phenomena, to unveil their role in averting calamity and scrutinize the factors influencing this tradition. Furthermore, it explores how the unexpected coalition between the diviner, monarch, and populace was forged with the explicit aim of neutralizing the adverse effects of eclipses. Keywords: Mesopotamian culture, Mesopotamian eclipse ceremonies, Mesopotamian astronomy, religious practices, Neo-Assyrian period, Neo-Babylonian period, Namburbi, substitute king ritual

Tarhan, Zozan

Neo-Assyrian Kings' Imperial Mission: Context and Interpretation of Some Formulaic Expressions

Time: Tuesday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P I

This paper investigates the various situations in which the Neo-Assyrian kings' imperial mission is evident. The focus is to present and analyze the relevant formulaic expressions with regard to the expansionist policy of the Assyrian rulers in the context of the historical events and royal ideology. The study attempts to trace whether the specific phrases inserted in the royal inscriptions or in other textual sources convey additional meaning aside the ideological implications. The modern scholarship agrees that the conquest policy of the Assyrian kings was conceived, or rather presented, as a commitment made by the great gods. This is how those military campaigns that the kings claimed to have been conducted by divine command can be considered. Such "divine orders" are issued mainly in cases when the Assyrians spoke of a specific offense or disobedience by some land. Under the circumstances in which the king directed his troops against a country without showing any disobedience to Assyria, did not refer to a divine command, but rather claimed to have the support of their gods. At these moments, the campaigns were presented as conquests, although it is clear that a large part of them should be considered as studying the unfamiliar land and routes or for the purpose of plundering. All of those circumstances, other ones and the exact formulaic expressions will be presented in context and by applying comparative analysis and mixed approach they will be further discussed.

Tavernier, Jan

Drink till you drop. Dealing with inebriation in ancient Ugarit

Time: Monday 17:30–18:00

Venue: Porthania P I

The site of Ras Shamra, ancient Ugarit, has yielded numerous literary and documentary texts, giving us a fascinating glimpse of life in this coastal town. Some of the texts provide us with information on the consumption and over-consumption of alcoholic beverages in Late Bronze Age Ugarit. As is generally known, beer, and especially wine,, were a common part of life in Ugarit, but sometimes excessive alcohol consumption appears in the documentation we dispose of, most prominently in the text called "El's Banquet" (KTU 1.114). It is this paper's aim to investigate how the Ugaritic society dealt with drunkenness and how it tried (and succeeded) to manage this social phenomenon. Special attention will thereby be given to the role of banquets, such as the marzeah.

Taylor, Jonathan

Scientific analyses of clay tablets

Time: Wednesday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P I

Recent years have seen increasing efforts being made to explore the material aspects of clay tablets. A key component of this type of work is the application of scientific analyses of various kinds. This paper discusses three studies conducted at the British Museum. The first study uses petrography and CT scanning to analyse the clays used and how they were processed for tablet production. Textual evidence for tablet production is almost entirely absent. But microscopic examination reveals whether the clay had been levigated, tempered, or fired, for example. And comparison of clays should allow the grouping of tablets according to origin and production practices. The second study focuses on textile impressions. While textiles themselves rarely survive, impressions in clay reveal important evidence. Deliberate impressions can be especially useful. In particular, the impression of the sissiktu “hem” instead of a cylinder seal is studied. When and how was the sissiktu applied, and what was it? The third study looks at the rare use of inks on clay tablets from first millennium Mesopotamia. What were these inks made from and what can we learn about how they were applied to tablets?

Tenney, Jonathan

Post factum documentation and administrative reality in Kassite period texts

Time: Thursday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P II

At a conference in 2000, Piotr Steinkeller proposed that at least some Ur III administrative documents were written “subsequent to the economic fact”. They are therefore post factum documents, drawn up in a different location and setting than the human activity described. Two years earlier, the political scientist James C. Scott stated that the function of administrative documentation was to turn a complex social, natural, and economic world into one that is simple, ordered, and reportable. These two ideas may formulate the beginnings of a source criticism for bureaucratic texts founded on a principle of “administrative reality.” This paper presents verbal and non-verbal evidence for post factum documentation in the Kassite period and considers the epistemological implications of administrative reality, especially as it relates to groups and social behavior.

Tenney, Jonathan

Textiles and garments in Kassite period texts

Time: Friday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

This paper provides an overview of the institutional documentation from Kassite Babylonia that may be used in a study of textiles and garments. It will demonstrate that the corpus is voluminous and presents opportunities to tackle the topic along several lines. On a macro level, one can examine the descriptions of intricate, multicolored garments with tassels and elaborate features, and work orders detailing the textiles used in the construction of chariots and wagons. On a macro level, there is evidence of a lively and elaborate textile trade that stretched beyond the borders of Babylonia. In addition, the paper considers how this evidence relates to a previous study of the people at Nippur who were engaged in textile and garment production.

Thavapalan, Shiyanthi

Telling by Hand: Tacit and Scribal Knowledge in BM 120960

Time: Tuesday 9:30-10:00

Venue: Porthania P III

BM 120960 is a unique text that ostensibly preserves a recipe for making a particular kind of opaque red glass. The instructions are written in an alternative cuneiform orthography, where the substitution of signs from the standard orthography is direct but unsystematic. Editions of the tablets were produced by C.J. Gadd and R. Campbell Thompson as early as in 1936, and then later by A.L. Oppenheim in 1970. This presentation is concerned with the forms of knowledge—about Bronze Age glassmaking but also about scribal scholarship—that we can glean from this text. On the one hand, it will look at how the scribe of BM 120960 is experimenting with writing and argue that the orthography represents an exploration of the polyvalency of cuneiform writing system (using existing syllabaries), but also of its generative property, since many new values not attested in any syllabary are also employed. On the other, it will consider the tacit knowledge about materials and pyrotechnologies preserved in the recipe and propose a hypothesis for why these two disparate forms of knowledge were deliberately brought together.

Thomalsky, Judith

Rise of territoriality and local power in the 1st millennium BC: the case of Tappe Rivi in the Samalghan plain, NE-Iran

Time: Tuesday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P III

Since 2016, an Iranian-German joint-venture is working in the small Samalghan plain in the borderlands of NE-Iran and SW-Turkmenistan (North-Khorasan Province). Key site of the investigations is the ancient site of Tappe Rivi that was founded by farmers in the beginning of the 1st millennium BC. Soon after, fortified complexes and monumental buildings appeared as well as the site increases in size and dimension. During the Achaemenid era, the site served as a trade center and probably also as a royal residency when the “travelling” king visited the region. However, the most interesting point is that the rise of Tappe Rivi, in the sense of a central site of the region, started significantly earlier before the region was annexed by the Achaemenid Empire (respect. Parthia or Hyrkania). Contemporary to the “centralization” of Tappe Rivi, other features of structural change in social, political and economic organization can be noted: new foundations on strategic points in order to control the route system and important locations of the region; appearance of a network of small fortifications/castles in the higher elevated mountains, and a veritable explosion of site numbers in general. Far away from written sources, we can observe specific developments comparable to West-Iran, where similar features were attributed to the rising power of the Medes (and other historic tribes). But firstly, we can evaluate a proper, archaeologically well-contextualized historical landscape with a relevant time depth in regard to the rise (and fall) of historical unities on the Iranian Plateau, at the dawn of the Achaemenid Empire.

