



Department of Ancient History,  
Archaeology and History of Art  
Faculty of History  
University of Bucharest



International Society  
for Cultural History



UNIVERSITATEA DIN  
BUCUREȘTI  
VIRTUTE ET SAPIENTIA



## Communicating Objects

*Material, Literary and Iconographic Instances of Objects  
in a Human Universe in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*



κλαίοντες δ' ἑτάροιο ἐνήεος ὀστέα λευκὰ  
ἄλλεγον ἔς χρυσέην φιάλην καὶ δίπλακα δημόν,  
ἐν κλισίῃσι δὲ θέντες ἑανῶ λιτὶ κάλυψαν:  
(Il. 23, 252-254)

## Objets en dialogue

*Présences matérielles, littéraires et iconographiques des objets  
dans l'univers humain pendant l'Antiquité et au Moyen Âge*

*Turba gemmarum potamus et zmaragdis teximus calices,  
ac temulentiae causa tenere indiam iuvat.  
Aurum iam accessio est...  
(Nat. Hist. 33, 2)*



Online International Conference

University of Bucharest – Faculty of History  
Department of Ancient History, Archaeology and History of Art  
November 27th-29th  
2020

Online International Conference

***Communicating Objects***

***Material, Literary and Iconographic Instances of Objects  
in a Human Universe in Antiquity and the Middle Ages***

***Objets en dialogue***

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November 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> 2020

**Conference Abstracts**

**Friday, November 27th**

**Keynote Speaker**

**Ecaterina Lung** (University of Bucharest; ISCH),

*Directions in Material Culture Studies and the International Society for Cultural History*

**First session**

**Ingela Wahlberg** (Uppsala University),

*It Is All in the Details. Analysing Embroideries in Search for Symbols of Faith and Saints*

When analysing two groups of medieval embroideries, made for religious use, I have recognised the use of not only the colour, motifs and well-established symbols as methods for bringing different aspects of the religious life to stand out. Those embroideries contain almost hidden messages in their techniques and the stitches are worked in a way as if they were a part of an established non-spoken language.

The first group of embroideries are a set of 24 roundels, the original function is unknown, depicting the story of Christ. They are probably made in north France and are dated to late twelfth century and have probably been used in the Uppsala's first Cathedral since they were brought to Sweden during the medieval time. Interestingly there are details in the embroideries that corresponds to details in depicting weaves from the Viking age that we presume that were woven in the local area. We have two different kind of textile and it is possible to see similarities not only in iconography and style but in technical solutions despite different producing techniques.

The other group is much larger, it's consisted of embroideries made in the late medieval time in the Birgittine convent, Vadstena Abbey and Nådendal/Naantali Abbey. Among some of the most important textile objects that have been preserved to our days include some spectacular pieces. By analysing the use of specific techniques and motifs is it possibly to attribute specific objects to important religious festivities, actuality a specific day. Other embroideries made by the nuns maybe tell us the story of which prayers they used in the sermons.

My methods are as mix of classic study of iconography, reading the texts related to the Vadstena Abbey, close analysing of the textile and working with USB-microscope to be able to "read" the stitches and embroidery techniques.

**Teodoro De Giorgio** (Italian Institut of Human Sciences, Florence - Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa),

***Il trono e la colomba. A proposito della connessione iconografica tra Etimasia e Pentecoste nel tardo Medioevo***

The meaning of the so-called Etimasia (from the Greek ἐτοιμάζειν: «preparation»), an iconographic motif of oriental origin and frequent in Byzantine and Medieval representations, is still in many ways unclear. Indeed, the empty throne does not always have the function of welcoming Christ at the end of time, according to the most widespread Western apocalyptic interpretation (Ap 4, 2-4). Recent studies have highlighted the need to contextualize this iconographic motif and to relate it to other images and scriptural texts. The intervention aims to deepen one of the meanings that still escape the correct iconological exegesis: the relationship between Etimasia and Pentecost.

**Elena Lavrentieva** (Institute of Theory and History of Architecture and Urban Planning, Moscow),

***Capitals as Communicating Points of Building Stages in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre***

The aim of the research is to consider the capitals of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher as communicating points indicating the construction stages of the building. Despite the large volume of scientific literature about architectural appearance of the shrine, the capitals have not been yet the subject of independent research.

Medieval capitals are located both in the western part of the church, so-called Rotunda Anastasis, and in the eastern part of the church, so-called basilica (Corbo 1981–1982; Pringle 2007). In the two-level arcade of the Rotunda there were spolia-capitals in use, as well as in areas those were integrated into the space of the basilica in the 12th century. The twelve-century capitals were included in the support system of the basilica. Also the decoration of the southern façade deserves special consideration.

The capitals are very diverse. Among them are Byzantine capitals of Corinthian style (4, 9, 12 c.), Byzantine trapezoidal capitals (6 c.), Byzantine folding capitals (6 or 7 c.), basket-shaped capitals of the Syro-Palestinian region (7, 9 c.), Byzantine cushion capitals (11 c.), the Crusader figurative, foliate and plain capitals (12 c.).

The primary use of the divers Crusader capitals shows the stages of the building process of the basilica. The secondary use of capitals testifies not only to the high quality of their execution, but also to the desire of medieval architects to include ancient elements into the church space. Based on the results of the study, it is proposed to prepare a classification of capitals by their creation time and style, as well as formulate a thesis on the construction stages that preceded the restructuring of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

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**Charlotte Nash** (Kent University & The British Museum),

***Could Middle Eastern Glass Bangles Indicate Changes in Economy, Society and Personal Identity?*** An Investigation into the Origins, Circulation and Cultural Impact of their Dissemination across the Indian Ocean in the Middle Ages

Small portable objects discovered across vast areas have long been used by archaeologists as evidence of periodic trade routes and movement of peoples. Such evidence is often interpreted as representing a far larger exchange of ‘invisible’ commodities and cultural transfers. The vast increase in the dissemination of glass bangles throughout the Middle East via the Indian Ocean trade network during the 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries CE is no different. Various studies have noted that these objects represent a wide variety of techniques, patterning, colours and finishes – indicative of differences in style according to manufacturing periods and places. However, many attempts at typology have focused on a few collections – not employing scientific analysis to aid provenancing – therefore, limiting their success. A larger comparative assessment of new and existing data is necessary to identify patterns of likely ‘locally’ produced common styles, versus rarer probable long-distance ‘imports’, alongside other political, economic and cultural changes.

Despite the apparent universal adoption of glass bangle wearing, preliminary research suggests they may not have followed the same patterns of production, distribution and meaning to other every day functional –nor luxury – objects. As personal adornment, they offer additional opportunities for a better understanding of regional, personal and gender identity. The wide range of styles may reflect regional tastes of producers, consumers or individuals. Deeper associations of meaning with types, as still seen in neighbouring Pakistan and India, is also possible. By mapping production and dissemination of glass bangles, it is hoped an interpretation of social meaning and value may also be ventured.

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**Daniela Maria Dantas Gomes** (Centre for History of the University of Lisbon),

***Inside a Hero's Panoply: the Role of Weaponry in the Narrative of the Hero's Journey, from the Ancient World to the Arthurian Cycle***

From the ancient world to our days, weaponry has established its symbolical role in literary sources. Legendary and semi-legendary swords, axes, clubs and shields, as well as several components of body armour, are often presented to heroes through the course of their journey, frequently sharing a few similar characteristics in the way they influence the story and are interacted with by the characters. They regularly gain their own surrounding mythology and receive their individual narratives, with sources speaking, often in great detail, of their divine origin, the way they are presented to the hero and their unique physical characteristics. Armour and weaponry, both offensive and defensive, can also be described as having their own supernatural powers, either pre-existent or acquired throughout the hero's journey, thus acquiring a mystical / magical component in the course of the plot.

The heroes wielding these out-of-ordinary weapons are, more often than not, presented as predestined to fulfil a certain fate, glorious, tragic, or a combination of both. They are no ordinary men themselves, often being the children of gods and kings, protected by mentors with supernatural capacities. This is reflected on the weaponry they receive, which must accompany their noble or divine birth, and allow for the concretisation of their ultimate purpose.

A divine weapon is thus made to the hero's measure, often created for a very specific purpose, and the moment a hero receives it is usually presented as marking a narrative standpoint, as the hero embraces the true call for his mission, or as there is an irreversible change, whether external or internal, that motivates him to abandon his former refusal of the call and embrace action. Weaponry wielded by a hero also represents a sign of his royal or divine origin, and of him being "the chosen one", a frequent literary topic. These weapons can appear and disappear in mysterious ways, and the lost trace of the hero's weapon can also give rise to the hope of a future champion, who will be worthy of wielding them and assume the role of a saviour reborn.

Much as the notion and ideal of a hero may change between Homer's description of the Trojan War and the medieval versions of the Arthurian cycle, there are transcendent factors that seem to last through the centuries. They are an element for story advancement and mythological symbolism. This communication intends to do a brief analysis of these common elements, shared between weaponry in literature of different eras.

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**Luminița Diaconu** (Université de Bucarest),

### ***Des gages d'amour dans Le Roman du Châtelain de Coucy et de la Dame de Fayel***

Composé par un certain Jakemès, *Le Roman du Châtelain de Coucy et de la Dame de Fayel* est un récit en vers d'origine picarde, qui s'est conservé dans deux manuscrits du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle et qui fait partie d'un corpus plus vaste de textes centrés autour d'une histoire d'amour adultère qu'un mari jaloux, le seigneur de Fayel dans ce cas, entend sanctionner d'une manière cruelle, anticourtoise et, à la fois, antichrétienne : il donne à manger à sa femme, sans qu'elle le sache, le cœur de son amant mort en croisade (le châtelain de Coucy, c'est-à-dire le gouverneur du château de Coucy). Même si, dans l'espace franco-provençal, on peut parler d'un corpus constitué de plusieurs récits brefs datant du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, antérieurs au roman, qui reprennent ce châtiment (*Le Lai d'Ignaure*, rédigé en dialecte franco-picard, les *vidas* et les *razós* du troubadour Guilhem de Cabestaing, composés de l'aire provençale et qui prouvent sans conteste le succès dont ce topos fictionnel a joui dans le Midi aussi bien que dans le Nord), seul le roman, qui propose aussi la version courtoise de cette histoire parle de gages d'amour que les amants échangent. Notre contribution aura pour objet d'étude ces dons et leurs fonctions symboliques : d'abord, les lettres échangées par les amants, communication valorisée dans la littérature courtoise aux XII<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles ; ensuite, une manche et des tresses que la dame offre au chevalier lors de son départ en croisade ; enfin, le coffret que ce dernier envoie à la dame, coffret qui contient une lettre et surtout le cœur de l'amant. Au bout de cette analyse, nous nous intéresserons également à ce que l'on pourrait appeler l'iconographie médiévale du « don du cœur », car ce motif emprunté à la rhétorique courtoise a joui d'une évidente fortune jusqu'au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, étant représenté sur des objets tels que les miroirs sculptés sur ivoire, les coffrets, les plaquettes et la tapisserie.

