A Hellenistic Revolution?
Objects and Change in Afro-Eurasia from the 3rd to 1st centuries BCE

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Day 1

M.J. Versluys: **Introduction. Objects and Change in Afro-Eurasia from the 3rd to 1st centuries BC: A global Hellenistic Revolution?**

From around 200 BC onwards we witness an unprecedented intensification of connectivity all across Afro-Eurasia. People in the period clearly were aware of what they were living through. In his *World History*, written in ca. 150 BC, Polybius (*Histories* 1.3) remarks: "*From this point onwards history becomes one organic whole: the affairs of Italy and Africa are connected with those of Asia and of Greece, and all events bear a relationship and contribute to a single end*". The 3rd to the 1st centuries BC indeed set a decisive stage in the interconnection of the different Afro-Eurasian spheres. As a result, the *oikumene* is characterised by expanded geographies, heightened cultural interconnectedness, dramatic changes and enduring innovations more than ever before.

This watershed has so far been studied mainly along geographical and disciplinary boundaries. Lacking is a comparative, global study of this 200 BC shift from a bottom-up perspective. It is the aim of the conference to prudently work towards such a global panorama by not only integrating the traditionally divided Hellenistic (Latin) West with the Hellenistic (Greek) East, but also by drawing in Northern Africa, Egypt and Central Asia. To achieve this, we have selected a wide range of sites and regions, from all over Afro-Eurasia, where we can document and study changes taking place from the 3rd to the 1st centuries BC. Objects and objectscapes will be central to our investigation, though not exclusively. These changes will undoubtedly vary from region to region and even from site to site. However, the panorama provided by our conference will allow us to investigate (and question) causalities between similar processes taking place far from

one another, as well as assessing regional forms and trajectories such developments could take. Can we really speak about a global Hellenistic Revolution? As 'zooming out' is most important for a fresh perspective on what we still use to call Hellenisation and Roman imperialism, we will start with looking at contemporary developments in Monsoon Asia and India.

In this Introduction I will first provide a brief overview of the increasing connectivity that characterizes the first millennium BCE in order to illustrate what I actually mean with "the 200 BCE threshold". I will then briefly comment on the two central (theoretical and methodological) concepts of our conference: Globalisation (which, for me, is about the impact of increasing connectivity) and objectscapes (which, for me, is about understanding objects as the *agents provocateurs* of change and innovation).

M. Stark: **Global Changes in Monsoon Asia from the 3rd to 1st centuries BCE**

Syncretism, vernacular cosmopolitanism, glocalization. Scholars of Southeast Asia have yet to find the perfect term to characterize the period that began in the late centuries BCE and shaped the first millennium CE polities that followed. My object-centered history of 3rd-1st century BCE dynamics across greater Monsoon Asia during the "paroxysms of integration" that affected the Roman world examines logistics and impacts of change that accompanied the region's incorporation into a Eurasian interactional network. After first defining Southeast Asia (place, time, focal points), I discuss the flow of things (particularly cultivated), ideas, and people between Monsoon Asia and points West from the 3rd through 1st centuries BCE, and consider what happened to selected Southeast Asian societies that were caught up in the dynamics of early globalization.

A. Bauer: **Ritualized Production and Cultivated Distinctions on the Early Deccan: Re-Centering Perspectives of Early Historic (ca. 500 BCE – CE 500) Indian Ocean Trade**

This presentation reviews recent archaeological evidence from the interior Deccan region of southern India to address the changing nature and intensity of exchange relationships with the wider network of Indian Ocean commerce throughout the first millennium BCE. It offers an analysis centered on interior sites that contrasts with suggestions that the region was mere "periphery" or "hinterland" to a widening system of trade that was centered on port towns. Contextual analyses on the Deccan suggest that the cultural significance of a variety of locally produced materials and exotic items was related to changes among ritual practices that were instrumental in constituting newly emergent social distinctions and collectives during the first millennium BCE. Prior to the development of this new socio-historical and symbolic-material context,

inhabitants of the region had seemingly less use for nonlocal trade items from across the Indian Ocean, despite evidence for long-term connections with littoral regions. As such, I point to how unique historical developments within the interior Deccan would come to significantly affect the profusion of materials and objects that were distributed from India to a broader Indian Ocean world.