Treuk Medeiros de Araujo, Matheus

Imperial Ancestral Cults and Beardless Attendants in Nimrud and Persepolis: Some Possible Analogies

Time: Friday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

In this study I propose that a category of male beardless attendants shown on Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid bas-reliefs were possibly connected to a shared tradition of imperial ancestral cults performed by the ruling king on behalf of deceased monarchs. We propose a case study of the reliefs from the East Suite of Ashurnasirpal's II Northwest Palace in Nimrud (9th century BCE) and the Persepolis' reliefs (6th- 4th centuries BCE), in the last case focusing on the slabs of the so-called "palace" of Darius (the *tacara*). To do this, I create a typology of beardless attendants' images in both sites to demonstrate how the figures holding "cloths," fly-whisks, and (occasionally) parasols are associated to specific scenes, activities, and archaeological contexts. We argue that the East Suite of the Northwest Palace in Nimrud was linked to ancestral cults, following previous scholarly analysis of the topic; and, similarly, that the *tacara* had a ritual function with some connection to royal burials and the royal necropolis in Naqsh-e Rostam. I further argue that the beardless attendants who are prominent in the visual programs of these structures did not represent the "human sphere" as opposed to the divine, as occasionally stated, but were rather mediators between the king and the supernatural world. Therefore, they are shown performing ritual acts, as well as flanking and protecting the king, often in uncanny settings that included mythological creatures and ceremonial performances. The written sources provide possible corroboration for this interpretation since the expression *ša rēši* is related to both beardlessness and to the office of "guardian of royal tombs" in the Late Assyrian Period, whereas the words *eunoûkhos* (Ancient Greek), *ustarbaru* (Akkadian), *lipite kutip* (Achaemenid Elamite), and *vaçabara* (Old Persian) (the last three meaning "garment bearer"), all have an important connection to royal burials, royal tombs, and beardlessness in the Achaemenid context. I speculate that, originally, these beardless figures could have been conceived in different ANE traditions as apotropaic entities that enabled a safe interaction of the king with supernatural spheres.

Tsoulouhas, Ariadne

“Where you go, I will go” (Ruth 1:16): Maternal Caregiving as a Queer Assemblage

Time: Wednesday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

What defines a mother? Is it the act of giving birth, the daily nurturing and care, or the recognition by social, legal, and cultural norms? These ambiguities illustrate the instability of maternal identity. As such, this paper aims to replace maternal identity with a maternal assemblage. The various activities associated with maternal caregiving can rarely be ascribed to one person, so maternity is better represented in a web of interconnectedness than a hierarchy of biological vs. non-biological, “real” vs. adoptive. Within the Hebrew Bible, the book of Ruth serves as a valuable case study for reimagining maternity as a queer assemblage. The love and support Ruth offers Naomi are benefits, in the biblical world, associated less with daughters-in-law and more with husbands and sons. While one queer reading of the text might suggest a sexual relationship between Naomi and Ruth, the queer reading I propose has little to do with sexuality. If we understand queerness less as a matter of sexual identity and more as an ontological state of in betweenness, then the queerness of Naomi and Ruth’s assemblage lies in their chosen kinship and collaborative mothering. Their assemblage is queer because it contains two mothers, not necessarily because these mothers are in a sexual relationship. In dialogue with Alexis Gumbs, Shelley Park, and Mara Benjamin, this paper re-reads the relationship between Naomi and Ruth to offer new perspectives on motherhood and mothering, both in the Hebrew Bible and in the contemporary world.

Tsumura, David Toshio

Discourse Grammar and Grammar of Parallelism in the Prologue of Enuma elish

Time: Friday 16:00–16:30

Venue: Porthania P I

The beginning of a narrative poem is usually characterized by the use of special devices of discourse grammar as well as the grammar of parallelism. I point out here that the Akk. enclitic -ma, in the beginning of the Babylonian creation epic Enuma elish, though it is most often used as a conjunction, may here be a non-coordinating –ma, functioning as a focusing or emphasizing particle, as described in John Huehnergard, *Grammar of Akkadian* (Third edition. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011:325 §29.2). In his book *Akkadian of Ugarit* (HSS 34; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 203–207, he provides a detailed analysis of this particle. According to him, it appears on two levels: (1) In some examples it clearly functions at the clause level, drawing attention to the word or phrase to which it is attached; (2) in other examples, however, the force of the particle seems to lie at a higher level, in that it apparently highlights the entire clause to which it is attached, within the larger surrounding context. Such uses of the enclitic -ma on two levels of discourse are not a phenomena particular to the peripheral Akkadian of Ugarit, but can be also identifiable identified in the discourse structure of the prologue of Enuma elish. Also, Semitic narrative poetry is characterized by parallelistic structure, and the prologue exhibits the phenomenon of parallelismus membrorum. In particular, the prologue of Enuma elish is written using the device of parallelism, which I explain as the device of expressing one sentence through two lines, and is characterized by vertical grammar, that is, a syntactic relation between two parallel lines (Tsumura, *Vertical Grammar of Parallelism in Biblical Hebrew* (AIL 47; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2023). This is the basic feature also of the poetic texts in Ugaritic as well as in the classical Hebrew of the Bible. Thus, literary and linguistic phenomena such as the discourse structure marked by the enclitic particle -ma and the grammatical device of poetic parallelism are noteworthy when we deal with the intertextuality of poetic texts both in Mesopotamia and in Levant

Tychon, Ofelia

The Looming Disaster: Investigating the Changes in Term Frequency in Neo-Assyrian Texts

Time: Tuesday 15:00–15:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

Does one see a tragedy coming? Much ink has been spilled on the subject of the collapse of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, both its historical sequence culminating in its defeat in 612 BCE and its complex political, socioeconomic, and environmental causes. This paper aims to investigate the question as to whether the Assyrians themselves were aware and troubled by the matters believed by scholars to have ultimately led to the collapse. This paper proposes that one way to answer this question is to trace the changes over time in the frequency of usage of various terms relating to agriculture, climate, and warfare in the extant texts. The Neo-Assyrian period offers a vast quantity of textual data, virtually all written in the Akkadian language, from royal inscriptions to archival data such as letters and legal, economic, and administrative texts. Over 8,000 of these texts have been published online by the Archival Texts of the Assyrian Empire (ATAE), Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period (RINAP), and State Archives of Assyria Online (SAAO) projects. This allows execution of efficient and thorough analysis, notwithstanding the challenges, such as the lack of scholarly consensus on dating post-649 BCE documents, and selection and survivorship biases. This paper will trace the changes in the frequency of usage of terms relating to concepts such as abundance (e.g., nuhšu, ṭuhdu), famine (e.g., sunqu, ubbuṭu), rain (e.g., zanānu, zunnu), and others across the Assyrian kings' reigns, in particular starting with Tiglath-pileser III in 745 BCE until Sîn-šarru-iškun in 612 BCE. Ultimately, this paper aims to augment our knowledge of the Assyrians' assessment of the sustenance, climate, and political situation through this analysis of the temporal changes in term frequency.

Töyräänvuori, Joanna

ANEE White Paper: Collaborative Writing as a Tool of Interdisciplinary Research

Time: Wednesday 11:30–12:00

Venue: Porthania P 674

The ANEE white paper outlines the benefits and challenges of collaboration and cowriting within the context of ancient Near Eastern (ANE) studies. While in recent years some large collaborative projects in ANE studies have been undertaken, the question remains why it is not practiced more. In the ‘publish or perish’ environment of modern Academia, producing publications quickly is in demand whereas in the humanities, ventures like collaborative writing are considered more time-consuming and, hence, are often sidelined. We have found within the Centre of Excellence in Ancient Near Eastern Empires that collaboratively written publications are generally capable of producing higher quality and may come with a number of benefits when compared to single-author papers. In the white paper we offer our recommendations, discovered through trial and error, of how to make cowriting and collaborative enterprises more efficient and enjoyable for all parties involved.