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## Second Session

**Caterina Mascolo** (Università di Roma La Sapienza),

### ***Complessità, diversità di ruolo ed effetto comunicativo delle immagini in un contesto rituale: l'associazione tra i simulacra e i loro ornamenta***

La differenziazione critica tra immagini cultuali e votive, spesso compresenti all'interno dei medesimi spazi santuariali, spinge a tentare di definire delle categorie nelle rappresentazioni del divino. La statua posta nella cella non era la sola immagine divina all'interno del santuario, ma era spesso circondata da una miriade di altre figure, divine e non, la cui funzione non è sempre di agevole determinazione. Il fitto apparato di tali *ornamenta*, spesso mimetico dell'identità del dio titolare, si inseriva infatti in un gioco di specchi di immagini effigianti lo stesso soggetto, ma con caratteristiche cultuali e percettive diverse.

È evidente la possibilità che si siano create concatenazioni tra architettura, culto, stile devozionale e cultura corrente, anche se sembra eccessivo ricercare in ogni struttura una consapevole strategia iconografica. Le modalità di associazione di statue di culto e *ornamenta* saranno dunque esaminate non solo a partire dalla categorizzazione fornita dalle testimonianze letterarie e giuridiche, ma anche analizzando casi concreti quali i templi di Giove Statore e Giunone Regina (dove, come testimonia Plinio il Vecchio nella sua *Naturalis Historia*, l'associazione di immagini presenta persino dei grossolani errori!); il tempio di Concordia, nel cui allestimento si è voluto tradizionalmente leggere l'intenzionale messa in scena, quasi museografica, di opere d'arte "d'arredo" e simulacro cultuale; il tempio di Angerona, ecco forse di una possibile associazione tra la statua di culto della dea e quella di Aio Locuzio, un'altra figura divina venerata nell'area dell'*infima Nova Via*.

Si viene dunque a comporre un puzzle dove la dialettica tra statua di culto, *ornamenta* e componenti di arredo si articola in una rete di rimandi da valorizzare, ma non esasperare.

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**Mark McCahill** (University of Glasgow),

***Roman Ritual and the Use of Imagines as Memory Objects***

Engagement with material culture in the ancient Roman world is offered here in a specific way: memory as a link to interaction with ancestral imagery, which is key to understanding the visual and cognitive elements of memory. Ancestral imagery interaction, through engagement with veristic sculptural examples that act as memory objects, allows a more flexible interpretation of *imago* and *imagines* for the purpose of ancestral commemoration, as can be shown through textual and material sources. Fundamental to this is the relationship of a physical object to that of a mental object, the phrase 'mental object' evoking and substantiating the immaterial; ancestor *imagines* become imbued with image memories. Mementos of times long past, old men long dead, intrinsic Roman values – Roman customs (*mores*), Roman-ness (*romanitas*), piety (*pietas*) and virtue (*virtus*) – then allow the ritualistic aspects of commemoration to be experienced on both personal and communal levels. The power of words to create and substantiate images also forms a central part of this approach, addressing the issue of non-extant sculptural imagery confirmed by textual evidence, with the benefits of vividness or evocation (*ἐνάργεια*) appreciated for the recreative potential that can engage us on an emotional level with our memories.

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**Jorge Elices Ocón** (Universidade Federal de São Paulo),

***The Şanam Hīrkuliš in al-Andalus: a Statue to Remember the Past, an Image to Decipher the Present, an Object to Narrate the Future***

The Idol of Hercules (*Şanam Hīrkuliš*) is, despite no archaeological record, the ancient monument that recalled more references than any other in al-Andalus. It is depicted in a Christian manuscript of *Estoria de Espanha* of Alfonso X and in an Islamic-Ottoman manuscript with the work of a traveller, the *Kitāb tamr al-albāb wa-zahr al-ādāb* of al-Garnāṭī, and described by several sources, from eighth to seventeenth century (both in Latin and Arabic) as a solid construction of three parts crowned by a male statue of bronze, mentioned as a lighthouse (*manāra*) and an idol (*şanam*), built by Hercules, and conceived as talisman (*tīlsm*), protecting al-Andalus from its enemies coming from the sea and linked to the fate of Islam in the Iberian Peninsula.

The *Şanam Hīrkuliš* evokes past, present and future and gathers material, literary and iconographic media. It subdivides into parts, since his chest would be identified with Toledo and his head with Cordoba. Any harm that those regions, the country or the statue would suffer should have consequences for the other part. The objects carried by the statue also provide meaning: a key, hold in one hand, conveys the control of the sea and the actual domain over the country, and a second key (or a lead tablet or book, according to other sources), brings the idea of an ancestral and magical knowledge treasured in the monument. As the statue changes its appearance and loses those objects, its narrative is adapted to new explanatory needs. According to al-Himyarī (14<sup>th</sup> century), the first key would have fallen in 1009, just when the Umayyad Caliphate started its ruin. The second key's fall would have meant the end of Islam in the Iberian Peninsula and, significantly, when the idol was destroyed in 1145-6 it led to the Christian conquest of Cordoba and the reduction of Sevilla. All these elements configure the *Şanam Hīrkuliš* as an extraordinary example of a communicating object, capable of crystallize an imaginary memory, lose or recreate new attributes and meanings and give form to multiple narratives.

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## Third Session

Tine Delafontaine (Université de Lille 3),

### **Digitis charta notata meis : références aux composants matériels de l'épître dans les Héroïdes**

Cette contribution envisage d'étudier les références aux composants différents de la lettre en tant qu'objet matériel dans les Héroïdes (*Heroides*) d'Ovide (*P. Ovidius Naso*), une œuvre littéraire présentée sous forme d'une liasse de lettres (les lettres sont écrites par des héroïnes mythologiques à 'leur' héros).

Comme l'écrit sait parcourir l'espace géographique aussi bien que temporel, la lettre est une messagère idéale (Habinek 1998, 103 ; Kennedy 2002, 220-223), dont la fonction ne se limite pas à la communication, mais consiste d'un volet social, aussi : son envoi peut p.ex. aider à (re)serrer les liens entre les correspondants (Williams 2014, 352-354 ; Kennedy 2002, 230). Ainsi, l'épître est un représentant 'tangibile' de son auteur distant, que le destinataire peut garder, toucher, contempler,... Dans ce contexte, il est important de considérer les éléments différents de son exécution matérielle une lettre est plus qu'un texte. Le support (qualité, nature,...), l'écriture, l'encre, la mise en page, ... contribuent tous à son apparence (et sa lisibilité !), et peuvent aider à faire bonne impression. Les lettres antiques en tenaient bien compte (Williams 2014, 352-354 ; Sarri 2018, 114-123).

Dans l'univers fictif des Héroïdes, ces éléments sont hors de notre portée : il n'y a que le texte. Or, à travers de l'œuvre, les divers aspects matériels de l'épître sont évoqués à maintes reprises : l'héroïde réfère à la lettre en tant qu'objet physique, qui doit être écrit, transporté, ... (p.ex. Her. iv, v.3-6, Her.i,v.59-62), elle indique le support (Her. xi, v.3-4), dépeint sa main, en train d'écrire (p.ex. Her. xii, v.115), s'excuse pour les tâches sur le papyrus (ce sont mes larmes ! - Her. iii, v.3-4), etc.

Il s'agit donc de la description des éléments différents, mais associés, de la matérialité de la lettre. Ainsi, dans cette contribution, j'aimerais bien d'étudier, avec l'audience, ces références. À l'aide de quelques cas, nous examinerons ces 'renvois matériels', leur nature, leur relation mutuelle, et leur fonction (ou fonctions) dans l'ensemble du texte. De cette façon, nous découvrirons leur signification dans l'œuvre des Héroïdes.

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**Tiziana Ragno** (University of Foggia),

***Playing Time, Playing Death: Clocks and Trumpets as Speaking Objects in Petronius***

The paper aims to analyse the presence of the 'theme of trumpets' (Barchiesi 1981) in Petronius and particularly in the *Cena Trimalchionis*. It could be considered a *Leitmotiv* which punctuates the world of Trimalchio functioning, on the one hand, as a narratological element and, on the other hand, as an entity with a highly symbolic potential (Borghini 2011).

Indeed, the seemingly enigmatic reference to a clock featuring a trumpeter (26.9: *Trimalchio... horologium... et bucinatorem habet subornatum*) contributes to create a dynamic and enigmatic start (Barthes 1970) in line with a deliberately defective narrative strategy embodied by the illusory and nonsensical movement existing throughout the *Cena* (Hubbard 1986). Moreover, it is a thematic start because it alludes to pervasive characteristics of Trimalchio (the obsession with time and death: Arrowsmith 1966; Toohey 1997).

Furthermore, assumed a very long time ago by J.D. Meerwaldt 1921, a probable aspect of Trimalchio's clock seems to pre-empt structural traits of the *Cena*, namely a taste for immoderate theatricality (Rosati 1983) and a tendency to show off astonishing *automata* (food-machines, e.g. 49.9; devices used by reckless acrobats, e.g. 54.4). The *bucinator* associated with Trimalchio's clock (most likely a water-clock) could consist, in fact, in an object, i.e. a timekeeper android, and not in a human being in the flesh (more recently, Magnusson 2000 and Ragno 2003). This interpretation, supported also by a certain amount of testimonies (e.g., Suet. *Claud.* 21), would reflect and further highlight a process of 'de-humanisation' featuring then as a distinctive quality of the entire episode: indeed, mere simulacra of life will occur throughout the *Cena* revealing themselves to be as apparently human as they are, in reality, mechanical and inhuman.

