ICAEM 2025
Mobility in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean:
Movements of People, Objects and Ideas

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ABSTRACTS

KEYNOTES

Ian Rutherford (University of Reading), Phoenician pilgrimage

In this paper I shall try to provide an overview of pilgrimage and religiously motivated travel in the Phoenician world. In the second part I shall focus on Phoenician graffiti from the Memnonium at Abydos in Egypt, some of which could have been left by pilgrims.

Raz Kletter (University of Helsinki), Deals with Danites: The Biblical migration story of Judges 17-18

PAPERS & POSTERS (in alphabetical order)

Antoine Attout (Centre de Recherches en Archéologie et Patrimoine, Bruxelles), Commercial mobilities and targeted inspirations on Greek pottery (6th century BCE)

The Greek world of the 6th century BCE often appears as a highly compartmentalised space; each region has its own distinct styles, especially in pottery. However, our research (focused particularly on Attic pottery from this period) shows that some pottery workshops were particularly open to foreign influences. Moreover, our research suggests that this phenomenon should not be systematically interpreted as a movement of craftsmen: it is clear that trade networks also played a crucial role in the mobility of ideas and diverse inspirations. Indeed, by studying the distribution of several groups of vases concerned (such as neck-amphorae, Attic chalices, Droop Cups, etc.), we find that Attic workshops often adapted part of their production to meet the specific needs of clients based abroad. These dynamics are not exclusive to Athenian workshops: they also affect Laconian, Chian, and Ionian workshops, leading to all sorts of complex artisan interactions between these regions. We have even identified several cases of "triangular" inspiration exchanges, where, within a single series of Attic vases, artisans combined Ionian and Laconian elements to better meet the expectations of clients based in Ionia. In this sense, commercial agents act as true drivers of the mobility of ideas (or inspirations) and play a decisive role in the climate of emulation and artistic interaction surrounding pottery workshops in the Greek world during the 6th century BCE.

Lucretiu Birliba (University of Iași), Mobility of soldiers in the Imperum Romanum. Two case studies in a small settlement at the periphery of the Empire: Ibida (Moesia Inferior)

The author analyzes two new sources attesting an extraordinary collective and individual mobility of soldiers. Ibida is a small settlement located north of a peripheral province of the Roman Empire: Moesia Inferior. One of the sources, a military diploma, attesting a soldier coming from the Greek-speaking areas, can be put in connection with other *constitutions* issued the same day and found at Ibida. The second source is an epitaph mentioning a Libyan settled at Ibida.

Alexandros Drosinakis (University of Tartu), Neleidae, Heraclidae, Aloadae: Approaching migration and human mobility in the Post-palatial Aegean from the tradition to archaeology [POSTER]

The ancient Greeks referred to myth and tradition to explain their past and their beliefs. Thus, myths were formulated about how cities and regions were settled. The two most important ones took place after the end of the Trojan War and are the Dorian Invasion and the Ionian Migration. The Aegean islands were associated with these traditions. More specifically, Neleus son of Kodrus and his sons settled in the Cyclades and the Asia Minor coasts. Other sources of the classical period associate the islanders with Athens. Exceptions are the islands of Thera, Milos, Anafi and the Dodecanese, which are associated with the Dorians. Islands such as Naxos formed traditions about their past during the late classical period, rejecting the Athenian-centered orientation. The different traditions reflect the fluidity of perceived archaic pasts and shared identities. In this paper, written traditions related to colonization in the Aegean will be examined, revisited in the light of recent archaeological research. The aim of the paper is to highlight the timeless significance of human mobility between the two shores of the Aegean, through and beyond Myth and Tradition, and to identify traces of these traditions as early as the Archaic period.