Uotila, Repekka

The Colleagues of Cuneiform Scribes: The Duties and Training of Aramaic Scribes in the Neo-Assyrian Period

Time: Friday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

Aramaic scribes (ṭupšarru aramāyu) are well-attested alongside cuneiform scribes in both iconography and administrative documents from the Neo-Assyrian empire. While the evidence of scholarly tradition of cuneiform scribes is exhaustive, the contemporary Aramaic scribes are veiled in mystery – what were they trained in, and were they expected to perform the same duties as cuneiform scribes? The reconstruction of the professional framework for the Aramaic scribes is challenging due to the scarcity of sources. References to Aramaic scribes in the Neo-Assyrian iconographic and textual evidence provide clues to the work description, such as situations where their employment was deemed necessary and the practice of keeping both cuneiform and alphabetic records of tribute and spoils of war. Most of the available Aramaic texts from the period are, however, legal texts, most significantly loan documents. The few exceptions to this rule include, among others, multilingual monumental inscriptions and ostraca from Dūr-Katlimmu, Assur, and Kalhu. The uniformity within the legal corpus and the letterforms of the Aramaic script suggests a level of standardization of Aramaic, a product of scribal training. Based on the available Aramaic evidence, I aim to reconstruct the scribe's required knowledge to draft these texts, such as conventions of writing legal and administrative documents, and compare the evidence to the professional realm of the cuneiform scribes. While the profession of alphabetic scribes likely shared similarities with the tasks of cuneiform scribes, as indicated by their comparable roles in the state administration, the Aramaic evidence may signify diverging Aramaic scribal traditions already in the Neo-Assyrian period.

Válek, František

Tracking the Networks of Near Eastern Royal Epics

Time: Tuesday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P I

Near Eastern royal epics encompass a broad corpus of cuneiform literature narrating about kings. However, only some of these texts were (presumably) composed during the life of the rulers they concerned. These cases present politically and ideologically oriented literature, the design of which was firmly set in specific historical contexts. With such texts – and drawing inspiration from the Actor-Network Theory – it may be possible for us to track the broad networks in which they were interwoven. Taking the texts (i.e., their material manifestation in clay tablets, including their contents and archaeological setting) as the starting point, we may follow the associations through which they were linked with the rest of the world they aimed to influence. The texts were created by living individuals who followed particular goals by this creation. To some extent, the texts were tools of their creators, but they may also be seen as independent actors of which the creators have lost control. The texts moved through society both as physical objects and as narrated stories. As such, they worked as actors in social relations, shaping the world around them through interaction. At the same time, the texts were intrinsically connected with the past, notably by reusing and transforming the motives of previous royal epics and other literary compositions. In the future, some of them might have also worked as inspiration for new epics. The presented paper aims to explore the networks and possible connections of two such royal epics: the MBA Epic of Zimrī-Līm and the LBA Epic of Tukultī-Ninurta. Admittedly, most of the viable and important links are now lost to us, and the emergent network will be largely porous and present many indirect links. Hopefully, the reconstructed networks can help us to better understand the narratives as truly living traditions with sociopolitical implications.

Valk, Jonathan

Assyrian Ahīqār

Time: Friday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P I

According to the Aramaic text from Elephantine and subsequent retellings of the story, the great sage Ahīqār served the Assyrian kings Sennacherib and Esarhaddon at the height of Assyrian imperial power in the 7th century BCE. Although the story of Ahīqār is set at the Assyrian court, the oldest evidence of the narrative is preserved in the Aramaic language, in a manuscript physically distant from Assyria, and roughly two centuries removed from the events it purports to describe. There is, moreover, no Assyrian evidence for such a story. As a result, scholars tend to approach Ahīqār as something outside of the Assyrian tradition. It is regarded as an Aramean narrative about an especially sagacious and successful Aramean courtier in the service of empire. The story is thus an easily transferrable parable that speaks just as well to Arameans serving the Persian empire. Assyria is reduced to a convenient setting, evocative enough to give life to the drama while distant enough to be politically anodyne. But is it necessary to view Ahīqār as an Aramean, and his story as a later tale told by Arameans? As research is increasingly making clear, Aramaic was by the seventh century as much an Assyrian language as Akkadian. There are a number of features in the Ahīqār narrative itself that suggest that its Assyrian framing is more than merely a convenient setting. And there are tantalizing traces of Assyrian narratives focused on persons other than the king, as well as of a broader but mostly lost Assyro-Aramaic literature. By weaving these disparate threads together, I argue that the Ahīqār narrative was not a story told by outsiders about an Aramean courtier in the service of Assyria's kings. Ahīqār was no outsider: his is an Assyrian story, set in Assyria and told by Assyrians. It is Assyrian Ahīqār.

Vesterinen, Anna-Mari

Is the future an open (access) book?

Time: Wednesday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

The number of peer reviewed open access monographs and edited volumes is growing steadily, but there is still lack of knowledge among researchers on different open-access models (green, gold, and diamond) and if and how publishing in open access is beneficial. There are several studies on open access journal articles, particularly on so called ‘citation advantage’ (or lack of it), but the results vary and are not necessarily comparable with book publishing. However, new evidence on books indicates that open access books have higher downloads than closed books, they reach geographically wider readerships, and are cited more (by a more diverse range of researchers). In my presentation, I will discuss some of the results from recent studies on open access books and analyse how open books reach wider readerships using metrics data from Helsinki University Press’ publications. Further, I will consider how monograph authors and edited volume contributors may benefit from publishing their works in open access and why open publishing is particularly important to research in the humanities and social sciences. Finally, I will discuss some pitfalls of open book publishing and points to consider when deciding on a suitable medium for one’s publication.

Viaggiu, Irene

An artificial adaptive system to define southern Mesopotamian figurative patterns in the cylinder seals from the end of the 3rd to the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE.

Time: Friday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P 674

Mesopotamian cylinder seals are objects capable of carrying with them, despite their small size, an entire universe of knowledge. They are at the same time small art objects, some of which are used as ornaments, apotropaic amulets worn to ward off evil, but they play a very important role in bureaucratic and administrative procedures. The proposed Machine Learning approach is based on the digital coding of both iconographic and iconological models relating to the corpus of 150-cylinder seals from southern Mesopotamia, from the end of the 3rd to the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC. Simulation through Artificial Neural Networks (AAN) of their multidimensional variables has revealed new possibilities for classifying this corpus. The new classes obtained with RNA learning can also well represent the three classically defined periods of Isin-Larsa, Ur III, and Old Babylonian, but at the same time they highlight hidden semantic correlations that relate the three periods and others that show their figurative diversity. A study of the seals in the light of modern trends in computational and cognitive archaeological research and the use of Artificial Neural Networks can now make use of these new analysis systems to increasingly reveal them as carriers of messages at different levels.

Vitas, Marko

Mountains and the Other in Mesopotamia and Greece

Time: Friday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P I

This paper examines how the idea of the mountain as an alien and even dangerous space is exploited in the 1st millennium Mesopotamian texts and the archaic Greek poetry. The recent years have witnessed a publication of a number of significant studies on the mountains in the Ancient World, both in Mesopotamia (e.g. Perdibon 2019) and in Greece and Rome (e.g. König 2022). These studies have shown that the mountains were important in both cultures not only as factors in practical pursuits (such as travel and conquest), but also as conceptual models for reflection on the world beyond the urban and civilized human space. The necessary next step is to engage in a comparative study on the mountains in order to see how the approaches to the mountains converged and diverged in different corners of the Eastern Mediterranean. In this paper, I take a step in that direction by examining three particular aspects of the mountains in the Greek and Mesopotamian sources. First, I look into the representation of the mountains as the seats of frightening and monstrous figures. Then, I move to a discussion on the human inhabitants of the mountains, who are often envisioned as affiliated with the mythological monsters. Finally, I turn to the representations of mountains as sacred spaces, inhabited or frequented by the gods, who represent the ultimate Otherness. I draw examples from texts such as the Eighth Campaign of Sargon II, the Sargon Geography and the Poem of Erra in Mesopotamia, and the Homeric and Hesiodic poetry, as well as Pindar in Greece. While this paper provides an analysis of the ways in which Greek and Mesopotamian cultures approached the idea of the mountains in connection to the Other, more generally, it can also serve as a framework for analyzing similarities and differences between the ways in which ideas and concepts around the Mediterranean were used.