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**Bénédicte Delignon** (Université de Lyon, ENS de Lyon, UMRHiSOMA),

***Les objets dans l'ode 3.26 d'Horace et leur agentivity : de la fonction symbolique à la fonction apotropaïque***

Dans l'ode 3.26 d'Horace, le locuteur renonce à la conquête amoureuse et énumère les objets qu'il consacre à Vénus pour célébrer cette *renuntiatio amoris*. Horace donne ici la version masculine des épigrammes votives de courtisanes que l'on trouve dans l'*Anthologie Palatine* (cf. *A.P.* VI, 1, 18 ou 59). Mais alors que la courtisane, au moment de prendre sa retraite ou de se marier, offre à Aphrodite un unique objet (un miroir ou une couronne de fleurs), dont elle fait le symbole de la vie érotique qu'elle quitte, le locuteur de l'ode 3.26 en consacre toute une série : ses armes, sa lyre, des torches, des leviers et sans doute des haches. Nous chercherons à montrer que ces objets ne sont pas seulement le symbole d'un passé érotique révolu, mais sont dotés d'une forme d'*agentivity* : sans être personnifiés, ils sont présentés comme les acteurs de la vie de l'amant. Horace s'inscrit alors dans la tradition des épigrammes votives de soldats, dans lesquelles les armes prennent la parole pour raconter leurs propres hauts-faits, qui se confondent avec ceux de leurs propriétaires (cf. *A.P.* VI, 125). Les objets consacrés de l'ode 3.26 sont cependant agents d'une *militia amoris* qui n'est pas explicitement située dans le passé : le locuteur leur prête la capacité à agir dont il prétend vouloir se priver lui-même. Il prépare ainsi l'hymne apotropaïque de la fin du poème, qui transfère toute l'*agentivity* au seul *flagellum* de Vénus, un fouet qui ne fait pas partie des attributs habituels de la déesse et dont la présence s'explique en lien avec les objets que lui a consacrés le locuteur dans les deux premières strophes. Nous montrerons pour finir que l'étude des objets et de leur fonction invite à écarter la conjecture *duellis* pour *puellis* et était la conjecture *securesque* au vers. 7.

**Vanda Strachan** (University of Oxford),

***An Anti-Social Life of Things: The Case of Objects Struck by Lightning in Ancient Rome***

Objects as commodities are of a social nature: there is reciprocity in exchange and a collective framework determining meaning and value. As objects circulate in social life, they have therefore come to be understood as having a social life of their own. The very fact of their circulation is indicative of material culture showing its vital signs. What I wish to explore in this paper, however, is what happens in the opposite direction, when a concerted effort is made to *remove* objects from circulation. The case in point is the ancient Roman habit of burying any object struck by lightning. This was an enduring and gravely serious ritual underpinned on the

one hand by a religious understanding of the nature of lightning, but confused, on the other, by its ambiguous and stochastic behaviour.

Clearly touched by the gods, anything struck by lightning had been conceptually severed from the human realm and this seems to have translated into a need to physically remove it also. In the terms of Roman religious law, such objects had become *sacer*, the property of a deity. No longer in the realms of the *profanum*, the social life of these things, whether charred wood or bronze statue, ended abruptly. Surprisingly little has been said about this ritual beyond describing what is known of its procedure although evidence in the archaeology, epigraphy, and literary sources offers insight into how objects could transcend the human universe and, through stark contrast, into how more worldly objects were viewed and handled in Roman thought and culture.

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**Lavinia Scolari** (University of Palermo),

### ***The Objects of Gift in Virgil's Aeneid***

According to the anthropology of things, gifts are special objects with their own history and memory. They are able to promote, create and maintain social ties between people because of their role of cultural and personal meaning bearers (Mauss 1950; Gregory 1982b; Kopytoff 1986; von Reden 1995, esp. 60 f.; Weiner 1992).

This was also true in ancient Rome, where gift-giving was a widespread practice of reciprocity that allowed them to weave a complex net of relationships (Carlà and Gori 2014; Satlow 2013). Such complexity is reflected in the most representative poem of Roman culture: Virgil's *Aeneid*.

My paper aims to investigate the representation of the gift-objects in the poem and to highlight the active role they play in the epic context: how many categories of gift-objects we can single out within the *Aeneid*? What are their relational functions and what purpose do they serve? Do such objects show to have any sort of *agency*? Are they gendered connoted? To what extent may the identity and the intentions of the donor – or the identity and the needs of the receiver – influence their nature, outcomes and representations?

I intend to focus on the relationships between hosts and guests in the poem and the role of memory in the exchange. Therefore, I will pay special attention to the textile gifts (*textilibus donis*) that Andromache gives to Ascanius, a souvenir (*monumentum*) of her hands (3.483-491), which Servius considers adequate to a female donor; the golden crater that Cisseus gave to Anchises (5.535-38), as a reminder (*monumentum*) and a pledge of their mutual affection (*pignus amoris*); the gifts that Anchises gave to Evander during his visit to the ancient Arcadian kingdom (8.154-174); and the “family objects” that Aeneas offers to his hosts: he gives to Dido the sceptre of Iliona and the coats and the veil of Helen (1.561-722); to King Latinus the golden cup of Anchises, the sceptre and the tiara of Priam and the clothes woven by the Trojan women (7.152-285).

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**Gianmarco Bianchini** (University of Toronto),

#### ***Material Culture and Latin Poetry: a Reciprocal Influence***

Over the last decades, particular attention has been drawn on the reception of Ovid in Antiquity and middle Ages; on the occasion of the 2000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, even more extensive researches have been carried out on Ovidian influence on Roman literary culture. In this respect, the contribution of the epigraphic sources deserves to be equally considered.

From an analytical filing of the corpus of *Carmina Latina Epigraphica* edited by Bücheler and updated by Lommatzsch and considering successive catalogues, Ovid turns out to be the most used author by the anonymous poets of the *carmina* after Virgil. More than a hundred cases have been detected in Latin metrical inscriptions where a whole phrase, a hemistich, even a syntagma have been taken from the Ovidian text on the initiative of the engraver or the person who ordered the inscription.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the close connection between the Ovidian works of exile and funerary inscriptions, intended as objects naturally associated to poetry. How have Ovid’s

words been transformed and adapted to an extremely different context such as inscriptions? And, in turn, how do funerary, inscribed objects find their place in Ovidian poetry? In particular, I aim to analyze how the poet's practice of writing about gravestones and tombs manages to emphasize certain moments of his late poetry. An interdisciplinary approach of this kind, I am sure, will be particularly useful to better understand the reception of Ovidian text on stone, as well as the reuse made by the poet of the practice of writing on such objects.

## **Saturday, November 28th**

### **Keynote Speaker**

**Jörg Rogge** (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität; Chair of the *International Society for Cultural History*),

*The Town Hall of Medieval Augsburg - A Material Expression of Communal Self-Concept*

### **First Session**

**Liviu Iancu** (University of Bucharest),

*Communicating Statuettes: Three Inscribed Bronze Apis Bulls, Three Archaic Aegean Mercenaries in Egypt, Two Degrees of Acculturation?*

Two bronze statuettes of Apis bearing an Egyptian-Carian bilingual and a Greek inscription, discovered in Memphis or in "a Greek site in the Delta of Egypt" (Cairo JdE 49061; British Museum 3208/1898,0225.1), have long been hypothetically associated with archaic Aegean mercenaries, most probably settled in Egypt and worshipping this very popular deity of the Egyptian Late Period.

Firstly, my paper adds to this group a third statuette of the same type and unknown archaeological provenance, inscribed with Greek letters of the Late Archaic Ionian alphabet, which has not received yet any consideration on this issue.

Secondly, it discusses the messages that the foreign dedicators wished to send by dedicating these statuettes in Egyptian / Greco-Egyptian contexts and the publics which they addressed to. The statuettes and the inscriptions are deemed to reveal different degrees of acculturation of the Aegean aliens residing in Egypt in the Saite and Early Persian Period. The example of the Carian Paraecym who dedicated along with his wife Polo the bull bearing the Egyptian-Carian bilingual shows that the Caromemphites – and particularly those of the higher classes, having frequent intercourse with Egyptian officials and possibly playing a role in the rituals associated to the official Egyptian cults – were eager to quickly embrace Egyptian cultural habits and to use the Egyptian language. On the other hand, the two other statuettes bearing Greek inscriptions only point out to a lesser degree of integration of Greeks who adhered to popular cults into the Egyptian society and the Egyptian cultural matrix. Some other Hellenic and Carian objects from

Egypt are called as parallels, as they communicate rather similar intentional and unintentional messages.

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**Ana Isabel Blasco Torres** (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven),

***Beyond Identification: Mummy Labels as Religious Objects in Graeco-Roman Egypt***

Mummy labels are usually defined as tags – made of wood, linen, stone or other material – that were placed around the neck of the mummy of the deceased to allow its identification for its transport or burial. In fact, most mummy labels dating from the Graeco-Roman period contain data such as the name of the deceased, the patronymic, the metronymic, the place of provenance, the date or the age of the deceased. However, numerous mummy labels – especially those written in Demotic, or the Demotic parts of the bilingual ones – include religious formulas characteristic of the Egyptian funerary tradition (cf., for instance, *nh p3y=f/s by m-b3h Wsir-Skr ntr 3 nb İbd*, ‘‘May his/her soul live before Osiris-Sokaris, great god, master of Abydos’’) which, together with the physical location of the labels – around the neck of the deceased –, lead to think that, besides the identification of the mummy, at least some mummy labels may also have had a religious or magical purpose. Indeed, these funerary formulas seem to have been used to facilitate or guarantee the survival of the soul (*by*) of the deceased in the afterlife. Although this religious practice is characteristic of the ancient Egyptian culture, in some cases it is also found in mummy labels written in Greek – or in the Greek parts of the bilingual labels –, where equivalent formulas or even translations occur. Likewise, the attestation of some Egyptian formulas in Greek transcription points to the importance of their correct pronunciation so that their content could become true. In this paper, the religious and even magical role of the Demotic, Greek and bilingual mummy labels dating from the Graeco-Roman period will be analysed.

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**Palma Karković Takalić** (University of Rijeka),

### **Unusual Objects on a Votive Altar Dedicated to Isis from Galizana (Histria)**

In this paper, the author will discuss the objects represented on a roman altar from *vicus Galisanus* in *Histria*. *Q. Lutatius Iucundus* erected the altar, dedicated to Isis, in 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Among the *common* isiac motives like sistrum, ears of wheat and crescent moon, the altar is decorated with numerous *unusual* objects such as the saw, the double axe, the compass, etc. Based on the autopsy of the monument, the context of its find and the information on the Isis cult from the written sources, the aim of this paper is to identify and interpret all of the represented items, to understand the *message behind* the monument as a whole.

