

Newsletter

The Heritage of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East

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Letter of Introduction

Dear friends of the Melammu Project,

It is our pleasure to present to you the newsletter of the Melammu project with a report on past events and an outlook on scheduled ones. Two Melammu workshops already took place in 2024, the 17th Melammu Symposium is taking place this week and four workshops are already planned.

In January the 20th workshop of the Melammu Project with the topic "From Athens to Samarkand: Spatial Perception in Antiquity from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Taklamakan Desert", took place in Innsbruck. It was organized by Florian Posselt, Alexander Steiner and Clemens Steinwender. Recently, in May, the 21st workshop "The Art of Love", organized by Krzysztof Ulanowski, Zozan Tarhan and Sebastian Fink, was held in Gdańsk. The report of these two workshops are given below.

The 22nd Melammu Workshop "Big and Small, High and Low, Proud and Humble. Constructing Significance in Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean Cultures" (organized by Mait Kõiv and the CAEMC) will be held in Tartu on September 12-15. The next workshop takes place in Wrocław on September 26-27: "Serving the Gods. Artists, Craftsmen and Ritual Specialists in the Ancient World" (organized by Aleksandra Kubiak-Schneider, Bernhard Schneider). The 24th Melammu Workshop, "Crossing geographical barriers and conceptualizing expansion in Eurasia. Exploration, conquest and ideology in antiquity and beyond" (organized by Liviu Iancu), will take place in Bucharest on October 17-18. The first Melammu Workshop of 2025, "Divination Techniques in the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean" (organized by Zozan Tarhan),



LETTER OF INTRODUCTION (continued from page 1)

will take place in Sofia and is scheduled for May 29-30 2025. A Call for Papers will soon be published on the website. You will find more information about these workshops below.

Now we are looking forward to the 17th Symposium of the Melammu Project, "Naval connectivity around the Iranian Worlds. From the Persian Gulf towards the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean" (organized by Touraj Daryaee, Robert Rollinger and Christoph Schäfer), which is taking place in Irvine, California, June 18-21. During this Symposium the general assembly will vote, in an online meeting, for the new Chair and the Board.

We take this opportunity to thank all the Board members and all others who have contributed to the success of the Melammu Project, and in particular Luigi Turri for his selfless work in updating the website and formatting the newsletters. Finally, we would like to announce that the 18th Melammu Symposium, "Knowledge Transfer between and across Ancient Empires", is organized by Sven Günther and will take place in Changchun in 2025. You will find the CFP in this newsletter.

All the best,
Sebastian Fink and Ana Arroyo

Reports on Recent Melammu Events

Melammu Workshop 20
Innsbruck, 17–19 January 2024
"From Athens to Samarkand:
Spatial Perception in Antiquity
from the Eastern Mediterranean
to the Taklamakan Desert"
(Organisers: Florian Posselt,
Alexander Steiner
and Clemens Steinwender)

History, Philology, Archaeology – In all of these disciplines spatial concepts matter. This was demonstrated in the conference "From Athens to Samarkand: Spatial Perception in Antiquity from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Taklamakan Desert" which was held as the 20th Melammu Workshop in Innsbruck. Many of the talks focused on regions beyond the "classical world". The decided multidisciplinary approach of the conference worked out well and attracted many international scholars from different fields, and the lectures dealt with many different places and periods (1st millennium BCE to 1st century CE). While some talks focused on borderlands, border cities, conflicts, and cultural exchange, others concentrated on maritime topics, special toponyms in different languages, and other cases of spatial perception in ancient sources. This convention and its lively discussions

between experts from different fields demonstrated that the multidisciplinary approach pays out for research on spatial perception. The incorporation of numerous disciplines that deal with the pre-to-globalized ancient world helps to overcome Eurocentric perspectives and improve our understanding of the Greek and Roman sources. Several talks also dealt with ancient empires, and illustrated the characteristic fluctuating of their borders – the so-called 'borderlands'. On the one hand, this conference demonstrated, how borders in antiquity were of military, geographical, and linguistic nature or just imagined, and on the other hand, it also exemplified how a multidisciplinary approach can overcome modern disciplinary boundaries.

