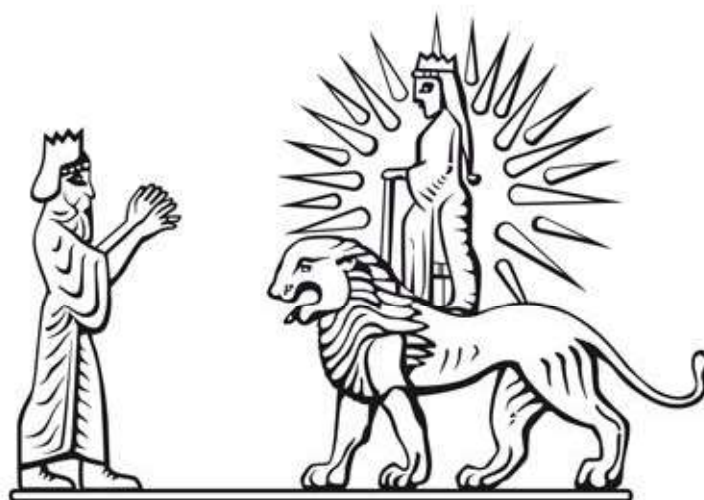


Newsletter

The Heritage of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East

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Letter of Introduction

Dear Friends of the Melammu Project,

The end of the year is approaching and we can look back on a successful year for the Melammu project. Thanks to the enthusiasm and energy of our colleagues, five Melammu Workshops and the yearly Symposium were organized this year and brought many new people to our network, fostering interdisciplinary exchange and research in the study of antiquity. Reports on the workshops in Tartu, Wrocław, and Bucharest are presented in this newsletter. During the Symposium in Irvine (CA) the new board, the chair (Sebastian Fink, Innsbruck / Sofia), and the vice chair (Julian Degen, Trier) were elected. The board includes scholars who are active in the Melammu network, who organize workshops or symposia, and who contribute to the success of the Melammu project. We thank all former board members for their constant

support of the project and look forward to the next two years!

The 18th Symposium with the topic Knowledge Transfer between and across Ancient Empires will take place in Changchun and the 25th Melammu Workshop on Divination Techniques in the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean World will be organized in Sofia. The deadline is still open – you will find the Call for Papers below.

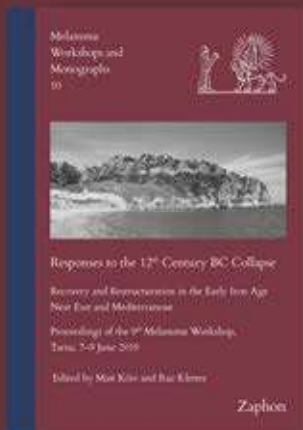
We take this opportunity to thank all the organizers, speakers, chairs, and helpers, who were involved in the numerous projects this year and hope to see many of you again in 2025!

With all the best wishes for 2025,

Sebastian Fink and Julian Degen

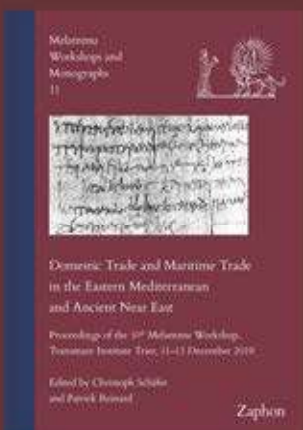


COMING SOON BOOKS



Melammu Workshops and Monographs 10
**Responses to the 12th Century BC Collapse
 Recovery and Reorganisation
 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 / VI + 525 pp / 135,00€



Melammu Workshops and Monographs 11
**Domestic Trade and Maritime Trade
 in the Eastern Mediterranean
 and Ancient Near East**

Proceedings of the 10th Melammu Workshop
 Transmare Institute
 Trier, 11–13 December 2019
 Edited by Christoph Schäfer
 and Patrick Reinard
 ISBN 978-3-96327-282-0

Reports on Recent Melammu Events

Melammu Workshop 24
 Bucharest (Romania), 17-19 October 2024
**"Crossing geographical barriers and
 conceptualizing expansion in Eurasia.
 Exploration, conquest and ideology in
 antiquity and beyond"**
*(Liviú Mihail Iancu and Florian Matei
 Popescu, with support from Bernhard
 Palme, Sebastian Fink, Robert Rollinger)*

