

CALL FOR PAPERS

27th Melammu Workshop

Organisers: Iulia Dumitrache; Sebastian Fink

The provisioning of soldiers is a crucial component of military organisation. It has a significant impact on both the efficiency of operations and the outcomes of battles. Every expansion is based on logistical abilities, and before any attempt to conquer faraway lands, the supplies of the troops must be organised.

For this colloquium, the dietary patterns, food sources, and logistical methods used to sustain armies in the Ancient Near East and the world of Classical Antiquity are under investigation. The distribution of food was an essential component in ensuring that soldiers maintained both their physical endurance and their morale.

There are two possible sources of supplies for an army. The army can carry its own supplies, using manpower, pack animals, carts, or boats, and it can rely on foraging for food. While in most cases, a combination of both options is the most plausible, the investigation of extreme cases, such as crossing desert regions, allows us to study the possibilities and limits of ancient logistics. Often, we can only deduce the logistical abilities of ancient armies from their successful campaigns. In some cases, we also have evidence for the organization of the supply lines and the distribution of food in the army.

The purpose of our meeting is to study in detail the logistics of ancient armies, to investigate the parallels and differences in food provisioning arrangements between different regions, with a particular focus on the sociopolitical, economic, and strategic aspects that influenced the logistics of ancient military operations. We aim to highlight how the efficient administration of food was not only essential for the survival of troops but also how it was a basis for the larger military and political objectives of ancient empires. This is demonstrated through the examination of historical documents (literary sources, official issues, papyri, inscriptions), archaeological data, and comparative military analysis.

Abstracts (200–500 words) should be submitted to iulia.dumitrache@uaic.ro; Sebastian.Fink@uibk.ac.at. The deadline for submission is 1st December 2025. Notifications will be sent by 15 December 2025.