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**Giulia Frigerio** (University of Kent),

***Material Culture at the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi: Affecting the Mind without the Use of Drugs***

Many scholars argued about the possible influence of drugs on the mind of the Pythias practising Apolline divination at the sanctuary of Delphi. Chemical substances able to affect the human mind have been looked for in the laurel leaves, the water of the spring Castalia and the vapour coming out of a chasm in the *adyton*. However, the analyses conducted have not revealed the presence of hallucinogenic substances in a quantity adequate to alter the Pythia's state of mind. In this paper, I argue that some elements did nevertheless have the power to influence the Pythia's mind: the material culture. Thus, I aim to demonstrate the cognitive impact of the objects present in the *adyton* on divinatory practices, arguing in favour of an agency proper of the material culture in the process. Specifically, the paper analyses the impact of the omphalos, the tripod and the laurel plant.

The methodology makes use of a cognitive approach that considers both the object affordances and human neural response to them. These aspects are subsequently set in the relevant cultural and ontological background, relying extensively on primary sources. Considering the evocative, symbolical, associative and physical properties of the objects, this study exemplifies how strongly material culture can affect divinatory practices. Changing the way of looking at material culture, this analysis gives a new perspective on the impact of the omphalos, the tripod and the laurel in divinatory practices and on divination itself. By highlighting the importance of viewing objects not as passive reflections of the society, but on the contrary, as active participants that shape social practices, I propose a new way of constructing archaeological interpretations.

**Ioannis Mitsios** (The National and Kapodistrian University of Athens),

***With the Protective Powers of Athena on Our Side! The Trojan Palladion on the North Metopes of the Parthenon***

The trojan palladion — according to the tradition (Apollodorus 3.12.3) — was a protective talisman — fallen from the sky — that safeguarded the city of Troy from defeat, until it was stolen and carried off to the Greek camp, hastening the fall of the city. Its presence warded off danger and destruction from those lucky enough to possess it and its special power arose from its “heavenly” origin, a fact that resembles the fall of meteors from the sky.

The palladion is directly linked to several protective powers of the goddess Athena, evoked through the following four epithets: *Poliás* (of the citadel), *Erysipolis* (she who protects the citadel), *Poliouchos* (she who holds the citadel) and *Eryna* (defensive). After the theft of the palladion from the city of Troy, several cities claimed its possession, including Athens, Siris, Lucerna, Rome and Constantinople, confirming that this sacred talisman was very important throughout the ancient history of the Mediterranean.

In terms of the architectural sculpture of the Parthenon, we may have up to four depictions of the palladion on the north metopes, which concern the Sack of Troy. But why was it shown so many times and, most importantly, what's the relation between its multiple depictions and the topography of the Acropolis? By employing an interdisciplinary approach, my paper aims to interpret the multiple depictions of the trojan palladion on the architectural sculpture of the Parthenon, its relation to the topography of the Acropolis and its function as a protective talisman.

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## Second Session

Ștefan Nițu (University of Oxford),

### *Sepulchral Voices: Aurality and Agency in Archaic and Early Classical Greek Epitaphs*

The dead do not tend to talk. And yet, someone reciting a roadside epitaph from 8<sup>th</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> century Greece may well find themselves lending a voice to those deceased. A significant proportion of the period's tombstones are inscribed in first-person speech, or otherwise call out to the reader. Their traditional interpretation focuses on memorialization: in having their names continually uttered by passers-by, the dead are not forgotten and their tombstones become κλέος-producing machines. However, scholarship centered on memorialization has ignored the aural aspect of an interaction between stranger and tombstone, where *both* the dead and the passer-by are affected in meaningful ways by the encounter.

This paper argues that first-person epitaphs acted as part of an agentic assemblage that affected the stranger at the same time that the stranger was memorializing the dead. When a passer-by reads an epitaph aloud, the spoken ἐγώ becomes a form of deictic discourse—just as any rhapsode becomes Homer in performed epic, with the important difference that since no one else is there, the passer-by becomes both performer and audience. Therefore, the discourse affects him too, and the affect is structured by sound. Greek society possessed a much greater aural dimension than modern civilizations, and new research is unearthing the deep societal affect—in a Deleuzian sense—of sound. When an epitaph asks the παριόντες to mourn using their own

voices, the encounter's aural affect engenders cognitive changes in these strangers, which reinforce social cohesion in a similar way to a funeral oration. Thus it will be shown that the co-location of the dead and the stranger's voice, facilitated by the material tombstone, becomes not merely an object but a subject capable of communicating and influencing others.

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**Serena Evelina Peruch** (Università degli Studi di Padova - Ca' Foscari- Verona),

***Oggetti simbolici e propagandistici nella monetazione di età antigonide***

Le testimonianze numismatiche del periodo antigonide sono ricche di significati politicopropagandistici che possono in modo sostanziale aiutare a completare la figura del Poliorcete, in particolare, a comprendere maggiormente quella del Gonata, personaggio per molti aspetti chiaroscurale per la scarsità di documentazione letteraria. Seguendo la scia dei recenti studi sulla simbologia espressa sulle monete di epoca seleucide, intendo analizzare in questa sede le monete coniate da Antigono Gonata dopo la vittoria macedone presso Lisimachia: in particolare ad essere esaminata è l'iconografia del dio Pan e del simbolo delle corna a lui associato e, più in generale, il significato politico propagandistico ivi racchiuso. Molte dinastie del tempo, seleucidi e antigonidi *in primis*, alludevano con molteplici finalità al simbolo delle corna animali, fossero esse caprine o taurine. Lo scopo è quello di indagare il motivo che spinse il Gonata a riprodurre tali immagini sulle facce delle monete da lui coniate ed evidenziare come si servì dell'iconografia delle corna animali per un proprio fine politico, differente rispetto alla generazione passata. Si presume che la finalità del Gonata fosse duplice: da un lato il sovrano macedone intendeva alludere alla figura di Alessandro – che, dopo essere stato riconosciuto figlio del dio Zeus-Ammon, amava farsi rappresentare con le corna sul capo – dall'altro prenderne consapevolmente le distanze al fine di creare una personale e autonoma identità e simbologia politica. Il confronto con l'iconografia seleucide consente di avvalorare queste ipotesi.

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**İsmail Akkaş** (Karamanoglu Mehmetbey University),

***The Use of Amphora Stamps as a Propaganda Tool in Classical and Hellenistic Period***

One of the most important evidences of commercial relations between cities in ancient times is amphorae and amphora stamps. It is known that there are many elements such as depictions or symbols on the stamp impressions belonging to the amphorae produced in the Classical and Hellenistic Period. These elements consist of the names of the productive cities, symbols of the cities (animal and plant), gods, goddesses and mythological items worshiped in the producer city, and the commercial products of the productive cities. In our study, the seal printing practices of cities producing amphora in the Classical and Hellenistic Period will be evaluated and introduced in terms of Propaganda.

**Alexandru Avram** (Université du Maine),

***Quelques remarques sur les taureaux votifs dans les sanctuaires grecs***

Le point de départ de mon intervention est constitué par l'identification d'un taureau votif en bronze dans la collection « Maria et George Severeanu » du Musée municipal de Bucarest qui porte sur ses deux flancs une dédicace à Apollon (*Apélon*) Maléatas (VI<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C., à en juger d'après les caractères paléographiques). L'objet, acquis sur le marché des antiquités, semble provenir soit des environs d'Épidaure, soit plutôt de Laconie, c'est-à-dire de Sparte ou, plus probablement, de Thyréatide (Cynourie) ; car c'est surtout dans ces régions que des sanctuaires d'Apollon Maléatas sont attestés par des sources littéraires ou épigraphiques, de

même que par des vestiges archéologiques. Deux autres dédicaces à Apollon Maléatas sur des figurines en bronze sont connues de Cynourie (Prasiai), l'une sur la base d'une statuette représentant un guerrier (*IG V 1, 927*), l'autre sur les deux flancs d'un bélier (*IG V 1, 929*). Pour ce qui est des taureaux en bronze portant des inscriptions votives, il convient de mentionner, hormis les sites précités, les découvertes du *Cabireion* de Thèbes, de l'*Héraion* de Pérachora, du sanctuaire de Zeus de Némée, de même que de deux supposés sanctuaires à Xérocampi (Astros), en Argolide, et à Mantinée. Il faut aussi compter sur beaucoup d'autres exemplaires – déjà publiés ou inédits – dispersés dans les collections des musées du monde entier ou circulant dans le commerce des antiquités.

**Hallie G. Meredith** (Washington State University),

***Portable Inscribed Commemorations: Personalised 3rd – 6th century AD Imperial and Christian Speaking Objects on Display***

Although, in material terms, civic inscriptions are often understood as the main source with which to approach 3rd – 6th century AD public commemorations, the late Roman “epigraphic habit” was not limited to the monumental. In stark contrast to public epigraphy, portable inscribed commemorative objects personalized their displays. Circulating usable (i.e. functional) objects, jewellery and insignia of office could transform the intangible into tangible memorials. A wealth of Roman portable object types survive. As a whole, however, their inscriptions were limited to no more than four topics. Why is it that the content of their inscriptions was so limited? Were these portable objects reinforcing an established public framework for commemorations? Or, should each object type be approached independently; understood to represent personalized responses?

This paper examines the personalized nature of commemorations inscribed on 3rd – 6th century AD portable objects by examining two types of inscribed portable evidence: **(1)** imperial objects (such as, *largitio* gifts and cross-bow *fibula*) and **(2)** Christian objects (for example, acclamations on gold-glass). This is due to their layered meanings when considered in combination with their use and social functions. Imperial gifts and insignia of office not only identify a wearer's imperial access, they also advertise allegiance to the emperor represented. Similarly, portable Christian commemorations memorialise expressions of faith, marriage and pilgrimage, transforming ephemeral experiences into personal commemorations which can be re-integrated into the wearer's or user's daily life and made visible to those given access to this display.

Concurrently, public insignia of office are made private through intimate contact with the body of the wearer or display in private spaces, and private commemorations are made public as objects worn on the body or usable in private spaces. In other words, this paper asks: when commemorative inscriptions on portable objects “speak” what are they allowed to say?