The 24th Melammu Workshop aimed to expand the understanding of how major geographical barriers separating human communities, such as mountains, seas, rivers, forests, deserts, and swamps, and the successful and failed attempts to cross them shaped the history of Eurasia. No less than 28 scholars based in Romania, Austria, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic, Poland, Greece, Bulgaria, and Israel answered positively to the call for papers, 27 of them being able to present their papers at the working sessions held at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Levant Culture and Civilisation in Bucharest: there were 22 onsite presentations, including a keynote lecture and a response at the end of the workshop, 2 online presentations and 1 recorded speech.

Wide arrays of questions were asked during the two working days of the workshop (e.g. What were the most important motivations that determined people to attempt to go across allegedly impassable or hardly passable geographical boundaries? How do imperial ideology and actual explorations and conquest interact? What were the technical inventions and intellectual developments that made the crossing of major geographical barriers possible? How did people describe and conceptualize major geographical barriers and the world beyond them before and after they were able to cross them? How were the crossings of major geographical obstacles portrayed in art and literature in different cultures?) and answers were attempted from many different perspectives, employing various methods provided by History, Geography, Classical Philology, Assyriology, Archaeology, and Anthropology. Thematic and methodological diversity was doubled by spatial and chronological variety. The papers dealt with spaces as distant as China, Mongolia, and the Strait of Gibraltar and with periods ranging from the Central Asian Bronze Age and the Third Dynasty of Ur to the Middle



Melammu
 Workshop 24,
 Bucharest



Melammu
Workshop 24,
Bucharest

Byzantine Empire and the Sung Dynasty of China, on a time span of approximately 4000 years.

On the first working day of the event, the focus was placed on the socio-anthropological mechanisms of spatial conceptualization and on how cognitive and political processes have been a major factor in the geopolitical construction of the present world (the keynote lecture by Anca Dan), the role played by the steppes and deserts in the history of Eurasia (papers read in panel 1 by Gian Luca Bonora, Clemens Steinwender, Zheng Ruisen & Nick Evans, Michal Schwarz), the way the Assyrian Empire dealt with geographical barriers and the peoples beyond them, both in practice and ideologically (presentations held in panel 2 by Zozan Tarhan, Aurélien Caron, Natalie Naomi May, John Alexander Edmonds), the geographical barriers in the literature of Sumer and Akkad and geographical obstacles overcome by public works in the Achaemenid Empire (talks in panel 3 by Sebastian Fink and Seyed Abazar Shobairi).

In the second day of the workshop, attention was paid to the crossings of the Danube and the Jaxartes by Alexander the Great, Dareios I and Zopyrion (panel 4: Liviu Mihail Iancu, Patrick Hayes,



Melammu
Workshop 24,
Bucharest

Julian Degen), the sea, the ocean and their coasts in Hellenistic and Roman times (panel 5: Florian Matei Popescu, Pamina Fernández Camacho, Chiara Cenati), the way geographical barriers were dealt with in the literary works of Ovid, Pliny the Elder and Appian (Anne Vial-Rogeay, Mads Orving Lindholmer, Ana-Maria Răducan, Eleni Ntanou) and the exchange networks of resources, commodities and prestige items in the Carpathians and the West Pontic area (Daniel Spănu, Ana Honcu & Lucrețiu Mihăilescu-Bîrliba,

Alina Streinu).

Bernhard Palme exquisitely summed up the discussions in his response held at the end of the conference, highlighting how the results of the workshop contribute to the more general topic of how historical transformations occurred in Eurasia throughout the ages.

The last day was devoted to visits at the antiquities museums of Bucharest and a guided tour of the old city center.