Wagensonner, Marko

Coping with Copies: A look at the transmission(s) of early word lists

Time: Thursday 14:30–15:00

Venue: Porthania P III

The technology of writing, as it developed around 3400 BCE in Uruk in southern Mesopotamia, is characterized by two data sets, a larger set of economic records and a smaller, but still significant corpus of word lists. Word lists, particularly those which were copied in full or in part multiple times, helped establish writing conventions, and certainly also served educational purposes given a substantial number of extracts. Although the exact pathways remain murky at best, parallel versions of some of the archaic word lists appear already towards the end of the 4th and beginning of the 3rd millennium BCE at the sites Jemdet Nasr and Ur. By the 26th century BCE, the late Early Dynastic period, lists that are clearly versions of the archaic texts appeared at sites such as Fara and Abu Salabikh, and slightly later also in Ebla. The paper aims at looking at the possible lines of transmission of early lexical texts throughout the third millennium BCE. What kind of alterations, if any, did word lists receive throughout their later history? How were such texts used as soon as they reached a “new” site? Did scribes use imported word lists to create new compositions?

Wallis, Caroline

In defense of structures?

Time: Monday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P I

In defense of structures? Structuralism once wielded considerable influence across the social sciences and humanities, permeating disciplines ranging from history and linguistics to literary theory, sociology, and anthropology. Scholars delved into the analysis of underlying structures that shape human thought, language, culture, and society. The zenith of structuralism occurred in the 1950s and 1960s when the term became a fertile ground for interdisciplinary communication and research. However, the backlash against structuralism in the 1970s was as forceful as its initial influence. During times of profound social and political upheaval, marked by rapid change, structuralism seemed out of step. Since then, the term 'social structure' has not fared well in a milieu that underlines fluidity and lability over fixed frameworks. Today, it feels akin to encountering a distant relative at a family dinner: familiar yet somewhat estranged. Nevertheless, there is a renewed interest in computer-assisted social network analysis in Assyriology, placing social networks and social organizations under the spotlight. The historical sociology of Empires, where historians, sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists converge, also gives center stage to the dynamic crisscross of different types of institutions and social groups. Could the concept of structure help? Is it time for a rescue operation? This presentation will explore the following questions: What is a social structure? Or should we be talking about social structures in the plural? How do they appear, how do they change? Are they made of people? Do they consist of ideas? How do we get from software-generated social networks to social structures? What is the relationship between structures and social organization? And last but not least, can this concept help us understand the relationship between politics, peoples, and polities of the Ancient Near East?

Wang, Tsu-Jang

Divination by Division: Comparative Studies on Spatial Arrangements in Mesopotamia and Early China Divination Materials

Time: Tuesday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P II

Divination is a common practice to gain knowledge and to ensure certainty by investigating the unknown. Widely observed in all the ancient civilisations, divination around the world shows some general features that enable comparative studies, such as the categorisation of omens in sign lists, or spatial arrangements on the plane of divination. Based on previous studies, the comparative approach to Mesopotamian and Early Chinese divination texts has brought abundant outcomes. The paper aims to compare spatial arrangements of entrail models from Mesopotamian extispicy with spatial arrangements of scapulimancy materials from Early China. The paper will argue that these divination texts from Mesopotamia and Early China are not only highly comparable but also share critical, parallel similarities. For the Mesopotamian part, the paper will especially focus on two liver models, ME 92668 from the second millennium and ME 50494 from the first millennium. In order to compare with the cases of Early China, the paper will choose oracle bones of the Shang Dynasty from the second millennium and Guice Liezhuan (the Records on Turtles and Stalks) in Shiji (the Records of the Great Historian) from the first millennium. Mesopotamian diviners divided the plane of entrails into small grids and blocks and thus they could indicate different results according to locations where the signs would appear. Similarly, Early Chinese diviners divided cracking signs on the plane of oracle bones into “heads,” “bodies,” and “feet,” and these sections could give a variety of results according to different shapes of crackings. The paper will conclude that, by careful spatial arrangements, both Mesopotamians and the Early Chinese people divided and demarcated signs into controllable grids and analysable twists, creating a limited, interpretable divination space full of emerging meanings. Therefore, the practices of divination quantify chances and opportunities, and thus measure and manage the risks better than being trapped in the chaos of the unknown.

Wasmuth, Melanie

Maintaining Relations between the King and the Egyptian Power Base: Key Mediators from the Kushite to the Ptolemaic Period

Time: Thursday 10:00–10:30

Venue: Porthania P IV, Suomen Laki –sali

In the first millennium BCE, extended periods of foreign overlordship characterized the political history of Egypt. After the slow disintegration of centralized power since the 12th c. BCE, Egypt was ruled by several co-reigning dynasties in the later 9th and 8th centuries. This changed in the mid-to-later 8th c., when the Kushite kingdom expanded from the 4th cataract region first to upper Egypt (around 750) and subsequently to the Mediterranean coast (c. 728) and the southern Levant (late 8th/7th c.). From that point, Egypt remained mostly united until the end of pharaonic history in 30 BCE with only short periods of political instability. In our contribution, we offer a diachronic overview of the governing elite of the 1st millennium BCE, from Kushite via Neo-Assyrian, Saitic, Persian, Argead, to Ptolemaic rule, with a focus on the key mediators who were appointed to ensure both loyalty to the king and the smooth functioning of local society. We review from which echelons of society these key figures were drawn and highlight points of comparison and distinctiveness between the different regimes, inter alia: the installment of female members of the royal family as local co-regents in the Kushite and Saitic period (i.e. God's Wives of Amun in Thebes); the re-installment of already powerful local rulers as vassal kings by the Assyrians; the drawing on a mix of local and imperial personae under Teispid-Achaemenid rule including strategy changes (e.g., replacing the former non-royal satrap with a brother of the king); and the shifting balance between the Ptolemaic royal family and court including the playing of the Greek aristocracy and Egyptian temple powers against each other. In doing so, we lay the groundwork for future analysis as to which imperial/royal strategies regarding the elite proved more (or less) successful for political stability in the short- and mid-term, and why.

Weiershäuser, Frauke

How to structure a manual in Assur

Time: Friday 16:00–16:30

Venue: Porthania P II

The group of the so called lexical texts comprises a large number of different compositions, ranging from signs lists for the use of beginners in cuneiform script to complicated multilingual lists composed and used by expert scribes. The structure of the different compendia follows quite different principles depending inter alia on the degree of training and knowledge of the scribe using it. Apart from the arrangement of the individual entries that becomes clear once the text is read, these texts also always show a specific outer structure as the individual entries were structured and arranged in a number of ways; among other things, they were divided by vertical and horizontal lines, by spaces, and sometimes by small extra wedges. This paper will focus on the corpus of lexical texts from the city of Assur and investigate this outer structure of different lexical compositions. It will examine the various features that were used to structure these texts and investigate the connection between the level of scribal training needed to study and write a certain composition and the external features used to structure these texts. It will also discuss some particularities that can be observed on individual lexical texts from Assur.