M. Pitts: **A Hellenistic revolution in the West? Wine amphorae and the excitation of objectscapes in Gaul and Britain from 200 BCE**

Polybius' description of a Mediterranean world experiencing sudden and profound connection, interdependence, and interweaving (*symploke*) in the aftermath of the Second Punic War presents a scenario that has been variously seized upon by historians and global sociologists as evidence of nascent global consciousness and ancient 3lobalizati processes. Whatever the reality or novelty of this historical situation, or indeed Polybius' motivations in constructing this picture, the outlook is fundamentally a Mediterranean one. While colonial settlements had been established on the southern shores of Gaul for several centuries prior to 200 BCE, the accounts of Posidonius in the early first century BCE underline just how different was the culture and society of *Gallia comata* (long-haired Gaul) compared with coastal cities like Massalia, only a stone's throw away. If anything, rather than a Hellenistic revolution, the real watershed for deeper-rooted change is traditionally understood as taking place only after Roman intervention – especially the further north one gets – following the often-violent conquests of Caesar and the urban and infrastructural developments of the Augustan era. What, if anything, is wrong with this picture?

There is no denying the significant societal impact of Roman imperial expansion in Gaul (and Britain) set in motion in the mid-late first century BC. Rather than questioning this, or re-framing processes of 'becoming Roman' as a kind of selective appropriation of Hellenism, the aim of this paper is to take an alternative perspective centred on the notion of changing *objectscapes*. In particular, I wish to investigate what Chris Gosden described as 'a general excitation of the object world from at least 100 BC onwards which owes something to trends emanating from the Mediterranean which ripple out through areas north and west' (Gosden 2006, 208, 'What Do Objects Want?', *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*). While Gosden refers to changes taking place as far away as the British Isles, can this phenomenon be pushed back to c. 200 BCE, or even earlier? Taking an objectscape perspective, part of my contribution will examine the appearance of novel objects around this time, the ways in which they innovated through their interactions with people and things, and their longer-term impacts in both inter-artefactual domains and spheres of cultural practice.

A particular focus concerns one of the most striking and archaeologically visible material changes that took place in Gaul and Britain from the second century BCE

onwards: the mass importation and consumption of amphorae (largely assumed to contain wine) of Mediterranean origin. Amphorae were among the first truly 4lobalizatio objects to appear *en masse* in NW Europe, and as such this phenomenon has already attracted substantial attention in scholarship. This includes 'prestige goods' models that saw the wine trade as instigating the economic and cultural 'softening' of Gallic communities prior to Roman annexation (e.g. Cunliffe, 1988, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians*), and more recently, post-colonial accounts 4lobalizati the agency of local communities who were attracted to wine (if not Mediterranean culture) because of its advantageous use in indigenous mechanisms of competitive feasting and alcohol consumption (e.g. Dietler, 2010, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*). What can an objectscapes-perspective add to these narratives? As Matthieu Poux's comprehensive analysis (*L'Âge du Vin*, 2004) of wine amphorae in Gaul demonstrates, localism undoubtedly played a vital role, especially for communities who forbade the entry of Italian merchants, as described by Caesar and archaeological attested in some regions. Nevertheless, a number of phenomena deserve further attention: the almost universally 'special' treatment of amphorae, the rapid development of new repertoires of imported and local technologies of consumption, and a growing sense of shared (if not identically replicated) practices spanning multiple communities in Gaul and Britain.

My contention is that the humble amphora served as a material *agent provocateur* par excellence, setting in motion a series of reverberations in objectscapes with major long-term social and historical consequences. To develop this argument, I investigate what made the wine amphora so irresistible, of a wide array of possible Mediterranean imports to Gaul. A past tendency to focus on amphora contents alone (wine) has meant that other innovative aspects of the amphora have been neglected, most notably its 4lobalizatio, almost anthropomorphic design. Making sense of the phenomenon, therefore, requires not only close attention to local contexts of consumption in Gaul and Britain, but also the circumstances that led to the manufacture of such huge numbers of highly 4lobalizatio pottery containers, from multiple Mediterranean centres of production, and the genesis of well-known types such as the ubiquitous Dressel 1 and its so-called 'Greco-Italic' forbears.