Beatriz Freitas (NOVA University of Lisbon), Images as living organisms: The impact of circulation in their meaning [POSTER]

Mesopotamia, the product of two population groups – Sumerians and Semites – has always been the scene of many movements. In the 1st millennium BC during the Assyrian rule, several journeys took place, all types of terrain were covered and with these people also moved around, either voluntarily, with the unification of the four quadrants, or forcibly, for example through deportations. The same is noticeable with artifacts. Regardless of the mean – trade, tribute, looting, etc. – for objects to circulate there would naturally be contact with the "other". So, ideas, culture and mentalities, particularly based on texts and images, were mutually exchanged, experienced and shared. By analyzing images as living organisms, whose meanings are not stagnant, they change, adapt and transform, I aim to understand their impact on Assyrian society. I propose to look at objects from their mobility, considering migratory motives, and their empathy, where the relationship that is established varies according to the degree of familiarity with the signs. Not only do I want to comprehend how the fixation or circulation of an image conditions its message, but above all I seek to reflect on meaning as something socially generated and, for this reason, strongly related to its movement through space.

Leonardo Gregoratti (University of Udine), The "Arsacid blockade": How did it work?

In the *Hou Hanschou* (c. 88. 2919), we read, "The king of this country [Da Quin = Roman Empire] always wanted to send envoys to the Han, but Anxi (Parthia), wishing to control the trade in multi-coloured Chinese silks, blocked the route to prevent [the Romans] getting through [to China]". These few lines from a corpus of problematic sources, as the Chinese ones are, concerning ancient Parthia, present the most explicit reference to the role played by the Arsacids along the so-called "Silk Road". The passage mixes economic and political levels, speaking of Roman political officers and then of a more general route blockade, thus providing a confusing and contradictory description of the Arsacid policy on the routes crossing their domains. Taking into consideration the surviving attestations of travels between the Roman Empire and Central Asia through Parthia, distinguishing between political initiatives and private enterprises, this paper will try to assess how this passage could be interpreted, that is to say, how the Arsacid blockade worked and whom it targeted if it ever existed.

Dylan James (University of Reading), Mobile armies and local guides (*hegemones*) in Classical Greek historiography

The significance of local guides for travelling armies is starkly highlighted by Xenophon when he notes that the Ten Thousand, having lost their generals, were suddenly stranded in hostile territory, without a guide (*hegemon*) to navigate (Xen. *Anab*. 3.1.4). This paper will examine these neglected figures (focusing on the

term *hegemon*) in Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon. Armies on the move were often reliant on such local knowledge for navigation, access to resources, and even cultural negotiation. But who were these guides? Why and how are these interactions narrated in historiographical texts? There has been little systematic work on guides, despite their significance to the outcome of events at times. This paper forms an early stage of my Marie Skłodowska-Curie European Postdoctoral Fellowship looking at local guides in historiography, their interactions with armies and imperial powers, including aspects of identity and mobility. By reading against the grain of these texts, we can create micro-biographies of movement and non-movement, as these guides are used and left behind, or taken along with armies. Where did they come from, and where did they go?

Priit-Hendrik Kaldma (Tallinn University), Legendary migrations and political struggles in Archaic Athens [POSTER]

The archaic era in Athens was characterised by competition between elite leaders, from Kylon's conspiracy to the Peisistratid tyranny and the reforms of Kleisthenes. The traditions often associate the elite families with the legendary heroes regarded as their ancestors. Several families, especially the ones known as the Neleidai, had according to the traditions migrated to Athens from the Peloponnese during the mythical times. As the reputed heroic origins surely promoted the authority of the archaic leaders and their kin groups, we can suppose that the migration traditions were used as means for political propaganda. Claims of heroic origins linked to various legendary migrations probably both reflected and shaped the goals of the Athenian elite. Understanding the legends about the migrations and their promotion by various groups among the Athenian elite can thus contribute to a better understanding of the power relations in Archaic Athens.

Mait Kõiv (University of Tartu), Movements of people and polis formation in Archaic Peloponnese

State formation in Archaic Peloponnese was connected to at least three kinds of movement of people: 1) *Synoikismos*, i.e. the concentration of the people into an urban centre – a process that has been traditionally regarded as almost the principal form of polis formation. 2) Conquest and colonisation, i.e. the mostly aggressive movements from the polis center – the process that has been connected mainly with the formation of the Spartan (conquest and colonisation) and Corinthian (colonisation) poleis, but can be traced also in the case of other Peloponnesian communities. 3) Deportations within Peloponnese, testified by the settlement of the Asineans and Nauplians from Argolis to the Messenian coast. The paper will discuss the interconnectedness of these movements, their impact on the polis formation and to the types of social system and government emerging as the result.