Wichterlová, Barbora

Dividing the masses: on the “expressedly singular” function of the Akkadian absolute

Time:

Venue:

The absolute form of the noun has long puzzled scholars working on Akkadian. Based on functional overlap with the Semitic accusative, Hasselbach offered a convincing interpretation of the Akkadian absolute not as a state (cf., GAG) but rather a vestigial form with -a > -∅ accusative case ending from before the development of mimation in Proto Semitic, and so found in expressions representing either older forms of language (e.g., adverbial idioms) or standing outside common syntactic contexts (e.g., vocative, numbers, measures) (Hasselbach 2013). Still, one function of the Akkadian absolute cannot be explained by Hasselbach’s analysis, namely, its ability to indicate that a noun is “expressedly singular” (e.g., *uṭṭet* ‘a single grain’). Here, I will trace the development of this secondary function from the form’s use in number and measure expressions, and so, beyond state and case, consider the grammatical number aspect of the Akkadian absolute. Based on comparative Semitic evidence and some fundamental linguistic revisions of the traditional mass–count distinction, I will argue that the absolute form acquired from number + measure expressions an individuating function, dividing a mass noun into countable units. On its own, the interpretation of the absolute defaults to singular, thus, for example, *ašal* ‘one rope’. The predominant use with such measure words reflects the form’s origins, but since, within the framework adopted here, all nouns are mass in the absence of some individuating structure, the function could spread elsewhere (e.g., *miḥar* ‘one equal man’). After the development of a true singular–plural opposition, with the dividing and counting feature combined in the former, the “expressedly singular” absolute began to be used emphatically (e.g., in negation contexts). Hasselbach, Rebecca. *Case in Semitic: Roles, Relations, and Reconstruction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. (GAG) Soden, Wolfram von. *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik*. 3rd Edition. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1995.

Wilhelmi, Lisa

The role of the Akkadian language in a nascent Hittite chancellery based at Ḫattuša

Time: Wednesday 11:00-11:30

Venue: Porthania P II

One of the pivotal questions in Hittitological research that remains unanswered to this day and is still debated controversially is that of the introduction of writing and the development of literacy in the sphere of the Hittite kingdom. It is commonly maintained that Akkadian was the language that was associated with writing and administrative documentation for a good period of time at the beginning of the Hittite kingdom centered at Ḫattuša, with the script only being adapted to write Hittite over the course of a few generations. The assumption is called into question by the fact that texts in Hittite language can be demonstrated to be present already in the very early period, and that there are a number of later texts in Hittite language that relate to these earlier periods, for which any evidence of Akkadian parallels that are postulated to have existed as forerunners, are entirely absent from the records. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the Akkadian language took a more prominent part in text production in the early phases of the kingdom in comparison to the Empire Period, when it was used solely for the purpose of diplomatic correspondence and the governance of subjugated regions in the South Eastern areas of the empire. A few select texts in Akkadian language and/or bilingual Akkadian-Hittite format, which bear no relation to diplomatic interactions outside of Ḫattusa and are of purely internal interest, all of them associated to the earlier periods, stand out from the record. The paper seeks to establish the motivating factors behind the use of Akkadian in these instances (and in contrast to others, where this was not the case) by addressing the following questions: What was the application of using a language that was likely to be accessible to a select group of few only? Was the language associated with the gravitas of the medium of cuneiform writing and therefore understood as of particular prestige? Did the texts in question play a performative role in consolidating a supra-regional kingship with a stable administrative center at Ḫattuša at the beginning of the Old Hittite period?

Winitzer, Abraham

Ea's Proposal for Nergal's Netherworld Escape: Backgrounds and Theological Implications

Time: Thursday 12:00–12:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

The paper will revisit the passage in SB Nergal and Ereškigal that tells of Ea's creative "idea" for Nergal, with its directions for the construction of a bogus throne that Nergal is to take with him to the netherworld, seemingly to enable a future escape. It shall be argued that at least two basic challenges concerning this passage have not been adequately addressed. One involves the means by which the throne is supposed to succeed in achieving its purpose. Another has to do with the relation between Ea's plan and the preceding statement by Nergal, which prompt Ea's creativity in the first place. This paper will strive to make sense of these matters by shedding light on key evidence in the passage that has otherwise been overlooked. Ea's words, it will be demonstrated, recall a brief creation myth and also resonate with the language of well-known first-millennium incantations series. It shall be suggested that these traditions were appealed to in order to offer a pretense of propriety to Ea's trick. But it will also be shown that this effort is predicated on deeper theological assumptions, offering a new angle on Mesopotamian thinking about divine presence and immanence.

Wisnom, Selena

Firing Holes in Literary Tablets from Ashurbanipal's Library

Time: Friday 11:00–11:30

Venue: Porthania P I

This paper aims to shed light on the so-called “firing holes” by combining analysis of their position with poetics. The holes are found in almost every genre of Mesopotamian scholarship, from literature to rituals to omens to medical and lexical texts. They occur especially often in tablets that were part of ancient libraries, in particular the collection known as ‘Ashurbanipal’s library’ assembled by the Assyrian king in the seventh century BC in Nineveh, northern Iraq. Yet despite the frequency of these holes, they are usually overlooked and their meaning remains a mystery. The paper analyses the placement of the holes in relation to the text and its meaning, applying the methodology of close reading to two poems: the Babylonian Theodicy and Ludlul bel nēmeqi. It is argued that the holes represent a form of punctuation that can either indicate pauses in performance, act as commas on a page, or serve as visual markers to draw attention to sections like a form of highlighting. Different manuscripts employ the holes in different ways, which is consistent with other punctuating practices cross-culturally. This has implications for our understanding of the performance of Mesopotamian poetry and its metrical structure, the interpretations of individual scribes, questions of emphasis, and the history of punctuation.

Witzig, Sophia

Governing Girsu/Lagaš under the 3rd Dynasty of Ur (2112-2004 BCE): Changes and Continuity in Local Administration

Time: Friday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P III

The province of Girsu/Lagaš reaches its zenith during the Second Dynasty of Lagaš, led by the famous ruler, Gudea. This Dynasty is partly contemporary with the Third Dynasty of Ur (Ur III), founded by king Ur-Namma in 2112 BCE. However, the first half Ur III is not documented, although tens of thousands of administrative tablets are known for this period, mostly from illegal excavations and looting. This paper will examine the role of Girsu/Lagaš as part of the Ur III Empire and will focus on the continuity both in the representation of power and in the administration of local institutions. I will argue that the rulers in Lagaš kept some independence when the kings of Ur came to power, as can be observed in the administrative archives and seal impressions.

Worthington, Martin

Mesopotamian Orality

Time: Friday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P I

Mesopotamia was a largely oral world in which writing was, though important, not hugely present in people's lives. So much is well known, and applied even to literate people. But how to go beyond a perfunctory acknowledgment of the situation – how to integrate it into the fabric of Assyriological research? The main avenue of work to date stems from the 'Parry Lord school' of Homeric studies, and involves searching belles lettres for 'fingerprints of orality'. This paper will suggest a different method: exploring the boundary between written and oral, and investigating how writing was used vs how it was not, by juggling 'writtens' against 'unwrittens'. Pursued in this various ramifications, this promises to generate an anthropology of Mesopotamian writing and orality.

Young, Marie

The place of the healer (āšipu) in the hierarchy of Babylonian temples

Time: Friday 17:00–17:30

Venue: Porthania P II

This paper analyses the place of the healer (āšipu) in the hierarchy of Babylonian temples. It employs a methodological approach that cross-references lexical, administrative, and notarial sources from the second half of the first millennium BCE. The investigation begins by examining how apprentices, through the study of specific lexical texts, gained insights into the social hierarchy among various professionals within Babylonian temples. A significant aspect of the argumentation centers on looking into the non-standardized versions of the lú = ša lexical series, which were studied and commented on during this period. The paper addresses the challenges posed by the transmission history of this lexical series. Furthermore, after analysing the social hierarchy delineated in the lexical lists, the paper endeavors to ascertain whether this observation aligns with the information from administrative and notarial texts found in Babylonian temples. These texts provide insights into the healer's income and the regional variation that existed over this extensive period.