Liviu Mihail Iancu

Melammu Workshop 22

Tartu (Estonia) 13–15 September 2024

“Big and Small, High and Low, Proud and Humble: Constructing Significance in Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean Cultures”

(Research Center of Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean Cultures - CAEMC)

The workshop was dedicated to discussing the creation, maintenance and expression of political, social and cultural prestige in the ancient world. The keynote speakers Gebhard Selz (Vienna), Reinhard Müller (Göttingen) and Christoph Ulf (Innsbruck) and participants from United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Italy, Bulgaria, Portugal, Poland and Estonia discussed a broad spectrum of subjects concerning various ways of manifesting significance. The papers discussed the prestige of persons, including rulers, of social groups, the importance of competition in prestige building, the prestige of languages, and the use of religious ideas, visual imagery, literary conventions and even grammar for promoting significance. Both strategies of social and political power building and influence of cultural conventions were considered. Geographically, the papers covered societies and cultures from Bactria to Mesopotamia and Egypt, Greece, Italy and Gallia, and chronologically the period from the Sumerians to the Late Antiquity. This broad spectrum of thematically related subjects highlighted both general regularities and cultural idiosyncrasies, and revealed how social, economic and political relations and cultural codes of the given societies conditioned the creation and manifestation of hierarchies in the various fields in these cultures.

Mait Kõiv

Melammu Workshop 23

Wrocław (Poland), 26–27 September 2024

“Serving the Gods. Artists, Craftsmen and Ritual Specialists in the Ancient World”

(Aleksandra Kubiak-Schneider, Bernhard Schneider, with the kind administrative help of Łukasz Szeląg, Univeristy of Wrocław)

The 23rd Melammu Workshop took place on September 26–27, 2024. The international community of young and experienced scholars from America and Europe gave in all 22 presentations on the topic of the people who worked in some way for the temples and cultic performances across the ancient world: from the Tarim Basin through the Near East and Thrace to Rome and Portugal. The outline of the workshop formulated the main focus in the following way: “All individuals, together with their ethnic and social backgrounds and occupations, present a diverse social and cultural stratum and form networks within the place of worship. Therefore, we want to treat this topic through the prism of both archaeology and history and prosopography.” The meeting aimed to initiate dialogue between representatives

of different areas of studies of the ancient world and to establish an open scholarly environment to discuss similarities and differences in multicultural and diachronic scope. This was more than achieved by the lively discussion after each contribution which gave the workshop real “Melammu feeling”.

As the opener, it was up to Sebastian Fink (Innsbruck and Sofia) to set the stage with his presentation “Divine Servants on Strike! Not Serving the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia”, kind of an antithesis of the workshop topic. The archaeological aspect of the topic was covered by Erin Darby (Tennessee), and Nicolas Samaretz (Brno and Fribourg). While Francesca Mazzilli (London) used a comparative landscape archaeological approach, the contribution by Bernhard Schneider (Wrocław) tried to connect recent results



from his current fieldwork in Iraq with existing epigraphic evidence from Babylon. The agency and materiality of the objects dedicated and produced for the gods were considered in the talks by Kiersten Neumann (Chicago), Dilyana Boteva (Sofia), and An Jiang (Los Angeles).

Several papers dealt with the textual and iconographical evidence. The artists, such as sculptors, decorators, musicians, and professional associations working for the gods were brought by the talks of Aleksandra Kubiak-Schneider (Wrocław), Michal Schwartz (Brno), Carl-Loris Raschel (Paris), Alisée Deviliers and Toon Sykora (Leiden). We heard about the shepherds (Stevens Bernardin, Paris), perfumers (Piotr Zadworny, Leiden), and forced laborers (Giorgio Paolo Campi, Warsaw). In a workshop on serving the gods naturally also the different aspects of ritual specialists were treated: priests (Roosa Kallunki, Tampere), Agnieszka Wojciechowska (Wrocław), Nikolay Sharankov, (Sofia), prophets, Krzysztof Nawotka (Wrocław), various ritual specialists, Alexis Szuster, (Paris). The non-priestly staff of the temples was discussed by Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò (Warsaw). Haggai Olshanetsky (Warsaw) focused on the performative role of soldiers in worship. Zozan Tarhan (Sofia) spoke about the role of the Assyrian kings in rituals and their involvement in the priestly functions.