Jinyu Liu (Emory University, Atlanta), (Im)migrants in the occupational world in the Roman Empire: Exclusion versus integration

A merchant of wool cloaks from Apulia in Southern Italy was buried in Mediolanum (*CIL* V.5925 = *ILS* 7578). Also in Mediolanum, another wool cloak merchant, a citizen of Mediomatrici, was buried by his brother and possibly another individual in the late second or early third century (*CIL* V.5929 = *ILS* 7579). Numerous inscriptions of this nature illustrate the mobility of tradesmen and craftsmen throughout the Roman Empire, eliciting inquiries regarding their experiences, reception in host cities, and available support structures. Scholarly discourse addressing these inquiries has considerably intensified over the past few decades, revealing a prevailing inclination toward a favorable, and arguably, excessively optimistic, evaluation of the interactions between (im)migrants and local populations. A widely accepted viewpoint holds that occupational associations (*collegia*) admitted practitioners of specific trades irrespective of their geographic or ethnic backgrounds. This paper challenges the assumption that occupational associations universally facilitated inclusivity, emphasizing instead the complex dynamics of social closure, competition for resources, and the persistence of ethnic and occupational hierarchies in the Roman world. For instance, the abundant inscriptional materials from Lugdunum pertaining to membership within occupational associations, their honorific customs, and their networks indicate that local associations

tended to exclude or marginalize (im)migrants. Two plausible explanations can be posited for this pheno-menon: local groups may have been ineffective or inadequate in providing systematic integration mechan-isms, or tensions between local and immigrant groups regarding resource access, trading areas, and other factors led to the formation of distinct associations of the *consistentes* (temporary residents), which served as a coping strategy developed by the (im)migrants.

Barbara Mander (University of Urbino Carlo Bo), Bearing letters: Travelling through Late Antiquity

Letters have always been a vital tool for maintaining connections across geographical and cultural boundaries. Ancient and private epistolary communication relied on one of the main key aspects of mobility, that is travelling. In the fourth century, the city of Antioch served as a crucial hub in the continuous exchange of letters between the rhetor Libanius, official sophist of the city, and his long-distance vast network. Libanius' extensive surviving correspondence—among the best-preserved examples from classical literature—offers a unique opportunity to trace the movement of both letters and their bearers. This paper examines the mobility of Libanius' letters by tracking down specific 'epistolary' road trips. While the first section provides an overview of the current state of research on Libanius' correspondence, the second section analyzes specific trajectories of some of his letters. A close analysis of mobility through the rhetor's epistolary corpus offers valuable insights into interrelation of Late Antiquity, highlighting the role of letters in mobilizing both information and individuals.

Marsha McCoy (Southern Methodist University Dallas), Mobility and change: *Cistophori* and identity in Roman Asia Minor

Scott and Webster (2003) situate the role of material culture in the complex and diverse transformation brought about by Roman imperialism. This paper examines the images and language on *cistophori*, the standard silver currency originally introduced by the Hellenistic Attalid kingdom by the mid-second century B.C.E., and retained after the kingdom was bequeathed to Rome in 133 B.C.E. These Roman period *cistophori* reveal a little noted but striking development from the late Republic to the early Empire, through which the systemic shift caused by Empire and the multi-dimensional integration of this area into Roman socio-political, economic, and cultural life can be documented. *Cistophori* first begin using the Latin language while retaining Greek in *cistophori* issued by Roman magistrates from 58 B.C.E., and most notably in an issue commemorating Cicero's proconsular governorship of Cilicia in 51–50 B.C.E. (Metcalf, 2017). This dual combination of Latin and Greek legends both makes the coins readable to local Greek speakers as well as Roman officials and businessmen, and also acknowledges the ongoing presence of the latter groups, while it keeps intact the traditional visual images of these coins. A decade later, however, *cistophori* minted in Ephesus in 39 B.C.E. commemorate the marriage of Antony and Octavia by showing the bust of Octavia on top of the traditional *cista mystica* flanked by snakes, while on either side of the snakes the legend is in Latin alone (Sutherland, Olcay, and Merrington, 1970). This trend continues as Greek completely disappears and the traditional images are displaced or entirely replaced by images reflecting political and social policies of Rome. By the time of Hadrian, *cistophori* have been completely integrated into the propaganda apparatus of the Roman emperor, as Asia Minor itself has become a thoroughly Romanized territory (Metcalf, 1980).