Zgoll, Annette

The Babylonian Myth of Succession: A Chaos of Deities, Incest and Murder

Time: Thursday 9:00–9:30

Venue: Porthania P 673

Besides the well known Hittite and Greek succession myths, there is a Babylonian myth of succession, preserved in the Dunnu Work Song (BM 74329, latest edition: Lambert 2013). This myth poses some challenges when we reflect (1) on the chaotic sequence of strange deities who succeed one another, (2) on the question why such a "horror of incest and murder" (Lambert 2008) may have been told and (3) on the question what can be deduced about the end of the myth in face of the fragmentary state of the tablet's reverse. In order to approach these questions I will apply philological methods and the hylistic method of stratification analysis while trying to avoid the psychological trap of myth interpretation.

Zgoll, Christian

Winner's or loser's perspective? The Discovery of a Narrative Twist in the Hittite 'Theogony' (CTH 344)

Time: Thursday 9:30–10:00

Venue: Porthania P 673

This paper deals with the succession of the first four generations of gods in the Hittite 'Theogony' or Song of Going Forth (CTH 344). A thorough hyleme analysis of the narrative structure in the beginning of the Hittite 'Theogony' will reveal some oddities, which will lead to a new reading of the cuneiform text and thus to the discovery of a previously unseen twist in the narrative, representing a new parallel to the narrative sequence in Hesiod's 'Theogony'.

Zilberg, Peter

Different paths, similar outcome- The Case of Carians in Babylonia

Time: Monday 15:30–16:00

Venue: Porthania P I

This paper seeks to compare between various groups of individuals of Carian extraction, mainly from Borsippa and the rural outskirts of Nippur, during the 6th and 5th centuries BCE. The study is based on a new edition of a group of texts from the city-of-the-Carians and other related texts. The talk will present the difference in naming patterns, social cohesion and status between these groups, and will seek to illustrate the social and imperial landscapes that led to such differences between similar migrant groups.

Zimmermann, Lynn-Salammbô

Female self-presentation and social status in Kassite period letters

Time: Monday 14:30-15:00

Venue: Porthania P III

Currently, four Kassite period letters from the administrative corpus from Nippur can be attributed to two female senders. Three of the four letters belong to the *bēlu* letters from superiors to subordinates, and the fourth letter belongs to the group of family letters. The female sender of the *bēlu* letters had a high-ranking managerial position, supervising agricultural workers and animals, and organizing the distribution of resources. As opposed to this, the family letter shows that the female sender was not actively involved in any decision-making processes of her family. In this paper the language and style of the preserved Nippurean Kassite period letters written by women are analysed based on the “Speech Act Theory”. The application of the “Speech Act Theory” allows for the tentative identification of differences between the language of women “in office” in Kassite period Nippur and their communication strategies applied within the family sphere. The interaction between social status and gender visible in the linguistic strategies and letter formula, and the parallel existence of social identities, specifically those pertaining to gender dynamics within familial contexts and gender roles beyond the family sphere, constitutes a focal point of this examination. Secondly, this study includes considerations regarding possible observable characteristics linked to gender, while acknowledging the limits of the small dossier of letters written by women from Kassite period Nippur. Although this case study focuses on the language of gendered letters, it is further enhanced by prosopographical considerations and by information about the letters’ social and historical milieu (“Sitz im Leben”).

Posters

Achouche, Imane

On the Next 'Life' of Mesopotamian Statues

Time: Tuesday 16:00-17:00

Venue: Urbarium

Statues had a particular significance and utility as agents in ancient Mesopotamian societies; Assyriology had already explored this question extensively. However, what is less fully understood is the practice of reusing them, an essential proof of the status and importance accorded to Mesopotamian rondes-bosses. Our study examines some cases of usurpation and reassignment of statues from the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC. It demonstrates the range of motivations and strategies used, from modifying an inscription and physical characteristics to simply changing the context in which it was displayed. It also illustrates the variety of ways in which the same practice can be at work, whether it takes the form of a usurpation designed to erase the original identity or of a re-attribution in which the intention is to make the past and the present coexist. To guarantee its effectiveness, the status of the statuary is continually preserved, revived, or modified. The power of statues is here demonstrated through the investment, which can take various forms, in conveying a given message through the reworking of the statue. As a complex artefact, the statue allows stories and ideas to coexist. Their re-use illustrates their capacity to adapt: in addition to the efforts made by society to change their status or function, there is a belief in their intrinsic malleability. If their context influences them, they in turn influence their environment.

Agee, Ann

Pillars, Peoples, Politics and Politics

Time: Tuesday 16:00-17:00

Venue: Urbarium

Politics, Peoples and Politics in the Ancient Near East—69th RAI Poster Proposal I am offering a poster highlighting one of the "Peoples" of the ANE (and here the people referenced are themselves surely a composite) -- the Indo-Europeans, more specifically the Proto-Indo-Aryans, who, we know, inhabited a portion of the large but increasingly unstable West Asian world of the late Bronze to the early Iron Age. These identifiable people, the Mitanni, who once were in control of an "empire" themselves, ultimately suffered dismemberment by a former vassal state formed by the up-and-coming Assyrians. With the collapse of the former oppositional Hittite empire combined with the increasing power (and power to tax) by Assyrians of their former Mitanni economies, it appears that many Mitanni chose to decamp, exiting, perhaps, through the now-open "Cilician Gates," headed for Ionia where they established themselves in the vicinity of the Mycenaeans, forming a powerfully distributed Civilization and absorbing features of various cultures. One of the signature forms of this hybrid culture was the famous Ionian column with its distinctive capital, memed down through the architectural ages, its iconicity too vigorous to be attenuated by even the most unknowing hands. This poster will show how this form was syncretized and created anew as a model of the universe, which fact is made explicit in the Indo-Aryan texts. This column, and the rites for which it was developed, was created for the pastoral aspect of these people, as a focus of their animal sacrifice. This new identification of the Ionian column -- because of a column's tight ritual connection with early names of I-A deities and other well-known prosopographic data--those specifically mentioned in Mitanni context, forms the main link enabling the above migratory trajectory of this Indo-Aryan people, making an essential geographic connection and describing for the first time the form of the ritual pillar itself.

Bielefelde, Svende

Drained rooms inside the dwellings in Babylon-Merkes

Time: Tuesday 16:00-17:00

Venue: Urbarium

As part of my doctoral thesis "Drainage Systems of Mesopotamia. A Study of the Drainage of Palaces, Temples and Temple Districts as well as Residential Buildings between the 3rd and 1st Millenium BC in Mesopotamia and the Syrian Region", the 215 rooms of the 18 Neo-Babylonian dwellings documented by Reuther (see Reuther 1926) in Babylon-Merkes are examined for the first time with regard to the function of their drainage. Such an investigation was not carried out in the more recent works about drainage systems and room functions of Christiane Hemker or Maria Krafeld-Daughtery. One aim of my work is therefore to critically question Reuther's interpretation of room function, especially of his bathrooms and toilets, and to provide a new overview of the types and frequency of room furnishings and location within the houses. The results will be made available to a specialist audience in the form of a poster during RAI 69 before the work is published, which hopefully will be the case in March 2026. In addition, the results of an archaeological experiment regarding the function of the soakaway will be explained in order to create a better understanding of this drainage system. For the meaning of the word *assurû*, "drainage element" is proposed based on the construction method of the individual drainage systems and an article by George from 2015. The poster follows a lecture titled *Baths and Toilets in Babylon: Speculation or Reality?*, which I gave at the last RAI 68 in Leiden as part of the workshop *Hygiene in the Ancient Near East: Power, Privilege, Inequality*, and represents a further development and expansion of the topic. Bibliography George 2015 George, A. R. „On Babylonian lavatories and sewers“. *IRAQ* 77 (2015): 75–106. Hemker 1993 Hemker, Christiane. *Altorientalische Kanalisation: Untersuchungen zu Be- und Entwässerungsanlagen im mesopotamisch, syrisch, anatolischen Raum*. *Abhandlungen der Deutschen Oriental-Gesellschaft* 22. (Münster, 1993). Krafeld-Daughtery 1994 Krafeld-Daugherty, Maria. *Wohnen im Alten Orient. Eine Untersuchung zur Verwendung von Räumen in altorientalischen Wohnhäusern*. *Altertumskunde des Vorderen Orients* 3. (Münster 1994). Reuther 1926 Reuther, Oskar. *Die Innenstadt von Babylon (Merkes)*. *Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Orient- Gesellschaft in Babylon III*. (Leipzig 1926).