### **Third Session**

**Anthi Dipla** (Open University of Cyprus),

#### ***Hanging/Leaning on the Wall, Resting on the Floor: the Role of Portable Objects in Creating Semiotic and Ideological Narratives on Athenian Vases***

My presentation proposes to research the symbolic role of objects on Athenian vases of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC bearing scenes, either generic or mythical, taking place in the *oikos*, a Greek household. We may observe a segregation and hierarchization of roles and possibly also to some extent of spaces within the Athenian *oikos*, on the criteria of mainly gender (women in the *gynaikeion*, men in the *andron*). The term *gynaikeion* probably did not refer to separate female quarters but rather to all spaces in the house, excluding the *andron*. The latter was the space where the men of the household regularly received their friends and companions and entertained themselves, consuming wine, and women. This space was marked off by a closed door from the rest of the house, facilitating the exclusion of the “citizen” women of the house and the inclusion of visiting women offering entertainment, or even sex.

Until quite late in ancient Greek art, space was portrayed in a shorthand, conventional way, through few architectural elements, and mainly through objects set against the background of the scene, as if hanging, or leaning on the wall, and standing on the floor. Since spatial markers are used very sparingly, any added objects could have been carefully selected not only to convey space but also to possibly comment on the occasion and nature of the activities, as well as on the social identity of figures interacting within that space. I shall claim that their choice and combination (mix-and-match to some degree of a relatively limited repertoire of portable objects, including furniture), was further used to suggest and prescribe gender roles.

Objects in various scenes set in the context of an Athenian *oikos*, namely scenes of everyday life (child upbringing, fabric production, labor, family or relative gatherings etc.) and of special occasions (funeral and, especially, the wedding in the *gynaikeion*, banquets -with or without paid sex services- in the *andron*) will be systematically grouped, classified and assessed in their combination with one another. They will moreover be compared to the similar or different array of objects associated with presumed brothel scenes.

For example, in the female space we commonly find mirrors and wool baskets, allusions to beautification/attraction and ultimately childbearing and to domestic fabric production respectively, both illustrating the ideal of virtuous productivity in Classical Athens. In the male dominated space of the *andron* we commonly witness the addition of *kraters*, bowls in which wine and water were mixed, which served as the focal point around which the space of the banquet was arranged and operated as a pictogram of the *symposion* embracing male homosociality through the sharing of wine. Respectable women are shown seated on chairs, sometimes throne-like, men and their prostitutes lying on banquet coaches/pillows. Finally, we may find shared objects in *gynaikeion*, *andron*, and brothel scenes, explained from a provable

trend in the fifth century to mix the iconographies of the respectable (brides/wives) with the disreputable (*hetairai*, high class prostitutes).

**Carmen Sánchez Fernández – Jorge Tomás García** (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid),

***De Grecia a la península ibérica: memoria, iconografía e interacción cultural de la cerámica griega en el contexto funerario ibero***

La presencia de cerámica griega en contextos funerarios en el sureste de la península ibérica es un tema con una dilatada y variada fortuna crítica en el ámbito historiográfico español y europeo. Durante la última década los límites metodológicos de los estudios visuales han ampliado el abanico de posibilidades a la hora de enfrentarnos a estos objetos: la agencia, la interacción cultural, la visión del espectador, el rol de la memoria o la dramatización de un estatus social determinado, son algunos de los temas que hoy en día focalizan las discusiones académicas. El caso concreto del conjunto de siete crateras áticas de imágenes singulares y de gran complejidad halladas en Piquía (Jaén) se presta a un análisis actualizado y complejo. Nuestro objetivo será, así, conocer la vida del objeto desde su producción (si fue o no mediatizada por la demanda ibera), su distribución (agentes comerciales y posibles caminos o rutas) y su amortización final (papel de los vasos áticos en las estructuras sociales y religiosas de los iberos). Finalmente, trataremos de esclarecer si en este proceso de análisis de las imágenes, los programas iconográficos son utilizados como *keimelia* (objetos atesorados portadores de memoria) entre los iberos, en un proceso de revitalización de la memoria social, en el que jugaban un destacado papel la narración de los vasos áticos.

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## *Communicating Objects/Objets en dialogue*

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**Rosie Wyles** (University of Kent),

### ***Objects of Grief***

This paper explores the role of objects in fifth-century white-ground *lekythoi* depicting mourners. Attic *lekythoi* offer key evidence for attitudes towards death in fifth-century Athens (Oakley 2004). The range of expressions displayed by the mourners has been studied (Allen 2017), yet the importance of objects in these compositions deserves greater attention. Textual evidence points to the awareness in fifth-century Athens of the ways in which the treatment of objects could express grief (for example, Sophocles *Electra*, Euripides *Phaethon* fr. 785). Moreover, the close association between objects and identity in Athenian theatre and society (Wyles 2011 and 2020) created a horizon of expectation within which the objects could carry heightened significance in relation to the deceased.

The discussion focuses on two examples which, through their difference, demonstrate the range of roles objects could play in these scenes:

- White-ground *lekythos* attributed to the Painter of New York 23.160.41 (*ARV*<sup>2</sup> 1241,6). Zürich, ex Hirschmann collection G 35. This shows a wife holding the **sword** belonging to her departing (and deceased) husband.
- Attic white-ground *lekythos* by the Painter of Munich 2335, c. 430 BC. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 09.221.44. This shows a boy (deceased) with roll-along **toy** reaching towards his mother as Charon awaits.

The analysis of these two examples allows for the exploration of the intersection between art, literature, and life in the associations forged for these objects (taking forward research on significant objects in art and literature (Mackay2002)).

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**Lisa Roques** (Ausonius UMR 5607 – Université Bordeaux Montaigne),

***Mais de quoi parlent-ils donc ? À propos d'un vase « dactylôton » décrit par les déipnosophistes...***

Au onzième livre des *Déipnosophistes* d'Athénée<sup>1</sup>, les érudits banqueteurs dressent un catalogue des objets utilisés en contexte symposial et s'attardent sur une coupe décrite par Ion de Chios dans son *Agamemnon*.

Ils s'attachent dans un premier temps à une description formelle de l'ustensile, discutant le sens des adjectifs qui le qualifient, avant d'en venir à l'histoire de l'objet, de mentionner sa « généalogie ». On passe alors des éléments qui établiraient la valeur « d'usage » de l'objet ou sa valeur « esthétique » à ceux qui constituent sa valeur « symbolique ».

Suivant la logique des *Déipnosophistes*, cet excursus sur le vase « dactylote » est enrichi par de nombreuses références et citations des différents commentateurs de l'œuvre d'Ion, Épigène ou Didyme d'Alexandrie. Le sujet n'est alors plus la coupe en elle-même, mais ce qu'on en dit, de sorte que s'affirme la valeur « lexicale », ou « métalinguistique », de l'objet. Partant, la comparaison finale entre Ion et Homère à laquelle procède justement Didyme couronne la valeur « littéraire » de l'objet. En effet, l'allusion et la connotation semblent l'emporter au point que le grammairien (ou du moins, ses citateurs) entend corriger Ion.

On peut alors se demander s'il saurait exister, aux yeux des déipnosophistes, un objet qui n'ait d'autre existence qu'une existence littéraire. Autrement dit, serions-nous dans un univers où la réalité littéraire des objets triomphe de leur réalité matérielle ?

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<sup>1</sup> Athénée, *Les Déipnosophistes*, XI, 468 c-e.

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**Yael Young** (The Open University; Shenkar College, Israel),

### ***The Invention of the Strigil in Athenian Iconography***

A truism in the discipline of Greek vase painting is that the transition from the black-figure technique to the red-figure one during the last quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, is bound with a radical change in the depiction of the human body. Suddenly we begin to see foreshortening, three quarter views, diverse poses, a more vivid and realistic image of the body. The purpose of the lecture is to suggest that objects played a crucial role in that radical change. Representing humans engaged with objects supported, augmented, and sometimes even generated this change. Here I will focus on the strigil as a case study.

The strigil is a metal instrument formed as a sickle-shaped curved blade used for scraping off oil, sweat and dirt after the athletic exercise. It was introduced into Athenian red-figure vases at the last decade of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, most probably by the painter Euthymides in a scene decorating a psykter. From this point on the number of such depictions rapidly increases. It is apparent that from the very beginning, the vase painters were interested in exploring the relationship between the strigil and the naked male body. They invented the iconographic motif of the 'apoxyomenos', in which the strigil interacts with the entire body, guiding its movements. Thus, the vase painters had the chance, and even the excuse, to represent postures and viewpoints hitherto unknown in vase painting. In these images the strigil generates the movement and disciplines the body. They are – body and strigil – equal entities with reciprocal relationship. The motif of the *apoxyomenos* encapsulates the notion that the radical change in the depiction of the human body is entangled with the depiction of objects surrounding it.

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**Chiara Ballestrazzi** (Institut für klassische Archäologie, Freie Universität Berlin),

***“All’arte ostile la gemma” (AP 9, 752). Il dialogo tra arte e materia nella glittica ellenistica e imperiale***

Il mio intervento indaga un aspetto dello specialissimo rapporto tra l’arte umana e la materia naturale proprio delle gemme intagliate, ovvero il dialogo tra l’oggetto raffigurato dall’artista e l’oggetto – la pietra preziosa – che accoglie tale raffigurazione. Si discute una scelta di casi, sia letterari che concreti, nei quali l’oggetto intagliato interagisce significativamente con le caratteristiche specifiche della gemma, che si tratti del colore, delle proprietà fisiche e medicinali, della proverbiale immobilità della materia litica o addirittura del nome del minerale.

Quando tra la gemma e l’immagine su di essa raffigurata sussiste un perfetto accordo, la materia naturale e l’arte umana concorrono a realizzare la perfetta *mimesis* della natura, grazie allo spirito e all’intelligenza dell’artista che ha saputo abbinare al meglio l’immagine al *medium*. Quando invece c’è disaccordo tra la pietra e il soggetto intagliato, si sviluppa un insanabile conflitto ontologico, come avviene negli intagli che raffigurano Dioniso o la personificazione dell’ebbrezza, Methe, sull’ametista (“a-methystos”), una pietra che, secondo gli antichi, proteggeva dagli effetti inebrianti del vino. Gli epigrammi litologici descrivono immagini intagliate così realisticamente vive da prendere la parola per dialogare vivacemente con la gemma personificata, o che “scapperebbero via” se non fossero “imprigionate” dalla pietra, anch’essa vivificata proprio grazie al valore semantico attribuitole dall’immagine che le viene associata dall’artista: la pietra si trasforma infatti in acqua, erba, aria, fuoco o personaggi mitologici a seconda del soggetto che l’artista sceglie di intagliarvi. E, a sua volta, la gemma è in grado di interagire attivamente con i suoi fruitori, modificando e modificandosi sotto il loro sguardo o a contatto dei loro corpi, oppure concretizzando e favorendo i rapporti tra committenti-donatori, artisti e destinatari come quelli delineati nei *Lithika* di Posidippo di Pella.