Short Bibiography:
Metcalf, W. 2017. *The Late Republican Cistophori*. New York.
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Scott, S and J. Webster, eds. 2003. *Roman Imperialism and Provincial Art*. Cambridge.
Sutherland, C.H.V., N. Olcay, and K.L. Merrington. 1970. *The Cistophori of Augustus*. London.

Iulian Moga (University of Iași), Intra-oriental migrations and the spread of aretalogies

We encounter various forms of divine exaltations or forms of gratitude regarding the deities in the Anatolian areas. Religious changes that shaped the world of divine starting with the Hellenistic period are undeniable. With the great conquests, the incorporation of these areas into larger state structures brought about substantial changes in religious mentalities, language used, iconographic perspective and symbolism,

cosmopolitan tendencies. But it also generated the migration of different cults into the intra-oriental space along with believers or new converts (e.g. of the Isiac cults since the Lagid domination of parts of Asia Minor). In the Roman imperial period under discussion here, these tendencies became more acute, as did the formulas expressing the omnipotence of the gods, the typology of divine hierarchies, and the modes of epiphanic personalized epiphanic communication. Our approach aims at a comparative perspective between the new aretalogical insights provided by these synnaoi theoi and similar phenomena persisting in the indigenous Hellenized environment of the eastern half of Lydia and Phrygia.

Owain Morris (Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology), Across the Adriatic: Female mobility between Italy and the Balkans in EIA

The Early Iron Age was a period of heightened connectivity with people, objects, and ideas moving across vast regions for a multitude of reasons. Such mobility led to strong bonds being formed between various ancient populations. Within this context, gender has often been a neglected avenue of exploration despite many of these groups in the central and western Mediterranean including women with high degrees of mobility. This is especially the case with the Adriatic where connections between groups on both the Balkan and Italian coasts are visible from the Bronze Age. This paper will examine some cases of female mobility from the Adriatic area to highlight the movement of both objects and ideas in this corner of the Mediterranean. A key focus is the prominent female burials in Campania (southern Italy), linked to the so-called Princely tomb phenomenon. Special attention will be given to the Oliveto-Cairano culture, which inhabited the microregion of Hirpinia in Campania. The women of Hirpinia were key figures in inter-regional trade acting as crucial links between the east and west coasts of Italy. Attention will also be given to female figures on the Balkan side of the Adriatic who may have functioned as priestesses in local cults.

Laura Muncaciu (National Academy of Music Gh. Dima / Sigismund Toduta Doctoral School Cluj-Napoca, Romania), The rite progress: The journey of performative traditions from Hittite rituals to Greek tragedy and *Dramma per Musica* [POSTER]

Performative traditions have always represented vehicles of cultural expression, evolving through the movement of ideas, practices, and forms across space and time. This paper traces the *journey* of performance from the ceremonies of the Hittite civilization to the Greek tragedy, and finally to the *dramma per musica* of the European Baroque era. Hittite ritual texts reveal ceremonies deeply rooted in theatricality, where spoken or sung words, movement and gestures created a dynamic interaction. These rituals, with their strong religious and symbolic functions, laid the groundwork for performative elements that would later manifest in the secular and civic contexts of Greek tragedy. This performative legacy continued its journey through time, culminating in *dramma per musica*, where music, drama, and performance merged to create an immersive theatrical experience. By examining these traditions as interconnected yet distinct moments in the history of performance, this study explores how performative ideas *traveled*, adapted, and transformed to meet the cultural and societal needs of different epochs. Through this analysis, it is proposed that the journey of these traditions reflects a continuity of human expression, where ritual, drama, and music serve as enduring conduits of shared experience and cultural identity across space and time.