T. G. Schattner: **Roads to Individuality and Homogenization – The Iberian peninsula around the turn of eras**

The Iberian Peninsula has the size and extent of a European subcontinent with a correspondingly diverse landscape. The ethnographic composition of the population corresponds to this when Gnaeus Cornelius Scipio and his troops landed at Ampurias in the Northeast in 218 BC. Scipio and the Roman army encounter a mosaic of Indo-European tribes in the West, Northwest and centre of the peninsula, non-Indo-European Iberians in the area of the Eastern coasts and in the South, and Punic populations of the Mediterranean coastal regions in the South. It will take Rome 200 years to unite this

European subcontinent under one hand for the first time in its history through a persistently pursued policy of perfidy, brutality and skilful exploitation of the internal discord of the natives (*divide et impera*). For the first time, Augustus will subject the so different landscapes of Hispania to a new order, 5lobalization by the fact that it was created on the basis of equal principles.

As different as these peoples are, as different is their cultural character and the archaeological evidence. The contribution will focus on two phenomena that are characteristic of the Hellenistic period: the outcoming of the individual on the one hand and the trend towards 5lobalization5 on the other, which characterise the epoch around the turn of the eras. The phenomena prove to be complementary in the sense that the individual obviously needs a certain environment of general acceptance of uniform (Greek) ideas in order to emerge. In this context, the outcoming of the individual seems to reflect an internal development of societies and 5lobalization5 an external one; 5lobalization55on is, in a sense, a response to the possibilities that arise through 5lobalization5. Neverthelesse, the inter-action is rich in variation.

The fact that the Iberian Peninsula is known to have only marginally participated in the Hellenisation of the Mediterranean area must be taken into account. Since the corresponding monuments are generally missing, Hellenisation can never have taken place over the whole country. Nevertheless, the criteria of *koine* and *habitus* are, at least up to a certain point, given as components in the enframing, as the existence of the phenomena mentioned proves. As for this contribution, a view from a certain distance seems to be indicated in any case.

The problem is illustrated by a few case studies, which are to be considered on the basis of the keywords connectivity, relationality and impact. These are chosen to reflect the range of developments in time and content in both the North and South of the country. In this latter region, the ground was prepared by its centuries-old Phoenician-Greek tradition, so that later 5loba fashioned 5lobalization5 took hold faster and more strongly in the South, but more weakly and slowly in the North.

Thus, the emergence of individual traits in statuary representations in the South does not reach a breakthrough in the depiction of personal traits until the Augustan period with the Roman portrait and documents thus a delayed reception. A different development in the public and private spheres is shown by the introduction of writing and script on monuments in the North with an interesting individual case as an exception. A further differentiation of the picture emerges when looking at the use of marble, which geographically has a South-North gradient, but at the same time also a gradation according to the status of the cities. Finally, the Terrace sanctuary of Munigua is mentioned, an incunabulum of hellenistic architecture on the Iberian Peninsula that has remained without precedent.

R. Henzel: **Changes in the Objectscape of Rome and Central Italy in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC**

The Hellenistic or Republican period in Rome can be seen as one of the periods most intensively investigated by ancient historians and archeologists. The last two centuries of the Republic have been analyzed as a time of transition leading to the Republic's end and to the rise of Augustus caused by the expansion of Rome abroad. However, the focus has mainly been on literary sources, which mention new objects and practices coming to Rome. In contrast, this paper will take an archaeological perspective, presenting an overview of changes in Rome's and Central Italy's objectscape after 200 BC. I will argue for several changes in architecture, art, pottery and materials, such as marble and opus caementitium, all visible in the last two centuries. I will show that the direct trigger for these changes was indeed the expansion of Rome, but that underlying them is a more complex interplay of changing needs, resources and practices.