Julia Hackhofer & Sebastian Knoflach



Melammu Workshop 21
Gdańsk (Poland), 23–26 May 2024
“The Art of Love”
(Organisers: Krzysztof Ulanowski ,
Zozan Tarhan and Sebastian Fink)

The 21st Melammu Workshop entitled “The Art of Love”, organised by Krzysztof Ulanowski (University of Gdańsk), Zozan Tarhan (Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski) and Sebastian Fink (Innsbruck University) and kindly assisted by Nicholas Sekunda, took place on the 23rd–26th of May 2024. Scholars from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, England, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Israel, Poland, Slovakia, South Africa, Switzerland and the USA took part in the conference. The keynote lecturer Peeter Espak (University of Tartu) held a lecture with the title “The Inseminating Power and Love of the Sumerian God Enki”. He introduced the colleagues to the myths and literature involving the god Enki and shared many (new) insights related to Enki’s inseminating power and responsibility for fertility. The other colleagues’ papers related to the art of love investigated sources part of myths, epics, songs, law codes, legal documents, and proverbs from the 3rd millennium B.C. Mesopotamia to medieval Inner Asia. The researchers presented a detailed look into how the relationship between lovers was conceptualized; how the whole complex of seduction and love was interpreted; how ancient people did perceive the matter of adultery; how offspring was conceived; which deities were responsible for all questions of love and seduction; and finally which stories were told to explain love.

Christie Carr (University of Oxford) presented a paper with the title “Conceptualising the Erotic: Metaphor and the Sumerian “Love Songs”. She discussed how metaphor in the Sumerian “Love Songs” communicates the more abstract concepts essential to poems about sex and love, as well as



Melammu
Workshop 21,
Gdańsk
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the conceptualization of the lover’s experiences of desire and pleasure. Sebastian Fink (University of Innsbruck) presented “The Sumerian Proverbs: Good Advice for Lovers?”. More specifically, he discussed the Counsel of Shuruppak related to love and how the ancient society prevented the choosing of the wrong wife, as well as how the concepts

of “being a good wife” and having a happy marriage have been regarded. Bernhard Schneider (University of Wrocław) gave a paper on the topic “The Sumerian Love Myth Enlil and Ninlil in its Local Setting at Nippur”, discussed the meaning of their “erotic journey”, shared his insights on some concrete localities mentioned in myth and shed light on

them with the help of recent archaeological excavations.

Karolina Przyłęcka (University of Warsaw) in her talk "Reflections on Erotic Images from Ancient Mesopotamia" shared the results of a comparative analysis of two groups of artifacts closely related to Mesopotamian erotic art – terracotta plaques and seals. She took into consideration their context of finding, and discussed the significant differences between male and female sexuality evident in Mesopotamian art, but enriched the topic by providing textual account and reconstructing some links to ritual practices.

Assos Qader (associate scholar at the University Würzburg) discussed the topic of "Prostitution in the Kingdom of Arrapha" and its connection to royal intervention, remuneration, social stigmatization, as well as the legal framework such as litigation and inheritance rights.

Vladimir Sazonov (University of Tartu) gave a talk on the "Divine and Human Seducers and Hieros Gamos: the Case of Inara and Hupašiya" and discussed the sexual intercourse between goddess and man that occurs in the Hittite myth "Tešub and Illuyanka" and its meaning. Zozan Tarhan (University of Sofia) presented a paper entitled "Cursing Enemy's Love and Sex Life in Assyrian Sources" and discussed the Assyrian royal curses directed to foreign rulers' sex life and offspring. She traced the development of this specific type of curses, discussed the context in which they appear and explored how they served the Assyrian kingship, i.e. how they should be interpreted. Hagai Dagan (Sapir College) gave a talk on the "The Song of Songs as an Erotic Fantasy: New Perspectives",

he explored this topic in the context of the Theory of Fantasy and discussed the features such as naturalism, fullness of images and poetic dizziness, the dialectic of covering and uncovering and gender subversiveness as well.

David Arthur Lambert (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) presented the "Intimacy and the Material Expanse of the Self in Ancient Israel", discussed some terms translated as "lying down with," "approaching to," and "coming to" and delineated a new view of intimacy in the Hebrew Bible by arguing that the words should be understood on their own terms rather than as standing in for penetrative sex.

Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò (University of Warsaw) gave a paper on the topic of "Hostility towards Foreign Women in the Province of Yehud –the Historical Context of the Biblical Tradition". He presented the historical context of the early Persian era that may have underpinned the idea of separation between the "chosen people" and "foreign peoples", including the separation of themselves from foreign women.