Neeme Näripä (University of Tartu), From Mt. Ida to the House of the Atreidae: The beacons in Aeschylus' „Agamemnon"

In Aeschylus' "Agamemnon", the message of Greek victory over Troy and imminent return of Agamemnon reaches Argos *via* beacons of light, lit one after another on highest peaks (Wilamowitz referred to it as *heroisch-optischer Telegraph*, "Aischylos: Interpretationen", 168). The journey of the light is the following: Mt. Ida – Hermaean scaur in Lemnos – Mt. Athos – watchtowers of Macistus – (over Euripus' stream) – Mt. Messapion – plain of Asopus – Cithaeron's scaur – across Gorgopis' water – mount of Aegiplanctus – headland that looks upon the Saronic gulf – peak of Arachnaeus – roof of the Atreideae (*vv*. 281–316). Most of these places are easy to locate, difficulties arise only with Macistus, Gorgopis and Aegiplanctus (Raeburn, Thomas, "The Agamemnon of Aeschylus", 100). A part of the journey overlaps with Hera's

movement in a reverse direction in the "Iliad" (*vv*. 228 f., Fränkel, "Aeschylus: Agamemnon", 154). Some distances for the beacons are geographically viable, others are not. Aforementioned toponyms are often connected with mythological treachery, ambushes and killings (Raeburn, Thomas, 100). This paper analyses how the journey of the light switches between geographical and mythical worlds and on what principles.

Andres Nõmmik (University of Helsinki), The connections between the cult in Cyprus and Philistia [POSTER]

During the 12th century, the region of Philistia witnessed an influx of people from areas to the west of it. Archaeological material hints that some of these people may be traced back to Cyprus. This paper deals with potentially cultic material from Philistia that has a Cypriot connection. Incised bovine scapulae, wheeled bronze stands, iron knives with bronze rivets and hearths have all been, to a varying degree, connected to both Cyprus and cultic contexts. Several of these objects appear in Philistia in a more advanced stage of the Iron I period, showing a potential continuity of links between the regions. The migrants undoubtedly brought religious ideas with them and if cultic items can be connected to Cyprus, these could indicate some sort of migration of Cypriot people to the Levant. However, this interpretation needs to be handled with caution and the archaeological material discussed more critically than often done by researchers. That is why I consider all categories of material in my paper separately and in the light of three questions: is there a link to Cyprus, is it indicative of migration and are the items connected to cult or are other interpretations more likely?

Kadri Novikov (University of Tartu), Travel routes and travelling in Ancient Greek novels

The five fully extant ancient Greek novels are, by essence, narratives about love and adventures. Therefore, in all these novels, the protagonists travel all around the Mediterranean area: the islands, Asia Minor, Phoenicia and Egypt. The only exception is Longus' *Daphnis & Chloe*, where the plot takes place only on the island of Lesbos. Firstly, this paper tries to map the travel routes of the protagonists and the most important side characters in the rest of the novels by Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, and Achilles Tatius. Secondly, it tries to analyze the methods and depiction of travelling – how accurately and thoroughly the authors of these novels describe the ways in which the characters travel, and how these depictions are influenced by the plot and the larger narrative structure.

Ana Odochiciuc (University of Iași), Mobility beyond the Roman Empire. The study of Roman bronze artifacts in nowadays north-eastern Romania (Iași county) [POSTER]

The presence of Roman bronze artefacts in the so-called "Barbarian" world offers valuable insights into the complex interactions between the Roman Empire and the populations beyond its borders. This study focuses on discoveries from the Iași region (Romania), examining the typology, function, and distribution of these objects. By analyzing their geographical spread, contexts of deposition, and stylistic features, we explore the mechanisms of trade, gift-giving, military connections, and cultural exchange that facilitated their movement. Furthermore, the artefacts' reinterpretation and use by local communities shed light on the dynamics of identity and influence at the Empire's periphery. This research contributes to the broader discussion on cross-border connectivity in antiquity, emphasizing the role of material culture in shaping interregional interactions.