I testi e gli intagli concreti selezionati (risalenti all’età ellenistica e imperiale) permetteranno di evidenziare la complessità del dialogo tra l’oggetto raffigurato e un *medium* artistico - la gemma - che secondo la sensibilità antica godeva di una straordinaria vitalità ed era autonomamente dotato di un’arte mimetica naturale con la quale l’artista umano doveva interagire, assecondandola o opponendovisi a seconda dei casi. Fu proprio tale eccezionale caratteristica, che secondo la sensibilità antica distingueva la glittica da pittura e scultura, a rendere le gemme intagliate un veicolo privilegiato per raffinate riflessioni sulla poesia, specialmente epigrammatica.

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**Sunday, November 29th**

## **First Session**

**Ángeles Alonso Alonso** (Universidad de Cantabria),

### **Ferramenta et monumenta. Significado y trascendencia de la representación de instrumental médico en los monumentos funerarios de época romana**

El mundo antiguo puede definirse, en parte, como un mundo de imágenes. El poder comunicativo que éstas tuvieron fue especialmente relevante en época romana: desde finales de época republicana, el fenómeno de la auto-representación y el hábito epigráfico se extendieron desde las élites a todas las capas de la sociedad, sobre todo en el ámbito sepulcral. Así, los monumentos funerarios se convirtieron en eficaces medios de construcción y comunicación de la propia memoria. Los epitafios tenían la capacidad de perpetuar el nombre del fallecido, mientras que las representaciones de su retrato o de escenas de la vida cotidiana conectaban con el recuerdo de la vida pasada de un modo más intenso. En otras ocasiones, la representación de objetos y utensilios proporcionaba mensajes –de carácter simbólico y connotativo– de interpretación más controvertida.

El objetivo de la presente comunicación es profundizar en esta cuestión a través del estudio de los monumentos funerarios de época romana en los que hay representado instrumental médico-quirúrgico u otros objetos relacionados con el *ars medica*. El fin último es valorar y entender el rol que la iconografía médica tuvo como vehículo de construcción de la memoria y símbolo de identidad del difunto. Para ello, analizaremos: a) qué instrumentos se representan; b) el cotejo de éstos con los hallados en el registro arqueológico; c) la contextualización del objeto en la escena (si aparece en solitario, dentro de un estuche o asido por el profesional y en acción); d) los textos epigráficos y los destinatarios del monumento; e) la relación –interacción e interdependencia– del objeto representado con el texto epigráfico.

De este modo, reflexionaremos acerca de la presencia iconográfica del objeto profesional en el contexto funerario, valorando la representación de utensilios y su importancia simbólica como vector comunicador de la propia identidad y la memoria individual en época romana.

**Angela Bosco** (Università di Bologna),

***Nymphaea Pompeiana: la costruzione di una scenografia domestica***

L'analisi dei ninfei pompeiani all'interno dei contesti privati offre l'occasione, grazie al suo straordinario stato di conservazione, di approfondire il processo di costruzione di una vera e propria scenografia domestica, data dall'associazione di più elementi quali la scelta del contesto, la forma del ninfeo, i rivestimenti decorativi (mosaici, pitture, stucchi). Particolare attenzione sarà data ai ninfei che presentavano un ricco corredo scultoreo, operando una riflessione sulle tipologie di sculture più frequenti (semplici statue o statue-fontana), sui temi iconografici selezionati dal *dominus* e sulla posizione destinata alla statua all'interno del complesso programma decorativo.

**Noé Conejo Delgado** (University of Seville),

***La materialización de la identidad: arquitectura y consumo en las villae bajo imperiales de Lusitania***

A finales del siglo III y durante el siglo IV se produce en Lusitania, al igual que en Hispania, el esplendor del mundo rural. De manera paulatina, son reformadas o construidas numerosas residencias rurales que se caracterizaron por una gran monumentalidad y complejos aparatos decorativos. Como en el resto de territorios mediterráneos occidentales, la emergencia de tales edificios rurales está muy relacionada con un nuevo orden político, económico y social desarrollado tras el periodo tetrarquico, el cual se caracterizó en Lusitania e Hispania por la designación de *Augusta Emerita* como capital de la *Diocesis Hispaniarum* y la paulatina renovación de la aristocracia más tradicional, con la inclusión en el ordo senatorial de burócratas y militares. En esta coyuntura socio-política, marcada por la competición y el ascenso social, las residencias rurales se convirtieron en verdaderos centros de promoción, donde la arquitectura y el consumo ostentoso fueron utilizados como un lenguaje, el cual pretendía demostrar a visitantes e invitados el poder económico y el estatus social de los respectivos propietarios. El análisis por menoreado de la arquitectura y de otros elementos de consumo documentados en varias villae de Lusitania, nos permitirá comprender con mayor precisión cuáles serán los mensajes que los propietarios rurales querían transmitir, contribuyendo así a un mejor conocimiento del comportamiento social de este grupo privilegiado.

**Eleonora Romanò** (Università degli Studi di Pisa), **Fabiana Susini** (Università degli Studi di Pisa),

***La mensa funeraria come medium tra i vivi e i morti: dall' epulum pagano al refrigerium cristiano***

Nel mondo pagano romano l'espressione materiale della *pietas* dei vivi per i congiunti defunti avveniva solitamente nei pressi della sepoltura attraverso le pratiche funerarie dell'*epulum* e

delle *infusiones* o *profusiones libationum*. In realtà il sostantivo latino *epulum* significa genericamente ‘convito, banchetto sacro’ ed era spesso collegato al sacrificio di un animale inteso come momento simbolico centrale del rito condiviso. Tale pratica, svolta in prossimità di una singola sepoltura in occasione di un funerale o della commemorazione di un defunto, prendeva il nome più specifico di ‘*silicernium*’, che manteneva molti aspetti rituali e materiali tratti dal banchetto dei vivi. Aspetto esclusivo in aggiunta a tale rito erano le formule e le azioni di compianto privato, non necessariamente rintracciabili archeologicamente tra i resti rinvenuti in prossimità delle sepolture che presentano per lo più piccole strutture rettangolari anteposte al luogo di seppellimento. Differenti sono le tipologie di *mensae* finora attestate nel mondo pagano romano in base al ceto sociale del defunto e della sua famiglia: da semplici sostegni appena accennati nelle dimensioni a insiemi di elementi (*klinai* e piani di appoggio) nei casi più articolati. In entrambe le soluzioni, il banchetto funebre era riservato esclusivamente ai *familiares* del defunto che partecipavano al rito.

Nei secoli della Tarda Antichità con il passaggio al culto cristiano si registra una certa continuità nelle pratiche funerarie, seppur con valenze diverse connesse al nuovo messaggio religioso. I corrispettivi lessicali più usati per indicare tali azioni di mantenimento del legame emotivo e spirituale tra il mondo dei vivi e quello dei morti diventano i sostantivi *refrigerium* e *refrigeratio* (termini già usati in età repubblicana con un valore più esplicito legato al benessere del corpo dei vivi che si ‘rinfresca’ con l’acqua e all’ombra; cfr. Cicerone, *De sen.* 16, 57; Plinio il Vecchio, *Nat. Hist.* 21, 46). Nella religione cristiana essi assumono valenze semantiche diverse, più simboliche e trascendentali perché relative sia alla pace eterna per l’anima del defunto che al significato di ‘rinfrescarne, mantenerne la memoria’ nei vivi. In questa nuova fase, i rituali vengono celebrati presso una struttura più grande rappresentata proprio dalla *mensa* cimiteriale ubicata in posizione centrale dentro l’area funeraria a simbolo di una compartecipazione che vede coinvolta tutta l’*ecclesia*. La riunione in un unico punto condiviso è connessa al ricordo del sacrificio concreto e simbolico di Cristo come *Agnus Dei*, da perpetuare attraverso la memoria con la fede e la preghiera per la resurrezione di tutti i defunti.

All’individualità pagana ‘si contrappongono’ perciò le azioni di preghiera comunitaria, che non riguardano più solo singoli casi familiari, ma costituiscono un momento collettivo condiviso senza alcuna distinzione sociale. Conseguenza della nuova valenza di tale pratica religiosa è anche la variazione strutturale della *mensa* che assume una forma circolare o a sigma per accogliere quindi un maggior numero di fedeli lì convenuti in preghiera.

Dal punto di vista materiale e concettuale questo studio intende quindi analizzare i diversi aspetti strutturali e le valenze socio-culturali e religiose che l’oggetto ‘mensa’ assume nel passaggio dall’età imperiale pagana all’età Tardo Antica cristiana.

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**Manuela Dobre** (Université de Bucarest),

### *Art et propagande impériale dans l'iconographie des monnaies byzantines (IV<sup>e</sup>-VII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*

Depuis sa fondation, en 330, par la volonté de l'empereur Constantin, Constantinople est devenue le lieu de rencontre des traditions anciennes, culturelles et artistiques. Située à la frontière de deux continents, la ville a été, depuis ses débuts, le centre d'une synthèse culturelle exceptionnelle entre l'Orient ancien et l'Occident méditerranéen. En même temps, les premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne ont vu un bouleversement extraordinaire: les grandes traditions du monde classique ont été transformées par des changements importants dans la structure politique et sociale, aussi bien que par l'influence croissante du christianisme émergent. Sous le signe de cette nouvelle religion et selon la doctrine politique byzantine, résultat des contributions majeures des théoriciens chrétiens du quatrième siècle, le pouvoir impérial était considéré comme d'origine divine, et l'empereur était considéré comme l' élu de Dieu pour diriger le royaume terrestre, Son lieutenant sur terre et l'égal des apôtres.

Marquée par la tradition romaine d'une part, par le christianisme d'autre part, la période entre le quatrième et le septième siècle, plus précisément entre le règne de Constantin le Grand et les invasions arabes, se caractérise comme une période d'expérimentation culturelle. Pour ces raisons, ma contribution vise à suivre et à analyser comment, depuis le début de l'Empire, l'iconographie des monnaies byzantines a progressivement intériorisé la nouvelle conception chrétienne du souverain. Celle-ci a été diffusée partout, parce que les monnaies émises par les empereurs de cette époque circulaient dans tout l'empire et au-delà de ses frontières et «parlaient» à tout le monde du souverain et de son pouvoir.