Colombo, Noemi

Dingir Inanna, the holder of Queenship and Kingship par excellence.

Time: Tuesday 16:00-17:00

Venue: Urbarium

This contribution arises from my deep interest in the literary and mythological production concerning Dingir Inanna between the Third and Second Millennium. This is not an investigation concerning gender literature or historiography, if this were the case all previous historiography up to the 2000s would be considered produced by male oriented scholars, but a textual approach that aims to reconstruct the primary profile of Inanna, lady of the Gipar of Unug, first consort of An, holder and guardian of the kingship. Through a comparative analysis of the Balbale Lubigu lubigu lubigu (Dumuzi-Inanna B) with musical compositions for instruments or voices taken from an extremely varied repertoire handed down in many languages ranging from Hattic to Hurrian, from Sumerian to Hittite, it is possible highlight common traits and differences that reflect the Seductress-Warrior duality connected to the pairing of Love and Death. The tablet containing the Balbale Lubigu was found on the Hill of Tablets in Nippur, many clues suggest that the place housed an Archive specialized in Songs to be performed during specific public events and probably a School of Singing and Music too, to prepare future performers. The ceremonies with their extreme liturgical rigidity reproduced and made visible what the power, whether in the hands of a Queen or a King, intended to perpetuate and make stable: fertility, abundance, long life, firmly guaranteed by the virtues and abilities of the ruler. Dingir Inanna, in the compositions of which she is the sole protagonist or which recall her deeds, boasts a conspicuous list of qualities and powers that make her the holder and guardian of "Kingship" par excellence.

Hietamäki, Tuomas
Sakko, Matias,
Spunaugle Adrienne

Records of Ancient Migration – locating the relocated under empire (RAMÛ)

Time: Tuesday 16:00-17:00

Venue: Urbarium

The Records of Ancient Migration (RAMÛ) project presents a relational database to facilitate the comparative research of a subset of migration practices—namely, experiences of imperially coerced migration. As a category, imperially coerced forms of migration include all instances in which persons are relocated by imperial administration—both temporary, as in state service or taxation, and more permanent, such as mass deportation events. In an effort to streamline comparative research across empires, RAMÛ presents 700 years and three empires worth of imperial building projects, tax labor, and other imperially coerced migration practices. Spanning from the early Neo-Assyrian to the Achaemenid empire, RAMÛ allows users to navigate historical sources via an interactive map and timeline, facilitating in-depth exploration and analysis of the event / item records. By presenting key points of each event source by source and integrating links to texts accessible online, RAMÛ affords a glimpse of the complex socio-political dynamics underlying imperial administrations and their impact on populations across regions. The RAMÛ database is a comprehensive tool for researching population displacement in ancient civilizations. RAMÛ database is designed for scholars engaged in comparative studies, Assyriologists, Biblicalists, Egyptologists, historical archaeologists, and other ancient historians, and offers an overview of imperially coerced migration practices of the ancient Near East. It can also be used as a teaching aid in classrooms at multiple levels. The first version of RAMÛ will be published in summer 2024. This version will focus on the major royal inscriptions and state archives of the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods. Subsequent versions will incorporate additional written sources of the Achaemenid period, and it is hoped eventually to incorporate material sources as proxies for migration. Please contact Adrienne Spunaugle if you should like to contribute to this project. RAMÛ is a project funded by the Research Council of Finland's Ancient Near Eastern Empires Centre of Excellence of the University of Helsinki. The database utilizes the Heurist Network Database infrastructure.

Jean, Mathilde

How to make clay tablets: a technological approach to scribal practices in Neo-Assyrian Mesopotamia

Time: Tuesday 16:00-17:00

Venue: Urbarium

Cuneiform tablets are rarely studied as archaeological artefacts. However, beyond the texts they carried, the tablets themselves can yield important information. The clay from which they are made and the techniques by which they were formed testify to scribal practices and production systems. This poster will present the objectives and methods of a major new scientific examination of Neo-Assyrian tablets. How were tablets made? Were they produced from specific clays or possibly supplied from other clay workshops (for pottery or construction)? What is the relation between clay provenance, clay processing, and the inscriptions' handwriting and content? Based on the British Museum collection, the "Reading beneath the texts: technological aspects of cuneiform tablet production" project will focus on a regional dataset from Nineveh, Nimrud, and Babylon. It will include samples from inscribed tablets, pottery, and architectural materials to compare clay management and processing techniques between several clay crafts. Using archaeometry and the chaîne opératoire approach, the aim is to adapt methods of clay analysis from pottery studies to epigraphic materials to build up a new protocol dedicated to clay tablets, from macroscopic observation to thin section petrography, digital microscopy, SEM-EDX, X-ray CT scanning, RTI, XRF and Raman spectroscopy.

Korzakova, Hava Bracha

Running from the mundane: anachoresis as a compound social phenomenon in Roman Egypt

Time: Tuesday 16:00-17:00

Venue: Urbarium

A tendency of a rural population to go away from its place of origin has been existed at all times and places, but in Roman Egypt this phenomenon known as anachoresis (“withdrawal”) has reached such a large scale that it became an issue for several prefectural edicts. The Roman authorities imposed a special tax on the population, *merismos anakechorekoton*, which is reflected in ostraca from Thebes and Syene-Elephantine, as well as in various documents on papyri. In some cases, partially surviving documents could be identified as dedicated to the issue of anachoresis due to the special vocabulary developed in this area. An interesting parallel could be made between the seemingly strictly administrative matter of anachoresis as an economic and social phenomenon and a spiritual act of anachoresis, a withdrawal to desert, undertaken by the Christians. The very idea of monasticism as an escape from the mundane might go back, at least partly, to the very popular means of escape from the heavy taxation and the mandatory labor (*angaria*), and from the injustice and oppression in general, known in Egypt from the Pharaonic era. A closer look at both of these meanings of anachoresis might give us a clue for the better understanding of the origins of the early monasticism. This parallel also sheds some light on the economic management of the monastic communities during the Early Byzantine Era.