Agne Pilvisto (University of Tartu), The ways of water. The transitions and transformations of the Syrian Goddess Atargatis

Water motifs permeate the cult of Atargatis on multiple levels. Not only is water the key element among her many attributes as a fertility goddess, present both in iconography and cult practices, but most of her cult sites are also located near natural water sources or bodies of water. These include the river Euphrates as well as the Mediterranean and the Black Sea which provided waterways to facilitate the spread of her worship across regions. In the southern Levantine port city of Ascalon, as well as in the Greek settlements

on the coast of Asia Minor and the Black Sea, her cult existed alongside or was intertwined with several marine aspects of the local love goddesses (Aphrodite Ourania/Pontia/Euploia *etc*). In the eyes of the Greeks these goddesses were believed to ensure the fertility of the new colonies and the safety of sea voyages. Atargatis herself was called the "Syrian Aphrodite" at the Black Sea. The association of Atargatis with other water goddesses appears to be rooted in a broader Mediterranean mythological context, incorporating motifs such as birth from the sea, post-marital bathing, and drowning or plunging into water. One story entailing the plunge motif, associated with Atargatis in Ascalon and later in Hierapolis, overlaps with the story of the sea goddess Leucothea (who also attempted to drown herself). The two goddesses were, to some extent, syncretized in the cities of inland Syria. These themes, along with other examples from mythology and ritual, will be explored in the presentation to offer a deeper understanding of Atargatis as a water goddess and the conditions that facilitated the expansion of her cult across the Mediterranean region.

Ikuko Sato (Japan Women's University) and **Sota Maruono** (Tokiwa University High School), Networks of the Phoenician diaspora: Bridging between the Ancient Near East and the Far Western Mediterranean

In this presentation we focus on the activities of the Phoenicians, primarily during the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The Phoenicians, living on the periphery of the powerful empires that emerged successively in the western Eurasia during the 1st millennium BCE, dynamically expanded into the far western Mediterranean. The trade routes and networks established by the Phoenicians in the Mediterranean must have served to complement and strengthen the relationship between Assyria and Phoenicia. Furthermore, the significance of Phoenician cities as military and economic centers within the Neo-Assyrian Empire is highlighted not only by their relationships with Levantine cities but also with the colonial settlement across the Mediterranean (cf. Wasmuth 2016, Fales 2017, Yamada 2019, Radner and Vacek 2022, Rollinger 2022). We therefore propose that exploring interactive networks is crucial, considering not only mainland perspective, but also those of regional cultures, such as the Nuragic and Tartessic in the West during the same period. This presentation examines the Phoenician diaspora through the Phoenician materials and documentation unearthed from throughout the Mediterranean. By doing so, it aims to elucidate the Phoenicians' role as a cultural and economic bridge between the ancient Near East and the far western Mediterranean, emphasizing their impact on intercultural exchanges and regional dynamics during this period.

Vladimir Sazonov (University of Tartu), A comparative analysis of deportation and migration narratives in Middle Assyrian and Hittite texts

Conquering new territories and deporting of people from occupied territories, (war) refugees, and migrating groups of people are always associated with crossing borders. In my paper I will examine some narratives in the texts of the Middle Assyrian kings (mainly royal inscriptions) and in the annals and other texts of the Hittite kings, as well as some other texts mentioning the deportations of conquered peoples or tribes and the migration of groups of people, e.g., as the "Sea People" – the collective name for the people from the Aegean area who invaded the Levant at the end of Bronze Age. *Migration* is an umbrella term reflecting the common lay understanding of a person or persons moving from their usual place of residence, whether within a country or across an (international) border, temporarily or permanently and for various reasons. *Deportation* (the forced transfer of people from one region to another) was not new phenomenon at this time in the Hittite world and in Assyria as well and much broader in the ancient Near East. In ancient Near Eastern sources, we find information about the deportation of people already in the 3rd millennium BC, but especially later in the Middle-Assyrian royal inscriptions of Adad-nārārī I, Shalmaneser I, Tukultī-Ninurta I, or later in the Neo-Assyrian annals and royal inscriptions (10th–7th centuries BC), e.g., in texts of Shalmaneser III, Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon II, Sennacherib and other Neo-Assyrian kings. In Assyrian and Hittite official texts there are not so many stories about migrations of people, but many migrations took place in the ancient Near East at that time. In the royal inscriptions from the Middle Assyrian period onwards, there are a number of references to the Assyrian king invading countries and deporting people from the conquered territories, or to prisoners of war who were defeated in battle and deported to Assyria.