The presented evidence was broad and diverse; however, we could find several connecting points. Firstly, we observed that the production for the temples and engagement in the rituals was often in the hands of specific families. Secondly, we noticed the relation between the ritual specialists and craftsmen, especially those who made reliefs, statues, and buildings for the gods. No matter the period and ispatial location, there was supervision of those who had religious knowledge

about cult performance over the works on behalf of the gods. This workshop showed the necessity of further studies on the organization, economy and human aspect of the ancient religions. It also put in question the concept of the elites, especially in the context of craftsmen who are shown by the

different sources as acknowledged specialists. Naturally we are looking forward for the publication of proceedings of this workshop which is in preparation.

Aleksandra Kubiak-Schneider
& Bernhard Schneider



Melammu board (2024–2025)

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Ana Arroyo
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Zozan Tarhan
Luigi Turri
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Giovanni-Battista Lanfranchi
Simo Parpola
Kurt Raaflaub †
Josef Wiesehöfer

Call for papers

Melammu Workshop 25
Sofia, 29–30 May 2025
“Divination Techniques
in the Ancient Near East
and the Mediterranean World”
Organiser: Zozan Tarhan

Divination and prophecy played an important role in decision-making in the ancient world. Royal courts, political elites, military commanders, and ordinary people relied on divination and prophecy to make the right decisions. The 25th Melammu Workshop is dedicated to divination techniques, provoked and unprovoked omens and prophecy in the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean World. The workshop aims to analyse divination techniques, their development and the context they have been used in, the experts behind them, their conceptual setting, and their diffusion in the ancient world.

The workshop is aimed to be organised in three sessions: provoked omens, unprovoked omens, and prophecy. A typical divination technique based on provoked omens is *nēpešti bārūti* – the inspection of the internal organs of a sacrificial animal, first documented in ancient Mesopotamia. This type of divination is better known to modern scholars as *haruspicy*, *extispicy*, or *hepatoscopy*. A good example of unprovoked omens are the celestial omens, especially collected in cuneiform astronomical and astrological series, as well as in the reports of scholars. The flight of birds is also included in the *Šumma ālu* series and is well documented in other cultures. In the classical world it is known as *augury* or *ornithomancy*. Although not a proper divination technique, prophecy will also be studied during the conference due to its importance in political decision-making.

To study the development of the divination techniques and prophecy, it is important to conduct a structural and comparative analysis of idiomatic phrases used in different cultures,

as well as to trace variations in the different sources.

Papers dealing with divination techniques, omens, prophecy, their representation in different textual genres and the archaeological evidence, the characteristics of the available sources that are part of (but not limited to) the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean world are welcome. Papers dedicated to the role of divination and prophecy in the decision-making process and the diffusion of divinatory techniques across the ancient world are strongly encouraged.

Abstracts (200–500 words) should be submitted to

Zozan.Tarhan@uni-sofia.bg.

The deadline for submission is 15 December 2024.

Notification of acceptance/rejection will be sent by 20 December 2024.

Melammu Symposium 18
Changchun, 5–7 September 2025
“Knowledge Transfer
between and across Ancient Empires”
Organizer: Sven Günther

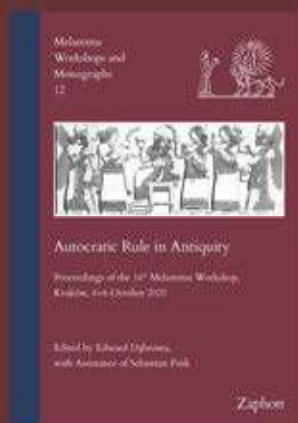
See description in
Melammu Newsletter N.13
or on Melammu’s website

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

Deadline for submission:
15 December 2024
Paper confirmation: 15 January 2025



COMING SOON BOOKS



Melammu Workshops and Monographs 12
Autocratic Rule in Antiquity
Proceedings of the 14th Melammu Workshop,
Kraków, 4–6 October 2021
Edited by Edward Dąbrowa,
with assistance of Sebastian Fink
2024 / ISBN 978-3-96327-284-4 / VI + 262 pp.
85,00 €

Impressum:

The Melammu Project
<http://melammu-project.eu/>
Chair: Sebastian Fink
Vice-Chair: Julian Degen
Layout:
Luigi Turri
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