Raz Kletter (University of Helsinki) gave a paper entitled "Seducer of Whom? The Judean Pillar Figurines and Modern Scholarship" pointing out that the Judean pillar figurines (JPF) of the Kingdom of Judah have been discussed extensively in the literature in recent decades, but no agreement about their meaning and interpretation have been reached. However, he focused on their context and specificities attempting if not to reach convincing suggestions at least to exclude controversial opinions. Aleksandra Kubiak-Schneider (University of Wrocław) gave a paper entitled "Atargatis: Goddess of Love" and presented the divine competences

of Atargatis considered the goddess of love and sensuality. She further discussed the spread of the cult beyond the Near East and based on the analysis of the epigraphic and iconographic sources she presented how ancient people of various cultures perceived the goddess.

Mandy Brandt (University of Innsbruck) presented the topic of the "Entangled Love–Entangled Bodies? The Construction of Love and Body in early Greek literary Sources". Her paper aimed to shed light on the construction of early Greek discourses about love, desire and sexual intercourse and their impact on and connection with body discourses. Orestis Karavas (University of the Peloponnese) gave a talk on "The Tyranny of Love on Gods and Men in Lucian of Samosata" and focused mainly on three collections of short dialogues: the Dialogues of the Gods (including the Judgement of the Goddesses), the Dialogues of the Sea-Gods and the Dialogues of the Courtesans. He discussed the techniques of seduction of Zeus, Poseidon and the clients of the brothels respectively, and the results of the tyranny of Love on gods and men in the Lucianic universe.

Ivan Tenev (University of Sofia) presented a paper with the title "Seduction and polygyny among Paeonians: an element of Achaemenid policy toward Southwestern Thrace in late 6th century BC". He discussed Herodotus' accounts of the impressive Paeonian woman in terms of the historical events, as well as he compared the context in which the phrase 'μεγάλα τε καὶ εὐειδέα' was used by Herodotus attempting to consider whether the sustainable use of the phrase was always related to seduction and how it is presented.

Bogdan Burliga (University of Gdańsk) in his talk "The Persian Princess and Her Greek Lover: From Gory (Melo)drama to Ethics of Medicine" argued that an episode of a love affair between a Greek doctor and a Persian princess recounted by Ctesias influenced the formulation of the Hippocratic oath.

Krzysztof Ulanowski's (University of Gdańsk) paper "Love Beyond Time. Can Anything Really Connect Love Spells from 'The Greek Magical Papyri' and 19th Century Pomeranian Folk Stories and Proverbs" traced the universal of specific rituals, customs, and spells related to love through different cultures and periods.

Elisabeth Monamy (University of Bern / Archeomuse) presented the topic of "The Way to a Man's Heart is through his Stomach – Ancient Aphrodisiacs" and the (ancient) sources that mention or warn of aphrodisiacs making a comparison which served as an attempt at classifying the information we have and allow further discussions.

Alice Ostuni (University of Foggia) presented "Ilia's Myth between Epic, Elegy and Historiography" aiming to rethink under a new perspective Ilia and Anio's epillius and to highlight the significant differences between Ovid's version of the story and the one found in the pseudo epic and in official historiography.

Annemarie de Villiers (Stellenbosch University) gave a paper on the topic of "Love in a Time of Turmoil: Catullus, Lesbia, and the End of the Affair" and discussed some less studied Lesbia poems where the end of the relationship is inextricably linked with the turmoil of late Republican Roman politics. She argued that, despite their undeniably political colour,

these poems are still first and foremost love poems and should be regarded as such.

Yuliana Radoykova (University of Sofia) presented "The Women in Cicero's Life between Literature and Law" and discussed the accounts in the letters of Marcus Tullius Cicero with a view to clarifying the status Terentia, Publilia, Tullia and, more generally, the status of the woman in the era of the Late Republic.

Nicolay Sharankov (University of Sofia / Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) presented a paper entitled "Love and Fidelity: Mythological and Literary Role Models in Inscriptions of Roman Moesia and Thrace". He outlined the use of Greek and Roman mythology and literature in inscriptions related to love relationships in the Roman provinces of Moesia and Thrace. The scholar concluded, that their authors possibly expected literate people to understand and appreciate the poetry, but the texts nevertheless aimed at a wider audience. He identified literary borrowings and therefore who were the Greek and Roman poets whose advice on love and marriage was considered most useful.