In Hittite texts, they are a little more common, but several Hittite annals also mention deportations, but the numbers are smaller, these cases are rarer.

Emma Stone (University of Glasgow), From the Baltics to the Nile – Amber in Tomb KV62 (tomb of Tutankhamun) [POSTER]

Amber is a recurring discovery in Bronze Age burials along an ancient network of trade routes known as the so-called 'Amber Road'. Although amber was exchanged between many cultural and political European and Mediterranean powerhouses, it has never been scientifically proven to have reached Egypt. Nonetheless, several Egyptian pieces have previously been proposed to be amber. The most famous of these undoubtably come from tomb KV62 in the Valley of the Kings, the tomb of Tutankhamun (c. 1332 – 1323 BC). These Egyptian 'ambers', ranging from carved works to raw lumps, are compared with ambers found across Greece and central Europe. While this method has been used to identify this Egyptian material visually, it has neglected the Egyptian interpretation of the material, which is the topic of this paper. This paper will outline a detailed analysis of the archaeological evidence of KV62 on its own merits. It will develop a function-centred approach that explores how royal burials in the New Kingdom potentially transformed this foreign material through three distinct interpretations: incense, beads, and amulets. These objects offer new insights into how this Bronze Age commodity crossed the Mediterranean and was reconfigured in the most publicised tomb in Egypt.

Lambros Tapinos (University of Melbourne), Heterotopia and liminal frames: Comparative analysis of the running spiral in the Bronze Age Aegean, Egypt and Mari [POSTER]

Traditionally, the academic discourse of Aegean-style paintings and designs in the Eastern Mediterranean has been centred on the direction of transmission, mobility of artists and construction of prestige. This paper argues that rulers in the Near East chose materials and designs from the Aegean believed to be created with esoteric knowledge under divine guidance. The paintings coalesced with architecture to create palace heterotopias for hosting ceremonial rituals. I will explore the role paintings played in the transmission of ritual practices through the comparative case study of the running spiral motif across cultural milieus. Rather than classifying the running spiral as purely decorative, multivalent meanings will be considered as each culture adopted and adapted the motif for their own purpose. Derived from the Early Cyclades, representing the sea and island identity. It was conceptualized as water essential for plant and animal growth in Protopalatial Crete. It was transferred to the Egyptians and Amorites during a period of increased maritime connections, centralised religious practices, and strengthened palace ideologies. Imbued with new mystic and power symbolism, it returned to the Aegean transformed—no longer representing water but framing liminality and delineating ritual space.

Matt Thompson (University of Nottingham), Beyond Thermopylai – Diplomatic and cultural interaction between Sparta and Persia

The relationship between Sparta and Persia is persistently and widely presented as one of fierce hostility, mainly due to an almost obsessive focus on the iconic Battle of Thermopylai (480 BCE) and contorted by Snyder's 2006 film *300*. This perception has long overshadowed the more complex cultural and socio-economic relationship between Sparta, Ionia and non-Greek powers in the East during the Archaic and Classical periods. The proposed paper seeks to take early steps in looking past Thermopylai in order to allow a more nuanced understanding of Sparta's relationship with Persia and the East to emerge. It aims to first establish the links, evident in literary sources and material evidence, between Sparta and Greek and non-Greek communities prior to the rise of Achaemenid Persia, notably Lydia, Egypt, Samos, and Miletus. Secondly, it will question how such links might have been affected by the rise of Achaemenid Persia in the mid-sixth century, and, crucially, seek to highlight hidden disagreement within Sparta regarding policy towards this new power. I will focus upon the movement and exchange not only of goods, but the semi-regular eastern movement of prominent Spartans, such as Demaratus and Clearchus, and the lasting ties between Spartans and foreign nobility.