### **Second Session**

**Velichka Martinova** (Regional Museum of History – Stara Zagora, Bulgaria),

### *Empty Tumuli and their Place in Thracian Funeral Rites (VI-V c. BC – III-IV c. AD)*

According to archaeological data, empty Thracian tumuli (mounds) that have no prime grave in them represent nearly 40% of the total number of studied monuments in Bulgaria. Some of them

have secondary graves, but they have no relation to the initial reasons for the accumulation of the tumuli. Yet, their place in the Thracian funeral rite system and mythology is not completely clarified, nor is their significance. Some of these empty tumuli are interpreted as cenotaphs, but there is often hardly any trace of a symbolic grave in them. On the contrary, these mounds often consist of very interesting structures. Some of the structures are related to funeral rituals, but most of them go beyond our understanding – like ritual pits, stone piles, treasures, vessels, sacrificed and buried animals, cromlechs, etc. Thus, some scientists rightly question the universal usage of the term “grave mound” even if the mound is part of a tumular necropolis.

This paper consists of a brief review of the scientific reports on such empty mounds in Bulgaria and focuses on some of the tumuli, which contain interesting and hard for interpretation structures and artifacts. Are all empty tumuli symbolic graves? A question that may never receive an answer but that deserves scientific attention and discussion.

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**Gencho Dimitrov** (The Historical Museum in Nova Zagora, Bulgaria),

#### *A Type of Roman Cup Used in the Funeral Rites in Thrace*

Cups are the most common vessel form, used as funeral offerings in flat and tumular necropolises in Thrace during the Roman period (I–IV c. AD). The subject of this paper is a very common type of small cups, made on a potter’s wheel. Their body is biconical with cylindrical convex neck and a slightly or strongly inwardly curved mouth rim. The bottom is either ring-like or with a low thick leg, sometimes convex.

Usually there are ornaments on the mouth rim or neck, consisting of several horizontal incised lines. All cups have two symmetrical vertical handles which start at the base or the middle of the neck and reach the broadest part of the body. Handles' cross-section is oval. Usually the inner and outer surfaces of the cups are covered with a red lacquer.

In most of the cases these cups are found in poorer graves, put in another vessel – a bowl or a deep dish, and probably it has a special relation to the funeral rite. This practice is similar to another funeral ritual – the combining of a bronze patera with a oenochoe, which is typical for the rich graves from the period. Similar cups are found in almost all tumular necropolises in Thrace: near the villages Pet mogili, Lyubenets, Korten, Stoil voivoda and Karanovo, Nova Zagora region; the necropolises of the large Roman urban centers like Philipopolis, Augusta Traiana, Kabile and Tuida; the necropolises near Chernozem, Merichleri, Straldja, etc. These cups are typical for the province of Thrace and they are not commonly spread in other Roman provinces during the I–IV centuries AD.

**Nicoleta Petkova** (History Museum Strelcha, Bulgaria),

***Zhaba Mogila near Strelcha – Systematization of the Available Data and New Interpretation of the Archaeological Complex***

Zhaba Mogila (Frog Mound) is a vast archaeological object seen from all the Strelcha Valley slopes. The mound, archaeologically studied by Georgi Kitov's team in 1976 and 1977, was surrounded by a water ditch and a berm. Frogs populate the ditch's ruins till these days; thus, the name of the mound. It is notable that under one mound, there are two facilities, and the directions of their location – southeast and northwest – are also of interest. Unfortunately, publications with the results of excavations in the past are incomplete. In recent years, however, several articles have appeared analyzing the architectural details and the chariot found in front of a tomb. There were recent attempts to restore the facades of the two tombs.

This article aims to systematize the data from all publications about Zhaba Mogila and supplement them with the available information from the museum's scientific fund in the Strelcha's museum. The more detailed information about the complex Zhaba Mogila, which includes the studied architecture, the horse burials with the chariot, the ceramics found during the excavations, and the traces of ritual activity on the mound, leads to a possible new interpretation of the complex with a ritualistic direction.

**Inga Gluszek** (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun),

***The Hellenistic Black-Gloss Campana Pottery from Histria-Preliminary Study***

The archaeological excavations on ancient archaeological sites of North-western coast of the Black Sea have brought a great number of finds of black-gloss pottery. For pottery examples dated on the Archaic and Classical periods, these are mainly vessels manufactured in Athens. In contrast, artefacts from the Hellenistic period represent a wide spectrum of imports from various

centres of production. The dynamically developing studies in this area allowed to recognize a several centres of production such as Pergamon, Knidos, Thasos workshops as well as the Asia Minor group. These groups of pottery were recognised among archaeological finds from Histria. Considering the black-gloss pottery from that region the appearance of the Campana ware is very interesting and shades a new light at the discussion about the long distance distribution of tableware in the Hellenistic period.

### **Third Session**

**Vasiliki Kousoulini** (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens),

#### ***Ships and Female Choreia in Euripides' Plays***

An ancient ship is an object that “traverses the sea and makes of the ocean a bridge rather than a gulf between lands” (Hardie 1987, 164). A ship is a boundary crosser (Hardie 1987, 164) and one of the most common objects encountered in Greek epic poetry (ships bring the Achaeans to Troy and back to their homeland, and men, such as Odysseus, can build ships- *Od.* 5.234-53; the *Iliad* contains a catalog of the ships that sailed for Troy-2.494-760). In ancient Greek literature, women are not usually associated with ships. They cannot build one, and they rarely enter ships to cross boundaries without consequences. Ships are linked to arrivals and departures and in ancient Greek thought, the departure of a maiden or wife is equated with the loss of her previous status (Scheer 2018, 139-143. Biffis 2018, 1 also remarks that women could only travel once: to their husband’s house after their wedding).

Nonetheless, in Euripides’ plays, women are often linked to ships. Ships allow Euripidean heroines to be dislocated and to pay the price. Moreover, ships seem to influence the content of their songs or their ability to sing. In the *Medea*, it is the Nurse who curses Argo (1-48) that became the cause of her mistresses’ angst and lamentation. In Andromache’s monody in the eponymous tragedy, we learn that the ships that sacked Troy and took Andromache from her homeland transformed her into a mourner (103-116). In the *Hypsipyle*, the heroine remembers the Argo, the ship that still defines the content of her songs. Several Euripidean choruses of women link ships to the loss of their previous status that has as a consequence the end of their previous *choreia* (*Hec.* 444-483, 905-952; *Tro.* 511-576; *IT* 1089-1152; nonetheless, the chorus of the *IA* 751-800, Greek women of Chalcis, imagine the ships that will reach Troy and will end the previous *choreia* of the Trojan women).

Ships do not always have ominous connotations. Euripidean heroines or female choruses often enter or wish to enter ships voluntarily and link them with their return home. Their homecoming is equated with the restoration of someone’s choral identity (*IT* 1123-1152; *Hel.* 1451-1511). Sometimes a voluntarily travel by ship does not guarantee that female *choreia* will be continued (the chorus of the *Phoenician Women*, 203-260, although it was sent to sing and successfully entered a ship, is unable to perform its songs, since the women are trapped in a city under siege).

In this paper, I examine the relationship between ships as objects described by women in Euripides' plays and female choral song. Ships are not only linked in these contexts to female *choreia*. They are the means to the mobility of women that has as an implication the loss or the restoration of their identities as performers of choral songs. Women brought by ships, or taken to ships by force, are presented as displaced chorus leaders or chorus members. They cease their previous *choreia*, and resort to silence, to loud cries or to lamentation, a form of *choreia* that is often described as unmusical. The ships, in less dire circumstances, are also the means of the restoration of their previous status and their choral identity in some of Euripides' plays.

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**Daniela Immacolata Cagnazzo** (Università di Bari),

### ***Oggetti in scena: un esempio in Eschilo***

*P.Oxy.* 2162, edito da Radt (1985) come fr. 78a-c, riporta un centinaio di versi di un testo poetico, attribuito al dramma satiresco dei *Theoroi* di Eschilo. La porzione di testo superstite coincide con la conclusione di un dialogo in trimetri giambici fra il corifeo (forse Sileno) e un personaggio non identificato (forse il Coro), che nei primi venti versi (cfr. fr. 1 = fr. 78a Radt) viene ringraziato per aver portato in scena una serie di oggetti. Si tratta, con ogni probabilità, di alcuni oggetti scenici, che buona parte della critica moderna tende a identificare con delle maschere oppure con delle tavole dipinte.

Il presente contributo intende analizzare il fr. 78a Radt di Eschilo, cercando di identificare gli oggetti scenici menzionati nelle immagini οὐ κατ' ἀνθρώπους (v. 1), εἶδωλον (v. 6), καλλίγραπτος εὐχά (v. 12) e τῆς καλῆς μορφῆς (v. 19).

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**Emiliano J. Buis** (University of Buenos Aires),

***Tangible Transactions: Foreign Goods, Dramatic Commodities and the Market of Comedy in Aristophanes' Acharnians***

When Dikaiopolis, the protagonist of Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (425 BCE), arranges for an individual peace agreement with the enemies of Athens and creates his private agora to trade products with foreign merchants, several comic strategies are implemented. One of the main strategies, although seldom explored, is related to materiality. In fact, the objectivation of the subjects involved—as it is the case with the sycophant wrapped as a local product for export—, on the one side, and the embodiment of abstract values—such as the peace agreements represented as wine cups—, on the other, constitute complementary poetic operations that exploit the interactive agency between people and objects. By means of these techniques, *Acharnians* reveals that the disputes arising from the material control displayed in the *polis* by citizen-agents should be carefully considered. Diplomatic tensions are described in physical terms, and an examination of the vivid life of objects on stage becomes an original key to interpret the attitudes of Dikaiopolis and his interlocutors. In political terms, when compared to the treatment of tangible things, the inherent risks of a private manipulation of the public interests of the community are exposed.

A reading of the play focused on the importance of material culture can prove that the handling of dramatic props and the interaction of characters and movable goods becomes a useful technique to represent the tangible dynamics of interstate negotiations. At the same time, on a meta-poetic level which is typical to Old Comedy, an object-oriented perspective can show that, not unlike what happens with artefacts available for commercial exchange, there seems to be a clear mercantile dimension in the literary transactions between comedy and tragedy. In literary terms, the contribution of New Materialism allows to conclude that for Aristophanes intertextuality and parody are assimilated to a profitable deal.