J.R.W. Prag: **Sicily between '-isations': finding a way out of the impasse?**

Narrative historiography of Sicily famously staggers from one conquest or colonisation to the next, and the 'Sicilians' are classically hard to identify and at different moments hellenised and romanised (but not, e.g. punicised) to very disputed degrees. The period after the Second Punic War in particular has proved challenging in this respect (Syracuse was sacked in 212 BC, the island left 'pacified' under a Roman praetor, largely without military presence, from 201 BC). 'Romanisation' is hard to identify in traditional forms before the Augustan colonisation, but urban landscapes and the island's economy flourish and the forms are more obviously 'hellenistic' than anything else. Recent work has emphasised the interactions of the elite in particular, broadly moving towards the seeming paradox of Hellenisation as Romanisation, whether with the label of 'Romano-Sicilian', or emphasising the role of Roman domination as catalyst for a regional identity and elite auto-representation in the language of the Hellenistic world. In earlier work I have sketched this situation, and in several studies attempted to fit this into a larger picture in different ways. Here I confront the same problem, but with a more explicit eye upon the potential for 'complex connectivity' or 'globalisation' to advance our understanding, and in the hope that the comparative perspective of the conference will offer new inspiration.

J.C. Quinn: **More Monumental Power: Globalisation at a Regional Scale in Hellenistic North Africa**

Ancient North Africa tends to be presented in modern scholarship as a series of islands in space (Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, the Maghrib, the Maghrib al-Aqsa, and the Saharan oases), disconnected from the cultural and economic development of the rest of the Mediterranean world, and dominated by a succession of imperial powers, culminating

after the destruction of Carthage in 146 in 'Roman Africa'. The inhabitants of the region are similarly categorised into politically-, ethnically-, culturally- and geographically-bounded groups whose material culture is seen as primitive and/or derivative, and whose activities are investigated either entirely separately from those of other groups, or in terms of political and cultural interactions between basically and originally distinct 'peoples'.

This tendency to fragmentation is compounded by divisions in the academy: the history and culture of the Phoenician colonies is treated as a branch of Near-Eastern studies, quite separate in terms of training and methodology from that of historians of Greco-Roman North Africa, and different again from the way in which the indigenous peoples are studied primarily through the lens of anthropology, or as 'pre-historic'. As a result, 'Roman Africa' has been relatively well studied, while the pre-Augustan period has until recently been largely ignored.

The ancient evidence tells a different story. New archaeological excavations and surveys – including projects at Carthage, Utica, Henchir Bourgou, Chemtou, Althiburos, Lixus and in the Libyan Fazzan – now provide abundant new evidence for the wealth, power and rich material culture of African cities and kingdoms in the pre- and early-Roman period, as well as for the exchange of people, goods and ideas. And while there is plenty of evidence for inter-continental exchange in the Hellenistic Period, continuing a pattern of connectivity that goes back to an earlier era in qualitative if not quantitative terms, what I want to concentrate on in this paper is new evidence in the Hellenistic period for intra-continental exchange, and more specifically for 'globalisation', within North Africa itself.

To do so I take the organisers of our conference up on their suggestion that I revisit my 2013 study of monumental architecture in third and second century BCE North Africa. But whereas there I 7lobali primarily on a group of monuments associated – geographically, at least – with the indigenous 'Numidian' kingdoms of central North Africa in the third and second centuries BCE, on their multiple external referents, and their multiple local messages, I now want to sketch out a regional perspective, looking at a larger polythetic set of monuments built in this era in North Africa west of the Nile. They constitute, I will argue, a distinctive regional style of architecture that first comes into focus in the third century, and changes in significant ways with the advent of Roman power in the second. Once again they draw on models from near and far, including 'Numidian Royal Architecture' itself, but speak above all about each other – and they speak, I will argue, of imperial power. I will use these architectural experiments to explore the meanings of the cultural identifications involved, the imperial underpinnings of ancient cosmopolitanism, the use of the Hellenistic concept, and the potential Globalization theory at a regional scale.

R. Krumeich: ***Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit.* Cultural contacts and self-Hellenization in the center of Hellenism**

This paper aims to discuss the reception of Greek culture by the encounter of foreign Greeks and especially of Romans with traditional Greek cities and sanctuaries in Greece during the Hellenistic period (especially in the second and first centuries B.C.E.). It focuses on the appearance and occasional self-Hellenization of Roman officials and generals and on some crucial practices both by Greeks and Romans that were genuine Greek or adopted by Roman donators.