Elo-Mall Toomet (University of Tartu), The arrivals of Ariadne: An attempt to place an elusive goddess

Ariadne, the daughter of the Cretan king Minos, is a mythical figure who seems to inhabit the opposites. She belongs to the cycle of Cretan myths and most likely has at least some roots in the early traditions of that island. At the same time the most well-known stories about her are told from a clearly Athenian point of view. By helping the Athenian hero Theseus combat the Minotaur, the Cretan monster devouring young Athenians, Ariadne – a foreigner and enemy – becomes a celebrated figure for the Athenians. Ariadne never arrives in Athens, however. Already the early epic tradition clearly states two versions of her fate – she becomes the immortal bride of Dionysos and she also dies, in Homer's account killed by Artemis. The latter version, the death of Ariadne, is mirrored in several later sources describing her arrival by sea in different localities – Naxos, Cyprus, Argos – and her subsequent death in all of those places, where she was also worshipped in cult. The aim of this is paper is to place the stories of Ariadne's arrival, death and immortality, into the context of the motif of arrival and return in Greek cult myth, and to see how her mythical movement resembles and differs from that of the so-called advent goddesses like Kore, Demeter and Hera, and also that of other well-travelled heroines, especially Helen and Medea. The structural similarities between the stories seem to suggest an early Aegean cult context, where the disappearance and arrival of a female deity played a central role, and that left a lasting influence to Greek culture. Ariadne, however, presents some unique problems and questions even in the context of similar deities and thus remains a figure both familiar and foreign in Greek tradition.

Eduardo Torrecilla (University of Castilla-La Mancha), Addressing the role of semi-nomad Suteans in the Middle Euphrates during the LBA crisis

The recently published House of Urtēnu diplomatic letters from Ras Shamra/Ugarit, published by Sylvie Lackenbacher and Florence Malbran-Labat (RSO 23 volume, 2016) revealed a hitherto unknown conflict with Sutean tribes near Tuttul (modern Tell Bi'a), in the eastern periphery of the Hittite empire, only a few decades before the end of the Late Bronze Age. The aim of the Tuttul battle was to expel some Sutean groups from the Hittite borders in the Middle Euphrates. The tension increase between Hittites and Suteans, to the point of making the former assemble a remarkable army to expel the latter, is intriguing. The provenance of those semi-nomadic Sutean foes is unknown, but they might be connected to a conflict in the land of Suḫu, which is usually considered their land of origin. Is it possible that the Sutean tribes were running away from this conflict, which involved Assyria, Babylonia, and Suḫu? In order to comprehend the situation lived by the Suteans, I intend to contextualize it in its geopolitical and chronological framework. With this purpose, near-contemporary texts from sites such as Emar or the Assyrian fortresses of Dūr-Katlimmu or Tell Sabi Abyad will also be brought forth.

Anna Tsanava (Tbilisi State University), Narrating the map: Mobility and spatial orientation in Io's scene from "Prometheus Bound"

Io's scene from "Prometheus Bound" represents one of the most remarkable examples of mobility theme elaboration in ancient Greek tragedy. In modern scientific literature, Io's long, enforced wanderings are interpreted in many ways, starting with a socio-anthropological perspective on the coming-of-age myth and ending with the manifestation of the Hellenocentric spatial model of Oikoumene and the Greek-Barbarian dichotomy. The paper will focus on the essential topographical feature of Io's journey. In the scene, the conceptions of Oikoumene and the maiden's mobility inside of it are directly related to the issue of spatial orientation. In particular, surveying the imagined quasi-geographical world is achieved through the mental navigational map created and narrated by Prometheus. In this respect, the text shows direct similarity with ancient geographical writings – periplous/periegesis – and therefore represents a unique case in Greek tragedy. Using the theoretical framework of the *Common Sense Geography* research group, the paper will demonstrate major linguistic and conceptual means of the mapmaking narration; how is the navigation system built up? which ancient mental models for orientation on land and sea are

employed by the author? Finally, how do Io's mobility and its accompanying mental mapping process function in the overall spatial configuration of the tragedy.

Wolfgang Zwickel (University of Mainz), Trade of Gaza

The city of Gaza and its surroundings have always been important for the Levant's exchange with Egypt. Control over this area also meant the possibility of establishing international trade relations. From the Neolithic to the Greco-Roman period, however, these trade routes and the main towns changed several times, as a survey of archaeological sites clearly shows. The lecture aims to show the respective infrastructure over a period of several thousand years in order to illustrate the times in which there were intensive trade relations between the two regions and which facilities were created for this purpose.