Lanz, Viktoria

Mesopotamian incense burners. Representations on cylinder seals and orthostates

Time: Tuesday 16:00-17:00

Venue: Urbarium

Mesopotamian incense burners. Representations on cylinder seals and orthostates A wide distribution of incense burners, also called Thymiateria, suggests that they held an important place in antiquity's ritual and private life. Researchers focus mainly on incense burners of the Levant and Mediterranean region since numerous specimens discovered in those areas could be more or less firmly categorised within this object group. Only few original examples of incense burners seem to originate from Mesopotamia, making Mesopotamian Thymiateria a relatively unexplored object group in its entirety. However, the lack of physical specimens in Mesopotamia stands in sharp contrast to the abundance of cylinder seals and reliefs that clearly show objects used for fumigation and incense burning. As an absence of coal and incense residue further exacerbates the unambiguous identification of these objects as incense burners, the evidence provided by visual representations of their use grows ever more significant. The sheer number of representations of this kind suggests that these objects played an important role in Mesopotamian society. With my dissertation project, I aim to contribute to the research around this object group and to use a detailed analysis of visual representations to categorise potential physical specimens. The main focus of the project is on Mesopotamian incense burners of the type bowl on a stand; specifically, on conclusions to be drawn about the respective societal structures these incense burners were embedded in. Furthermore, I aim to clarify whether function and use represented in numerous iconographic and written sources can be confirmed when considering physical specimens. The proposed project will therefore further the debate around this group of archaeological finds, particularly around its terminology. It will also provide a comprehensive overview of Mesopotamian incense burners of the type bowl on a stand of the 2nd and 1st millennium B.C.

Monamy, Elisabeth

Foodways in the Neo-Assyrian Empire

Time: Tuesday 16:00-17:00

Venue: Urbarium

A topic that has been little researched in relation to the Assyrian Empire is food. Food is the key to understanding people in the past and yet this topic has often only been dealt with in marginalised ways. My doctoral thesis focuses on this very broad topic. How important was food in the Neo-Assyrian Empire? Where, how, who and what was cooked? Did all social classes eat the same food? Were there special festive dishes or even food bans? In this poster, the author wants to show how diverse this topic is. It is about eating and cooking habits that give us an insight into the cooking pots of the Assyrians! Thanks to archaeological finds, it is also possible to reconstruct the dining rooms and furniture. Written testimonies give us insights into food rations and foodstuffs. Chemical-biological analyses show which types of pollen or grain existed and were used. And finally, the many relief depictions help us to get an overall picture of this topic. It will not only be about nutrition, because "eating" also includes the acquisition of food and its processing. The various aspects of the work are presented in this poster. To summarise, our knowledge of the eating habits of the New Assyrians can only be obtained from different angles in order to get a fairly complete overall picture. Only when all fields (archaeology, archaeobotany, written sources, archaeofauna, etc...) provide their information can we understand the subject of food. Because eating is not just the consumption of food, but much more an attitude in life.

Savino, Letizia

Healing eye-diseases in Ḫattuša

Time: Tuesday 16:00-17:00

Venue: Urbarium

CTH 809 consists, to date, of seventeen Akkadian fragments dealing with ophthalmology, grouped by HPM as belonging to seven different probable original manuscripts. In a 2013 article, Daniel Schwemer suggested the addition of two further fragments, and the exclusion of what HPM considers Ms. (2). Schwemer also provided an analysis of the palaeography of these fragments, and thus a preliminary study of their possible provenance. Of the nine reconstructed manuscripts considering HPM's 'original' seven and the two proposed by Schwemer, only three have so far been edited and commented on point by point: Mss. (1) and (2) by me in two short notes edited in NABU 2023/3, and Ms. (5), edited by Jeanette Fincke in NABU 2010/1; two other fragments from Ms. (3) have been edited by Abusch and Schwemer in AMD-8/2, while of some others only a few non-systematic mentions and brief annotations have been provided. Indeed, in the case of some fragments and/or manuscripts, the state of preservation is such that a translation is at present not possible; nevertheless, their analysis offers the possibility of gaining useful information regarding the nature of these manuscripts. The aim of this poster will be to provide an overview of all fragments that have so far been recognised as dealing with ophthalmological matters, their content and their editions, together with a short commentary, particularly focusing on their palaeography. Their provenance and the nature of the original manuscripts to which they belonged will also be investigated, particularly in comparison to other Akkadian texts found in Ḫattuša and presenting similar formal and content characteristics.

Steinert, Ulrike

Akkadian and Hittite Emotions in Context (AHEC) – Towards a Lexicon of Emotions in Cuneiform Texts from Ancient Mesopotamia and Asia Minor

Time: Tuesday 16:00-17:00

Venue: Urbarium

The project “Akkadian and Hittite Emotions in Context (AHEC)”, led by Doris Prechel and Ulrike Steinert (Mainz University) and by Amir Gilan (University of Tel-Aviv), undertakes, for the first time, a large-scale analysis of Akkadian and Hittite emotion terms attested in cuneiform texts from the second and (for Akkadian) the first millennia BCE. The project investigates systematically how emotions are linguistically and contextually differentiated and delimited in these two ancient languages. To this end, we collect attestations of emotion terms and expressions (including metonymic and metaphorical expressions), analysing semantic properties, similarities and relations between different emotion terms, their uses and developments in different text genres, periods, and contexts. In a further step, AHEC compares the semantic patterns and features of Akkadian and Hittite emotion terms, exploring interlinguistic and conceptual differences as well as similarities. The poster presents an overview of the project’s ongoing research and first insights from the investigation of the semantic domain of fear in Akkadian texts. The focus of the presentation will lie on applied methodological approaches (including cognitive-linguistic emotions research), on presenting a preliminary semantic structure of the fear domain in Akkadian, and on highlighting significant examples of emotion metaphors.

Svärd, Saana

Alstola, Tero

Sahala, Aleks

Valk, Jonathan

Update on the Lemmatized Neo-Babylonian Text Corpus

Time: Tuesday 16:00-17:00

Venue: Urbarium

A sizeable corpus of digitized and linguistically annotated texts is a prerequisite for many quantitative research approaches and a great help for qualitative philological work. In the field of cuneiform studies, the availability of such corpora is very uneven across different periods and geographical locations. While Oracc provides several rich corpora from the Neo-Assyrian period, the number of annotated Neo-Babylonian texts is small. To improve the availability of annotated Babylonian texts, we are in the process of creating a corpus of 6,100 texts from the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, including 2,800 texts from Achemenet. As manual annotation of cuneiform texts is very time-consuming work, we have developed methods and workflow for automatically lemmatizing and part-of-speech (POS) tagging Akkadian texts from transliteration. This workflow currently results in accuracy of 95% for lemmas and POS tags, which is sufficient for statistical analysis of the corpus. The workflow and methods were presented in a RAI 2023 presentation (Alstola, Sahala & Valk). In this poster, we will give an update on the current state of the project and the expected timeline of when the full corpus will be available. We will also highlight some examples of research opportunities that this corpus can offer for both quantitative and qualitative research. The corpus is being created at the initiative of the Centre of Excellence in Ancient Near Eastern Empires, with important support from the Language Bank of Finland (provided by FINCLARIN), the Achemenet project, and numerous colleagues.

Vanderstraeten, Evelien

Marriage Networks in the Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods.

Time: Tuesday 16:00-17:00

Venue: Urbarium

This poster is a visual presentation of the PhD project Connected through Marriage: A Social History of Marriage in First Millennium BCE (c. 934-141 BCE). My project addresses among other the question of which marriage practices took place within and between families throughout the first millennium BCE. I choose to present here some marriage networks from the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods (620-330 BCE). The first segment gives the steps used to gather the data on who married whom. The sources used are the legal texts written on cuneiform clay tablets. Based on these texts a marriage is either attested or could be reconstructed. The second part focuses on the build family trees and marriage networks establishing which families connected themselves through marriage. The advantages of applying kinship software to study genealogical relations in ancient texts is two-fold. Firstly, the computation of familial data facilitates the statistical analysis of kinship and marital relations within larger text corpora. Secondly, the kinship data digitization process permits mapping e.g. consanguineous and affinal endogamous marriage practices, thus revealing local strategies in first millennium BCE Mesopotamian societies to keep property within the family and to provide social support to family members in need.