The Greek mainland included most famous and traditional cities such as Athens or Sparta and can be considered the very center of Greek culture or Hellenism. Regarding this area, terms like 'Hellenization' or 'Hellenistic Revolution' sound like oxymora and seem a bit strange or inappropriate – at first glance at least. As well as other areas of the Mediterranean, Greece has been part of a global network during the Hellenistic period. The Attalids of pergamon, e.g., intended to leave their marks in Athens as an allied city and a very important cultural center. Certainly, the huge Pergamene pillar monuments carrying bronze chariots with royal statues brought a new type of royal self-presentation to the Athenian Acropolis and contributed to the great importance of this venerable sanctuary. On the other hand, the Pergamene kings emulated the Athenian example by installing a marble emulation of the Athena Parthenos in the sanctuary of Athena in Pergamon. Moreover, a Pergamene king by the name of Attalos (most probably Attalos II) tried to equal the Athenian exploits in mythical and historical past by dedicating the "Little Barbarians" on the Acropolis (Paus. 1.25.2): more than 100 under-lifesize bronze statues on four separate elongated pedestals displayed a gigantomachy, the fight of the mythical Athenians led by Theseus against the invading Amazons, the Battle of Marathon (490 B.C.E.) and a Pergamene victory of the third century B.C.E. over the Galatians in Asia Minor. Obviously, the Pergamene king placed himself on the same level as great saviors of mankind and acted as an important guardian of Greek civilization. This dedication illustrates the adaptation of a very successful Athenian model by a foreign Greek king in the second century B.C.E.

In the same period, Greece was an important center of a proper self-Hellenization: in conjunction with Rome's expansion in the Mediterranean, Roman generals were active in Greece from the early second century B.C.E. and came in close contact with genuine Greek forms of representation and honorific portraiture. Aemilius Paullus' aggressive usurpation of an almost finished pillar monument of the Macedonian king Perseus in Delphi was clearly an exceptional demonstration of Roman power (*CIL* I^2 622: *L. Aimilius L. f. imperator de rege Perse Macedonibusque cepet*). More typical was the representation of L. Mummius, who appeared as donator and benefactor in Olympia and several other Greek sanctuaries. Beyond that, he was the first to re-dedicate already existing Greek votive-offerings to Greek deities on his own behalf – a practice that was later carried out by Sulla as well. By contributing to the reputation of the respective Roman generals and

to the continuing fame of the respective sanctuaries as well, these re-dedications ("Neustiftungen") were of use in two respects.

It is very instructive to have a look at the political representation of Roman generals and officials in Greece from the second century B.C.E. Many representatives of Rome received honorific statues in several cities and sanctuaries of the Greek East that showed them mostly naked or else in another Greek 'costume' (wearing a Greek *himation* or cuirass). Moreover, in the Amphiareion of Oropos and on the Athenian Acropolis many Romans were honored by reused and re-inscribed Greek statues of the fifth, fourth or third centuries B.C.E. This practice flourished from the Sullan times until the imperial period and sometimes led to remarkable and unexpected results. There is every indication that the experiences of Roman generals and officials in the Greek East as well as such honorific portraiture with its genuine Greek typology and iconography contributed a lot to a deliberate self-Hellenization of Romans since the early second century B.C.E. In Rome and Italy there was a certain tension between resistance against and eager reception of Greek culture and customs; some prominent Romans liked to wear the Greek himation and sandals or even were represented in a purely Greek iconography or by means of a genuine Greek statue.

There was certainly no sudden self-Hellenization of Romans in Greece from 200 B.C.E. onward. Rather, we are dealing with a more complex historical process. But in the end, the consequences of the close encounter between Romans and the traditional cities and sanctuaries of the Greek mainland initiated a continuous process of cultural exchange and an eager reception of Greek culture and 'costumes' that resulted in a true 'Hellenistic revolution'.