Meredith Nelson (Université Libre de Bruxelles / New York University) presented "The Allure of Gold: Love, Magic, and Adornment in Roman Antiquity" and discussed women's use of jewelry. Her paper delved into the former claim, exploring how female adornment was conceived of and designed to enhance the desirability of the wearer. Michal Schwarz (Masaryk University) gave the last talk of the workshop on "Symbolism and Strategies of Love in Inner Asian Perspectives". He focused on Inner Asian examples how cultural attitudes are changing the principle

of love back into the role of hidden actor and driver. In Asia the suppression of individualized love and the focus on family and clan matters transform love into transpersonal negotiation and strategy, where the hidden driver of love still serves and regulates biological goals.

Zozan Tarhan

Upcoming Melammu Events

Melammu Workshop 22
Tartu, 12–15 September 2024

**“Big and Small, High and Low,
Proud and Humble:**

constructing significance

in Ancient Near Eastern

and Mediterranean Cultures”

**Organisers: Amar Annus and Mait Kõiv –
Research Center of Ancient Near Eastern
and Mediterranean Cultures (CAEMC)**

Melammu Workshop 23

Wrocław, 26–27 September 2024

“Serving the Gods.

Artists, Craftsmen

and Ritual Specialists

in the Ancient World”

Organisers:

**Aleksandra Kubiak-Schneider
and Bernhard Schneider**

Melammu Workshop 24

Bukarest, 17–18 October 2024

“Crossing geographical barriers

and conceptualizing expansion

in Eurasia.

**Exploration, conquest and ideology
in antiquity and beyond”**

Organiser: Lviu Iancu

Full Program is available

on our official website:

<http://www.melammu-project.eu/>

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<http://melammu-project.eu/>

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Vice-Chair: Ana Arroyo

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Call for papers

Melammu Symposium 18

Changchun, 5–7 September 2025

“Knowledge Transfer

between and across Ancient Empires”

Organizer: Sven Günther

The communicative turn which historical studies have seen in recent years has also reshaped the way we understand information flow and knowledge transfer. It is not anymore a simple sender-receiver-model that is applied to examine ancient sources, but a full acknowledgement of the complex dynamics of communication with all the accompanying, enabling, and limiting political, social, legal, economic, and religious-cultural frameworks that matters in transferring, that is, transmitting and receiving formal and tacit knowledge between persons and across times. In the XVIIIth Melammu Symposium, we aim at connecting the topic of knowledge transfer to the imperial framework. Paper proposals are invited from all ancient studies disciplines and might address, but are, of course, not limited to, questions of the languages, ways, forms, agents, possibilities, ideologies, limits etc. knowledge was transferred through, both between contemporaneous and across consecutive ancient empires; but also those cases where knowledge was not transferred, intentionally or by chance, and potential feedback of these (non-)transfers on the respective systems. 3–4 travel bursaries are available for doctoral students.

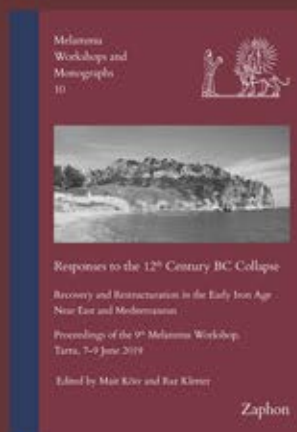
Submissions or questions shall be sent to:
Prof. Dr. Sven Günther,
svenguenther@nenu.edu.cn

Deadline for submission: 15 December 2024

Paper confirmation: 15 January 2025



COMING SOON BOOKS



Melammu Workshops and Monographs 10

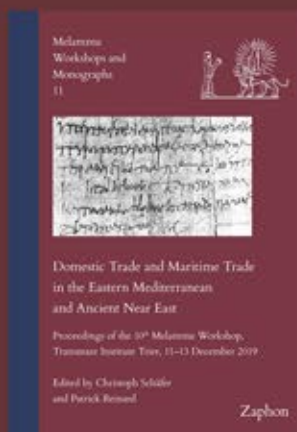
**Responses to
the 12th Century BC Collapse
Recovery and Restructuration
in the Early Iron Age**

Near East and Mediterranean.

Proceedings of the 9th Melammu Workshop,
Tartu, 7–9 June 2019

Edited by Mait Kõiv and Raz Kletter

ISBN 978-3-96327-276-9



Melammu Workshops and Monographs 11

**Domestic Trade
and Maritime Trade
in the Eastern Mediterranean
and Ancient Near East**

Proceedings of the 10th Melammu Workshop
Transmar Institute

Trier, 11–13 December 2019

Edited by Christoph Schäfer

and Patrick Reinard

ISBN 978-3-96327-282-0