**Maria Combatti** (Columbia University),

***Κόσμος (“Finery”) and Ὑφάσματα (“Shrouds”): Entanglements of Women’s and Objects’ Agencies in Euripides’ Alcestis and Helen***

In her work *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*, Helene Foley has investigated how Euripides in his plays highlights Alcestis' and Helen's reputation for excellence. This paper explores how objects are implicated in such representation. Building on insights of the new materialisms (Hodder 2012; Canevaro 2018; Telò and Mueller 2018), this paper focuses attention on objects, especially

funerary, as theatrically active entities that help Alcestis and Helen to secure their domestic and social agency.

In *Alcestis*, in her preparation for death, Alcestis dresses herself in her “finery” (κόσμος, 161). Then, she deals with the household management, decking altars, comforting her children, and greeting her servants, such that her bedchamber is transformed into the administrative center of the *oikos*. I argue that κόσμος, which originally denotes an idea of order and arrangement, materializes Alcestis’ ability to act as head of the house, extending her power of good mistress, mother, and wife into the afterlife. In *Helen*, in her performance of Menelaus’ fake burial, Helen carries “empty shrouds” (κενὰ ὑφάσματα, 1243) to virtually bury her husband, thereby deceiving the king who holds them hostage in Egypt. The word ὑφάσματα recalls the “spider’s web” (ἀράχνης ἐν ὑφάσματι, *Ag.* 1492) made by Clytemnestra to kill Agamemnon. Thus, the shrouds challenge the audience’s memories regarding female deception, contributing to redeeming Helen’s reputation. Other objects take on an active part in the plays’ action: the bed in *Alcestis* (183-88); the tomb in *Helen* (61-67); and the statues (δέμας, *Alc.* 348; ἄγαλμα, *Hel.* 262) that are compared to the heroines’ bodies.

Drawing on phenomenological, cognitive and aesthetic theories (Thompson 2007; Porter 2010), this paper finally posits that objects are “vibrant materialities” (Bennett 2010) that encourage the spectators to fully apprehend the sense of Alcestis’ and Helen’s roles as faithful wives, good mistresses and heads of their household.

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**Brian McPhee** (Indiana University Bloomington),

#### ***Medea’s Promethean Drug and Other Significant Objects in Apollonius’ Argonautica***

This paper examines Apollonius Rhodius’ exploitation of the epic technique of “genetic description” or “the biography of things,” which invests objects in the narrative with added

interpretative significance by recounting their prior histories of ownership or usage. Apollonius inherited this technique from Homer and put it to wide-ranging use in the *Argonautica*, which features at least thirty examples thereof. In this paper, I demonstrate Apollonius' self-conscious recognition of the Homeric pedigree of this device and offer a survey of the various literary effects that he achieves thereby, including characterization, the signaling of key themes, and foreshadowing of events to come.

Following this survey, I focus in detail on one particular significant object as a case study, namely, the Promethean drug that Medea gives to Jason to ensure his success in Aeetes' challenge. I argue that Apollonius' description of the drug's manufacture from a flower sprung from the blood of the tortured Prometheus (3.844–868) alludes to Euripides' *Medea*, and in fact mirrors key details from the bloody resolution of that tragedy. For instance, Apollonius contrives for Medea to forge her bond with Jason by giving him a drug that makes him immune from iron and fire for one day, whereas in Euripides, Medea severs her bond with Jason by putting their children to the sword and sending a drug to his new wife that sets her ablaze—a drug identified in later sources as the φάρμακον ἐφήμερον, the drug that kills its victims in just one day. In other words, Apollonius has designed the salvific drug that brings this couple together as the anti-type of the horrific violence that marks their divorce, a parallelism that would not be missed by Seneca (*Med.* 709). This example reveals the sophistication that Apollonius could achieve in emulating the Homeric technique of object history.

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**Vladimir Crețulescu** (Université de Bucarest),

### *Utiliser l'analyse de discours dans les études de culture matérielle*

Dans la section théorique du célèbre volume collectif édité par Arjun Appadurai (*The Social Life of Things : Commodities in Cultural Perspective*), Appadurai conceptualise la vie sociale des biens de consommation et d'échange (*commodities*) comme se situant au centre de processus complexes qui négocient l'investissement de valeur et les pratiques d'échange, à travers des nombreuses tensions et failles du domaine politique, au sens large (Appadurai 1986, 3-63). Igor Kopytoff propose une approche bien différente, à savoir biographique : tout objet a sa propre biographie culturelle, et son statut de bien de consommation et d'échange (*commodity*) ne constitue qu'une étape transitoire d'un « parcours de vie » bien plus riche et varié (Kopytoff dans Appadurai 1986, 64-94).

À côté de ces deux perspectives – l'une (celle d'Appadurai) esquissant une économie symbolique des biens, l'autre (celle de Kopytoff) puisant dans les ressources épistémiques de la méthode biographique –, nous voudrions suggérer une troisième voie possible pour interroger la culture matérielle. Partant de la boutade classique de Jacques Derrida (« il n'y a pas de hors-texte »), nous proposons d'aborder les objets comme des monades de « texte » social, analysables avec les outils conceptuels de l'*analyse de discours*.

En tant que méthode d'investigation en sciences sociales, l'analyse de discours part de l'observation que *la réalité sociale est conceptuellement médiante*. Ce regard spécifique porté sur le social détermine le *caractère matériel-sémiotique* de l'objet d'étude propre à l'analyse de discours, car, en effet, cette approche est centrée sur le rapport dialectique entre les éléments matériels (objets) et les éléments sémiotiques (discours) de la société. Pour dire les choses autrement, *la discursivité*, ou *le discursif*, représente un horizon théorique à l'intérieur duquel est constitué l'être des objets. Car tous les objets sont des objets du discours, leur signification étant dépendante d'un système socialement constitué, formé de règles et de différences signifiantes.

Concrètement, nous proposons deux manières d'interroger les éléments de la culture matérielle : la première perçoit les objets comme les produits des discours qui mettent en mouvement une société donnée ; en tant que tels, ils expriment *sui generis*, par leur forme et matérialité mêmes, les tensions, clivages et identités sociales les ayant engendrés. Ce type de regard est apparenté à la démarche de l'archéologue, qui tente de déduire les logiques et dynamiques d'une société, partant des vestiges de sa culture matérielle. La seconde manière d'interrogation requiert l'étude des sources historiques écrites (témoignages de l'époque, sources littéraires, etc.), pour en extraire des références à l'emploi, pratique ou symbolique, d'un certain type d'objet. La manière dont l'objet en question est connoté dans divers textes peut donner à voir son statut de *locus* de contestation disputé par plusieurs discours politiques concurrents, qui cherchent à l'investir de significations opposées. Par exemple, Joseph-Ignace Guillotin, l'inventeur de la guillotine, l'avait conçue comme un instrument humanitaire, qui aurait dû épargner les souffrances inutiles aux condamnés à mort. Pourtant, les Jacobins adoptent la guillotine comme mécanisme justicier appelé à défendre la Révolution contre les supposés réactionnaires de l'Ancien Régime, tandis que les intellectuels de la Restauration la considèrent comme un instrument odieux de la Terreur républicaine.

**Mihaela Pop** (Université de Bucarest),

### ***Objets et mentalités. Approche comparative entre le Moyen Âge et le XX<sup>e</sup> siècle?***

Nous allons réaliser une comparaison schématique entre l'univers objectuel du Moyen Âge à travers quelques-unes de ses composantes définitoires : éléments de construction des maisons, par exemple le *seuil* et le *gradin*, ou les meubles, surtout le *lit*, et leurs correspondants de la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup>, voire du début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle (selon les représentations artistiques des avant-gardes), en utilisant comme base théorique *Le système des choses* de Jean Baudrillard. La raison de cette comparaison est fondée sur le fait que les objets sont le produit de la pensée humaine et par conséquent ils reflètent, par

1) *la manière de leur production (la technologie)*, la pensée de l'homme qui appartient à une époque historique précise. Donc ils expriment un *rapport culturel entre la technologie productrice et les structures mentales et psychologiques humaines de l'époque*, structures mentales qui les imaginent et les produisent. 2) Les objets expriment également *les rapports sociaux, culturels, religieux et moraux* d'une certaine société. C'est ainsi qu'ils ne sont pas seulement des produits utiles, fonctionnels, mais aussi des produits qui se constituent en

### *Communicating Objects/Objets en dialogue*

messages (discours, textes) d'une certaine culture. Il s'agit ainsi de leur contenu symbolique, donc culturel, qui peut être interprété en tant qu'expression d'une spiritualité appartenant à une époque précise. 3) Il y a aussi un rapport étroit entre objets, leurs formes et les gestes qui les 'impliquent'. Par conséquent, les objets accomplissent certaines fonctions au-delà de leur fonction d'utilité, d'instrument humain pour réaliser une action, c'est-à-dire ils sont l'expression d'une certaine pensée qui reflète le rapport entre l'idée créatrice et la forme concrète. 4) Les objets reflètent aussi une certaine vision sur le temps et l'espace, qui est suggestive pour la manière dont l'époque se rapporte au monde, en exprimant ainsi un certain Weltanschauung culturel.

La comparaison entre les deux époques culturelles tout à fait distinctes reflète, selon nous, les changements majeurs qui se sont produits au niveau de la pensée européenne, soumise au développement industriel et technologique de la modernité. En même temps, elle peut dévoiler certaines continuités culturelles qui survivent. L'un des éléments de relation nous semble être une classe sociale – la bourgeoisie – qui s'affirme à la fin de l'époque médiévale, qui survit jusqu'à nos jours. L'accent de notre recherche sera mis sur les solutions propres au Moyen Âge, solutions qui reflètent le Weltanschauung de l'époque, surtout la vision religieuse et morale.

Nous allons utiliser pour exemples comparatifs des peintures comme l'œuvre de Jan van Eyck, *Le portrait de la famille Arnolfini*, et diverses miniatures du Moyen Âge, de même que *L'Annonciation* de Fra Angelico, par rapport au *Lit* de Van Gogh, et l'œuvre de Richard Hamilton, *Quelles sont les choses qui font nos maisons tellement distinctes et séductrices ?* Nous espérons offrir ainsi 'un regard synchronique et comparatif' (que l'appel de la conférence nous suggère) entre le milieu matériel, objectuel, et l'image artistique représentative pour chaque époque.

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