N. Terrenato: **discussion Western Afro-Eurasia**

Day 2

M. Blömer & M.J. Versluys: **Anchoring innovation at the Euphrates. Commagene and the global Hellenistic revolution**

The second and first centuries BCE constitute a remarkable period in the history of Commagene, a region in northern Syria at the Euphrates. The famous monument of Nemrud Dağ, dating to the era around 50 BC, can be regarded as the result of the dramatic changes and innovations that took place in (roughly) the century before.

The site of Nemrud Dağ consists of a tumulus surrounded by two major terraces. The tumulus was created by Antiochos I around the middle of the first century BC on a hilltop in the north-eastern part of his small kingdom; it is said to contain his tomb, although it remains as yet undiscovered. Each terrace originally contained more or less the same elements, including a series of five monumental statues (four gods and the king himself, flanked on each side by an eagle-lion pair) as well as series that included *dexiosis* (hand-shake) reliefs and ancestor reliefs. A large inscription in Greek situated at the back of the colossi, generally referred to as the great cult inscription containing a *nomos* (law), provides information on the function of the monument and the intentions of its builder. In terms of identity and style the monument shows Greek as well as Persian (or Iranian) aspects, as Antiochos I traced his ancestry to both Alexander the Great and Dareios, while the deities were "syncretised" denominations. In addition, the king referred to himself not only as *philhellen* but also as *philorhomaios*. Several elements that are found at Nemrud Dağ (a hilltop sanctuary, colossal statues, *dexiosis* reliefs, specific animals, cult inscriptions) recur in other known Commagenean sites, for example Arsameia ad Nymphaeum and Karakuş; and most likely also the kingdom's capital, Samosata—now submerged by the Euphrates due to one of the dams built for the South East Anatolia Project.

From this brief description it already becomes very clear that, around 50 BCE, Commagene was a late Hellenistic laboratory for innovation by *bricolage* just as were well-known *metropoleis* like Alexandria, Rome, Antioch or Seleucia. Antiochos I took elements that had been universalized by the global Hellenistic revolution and particularized them in his project. Only the end result as such is unique. All the elements themselves had been circulating in the Hellenistic network for a while already; coming to Commagene with their specific genealogy. This process of *bricolage* has recently been well studied. Attention is then mainly given to the (global) elements making up this particular constellation themselves: Hellenism, Persianism and what we perhaps should call Romanism. What is so far lacking, however, is a proper understanding of how the impact of the Hellenistic revolution was embedded in Commagene itself; how the new, global elements were aligned with what was already there, locally and regionally.

To answer the question how Commagene embedded the global diversity it was confronted with in the second and first centuries BCE, we will focus, in this lecture, on the strong formal correspondence between the distinctly novel and original monuments

commissioned by Antiochos and the pre-existing local sculptural environment. As bold, innovative, and new as the Antiochan project was, it also seemed specifically designed to be accommodated to local conditions. Concerning the new cults instigated by Antiochos I, the most obvious example for the desire to fit in the pre-existing religious environment is his choice of places for his new religion and ruler worship. Although evidence for the character and design of cult sites is very limited, many finds come from locations which have also yielded direct or indirect evidence for established sanctuaries. Another aspect, which appears to have never been noted before, is the strong formal correspondence between the new monuments commissioned by Antiochos and the pre-existing local sculptural environment. Are these examples of 'anchoring innovation' cq. the embedding of global diversity unleashed by the global Hellenistic revolution?

O. Tal & A. Lichtenberger: **Nysa-Scythopolis (Tell Iẓṭabba): A Seleucid Newly Founded Settlement in the Near East and Its Material Culture in a Global Perspective**

The site of Beth She'an and the Beth She'an Valley are well known for their long occupational history. Located on a crossroads in the northern Jordan valley, on the banks of Naḥal Ḥarod, Beth She'an has demonstrated dense occupation from proto-historical to modern times. Tell Iẓṭabba, the Seleucid site-foundation, consists of three hillocks located immediately to the north of Tel Beth She'an to the north of Naḥal Ḥarod. Excavations at the site unearthed settlement remains dated to the Early Bronze, Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods. The Hellenistic settlement at Tell Iẓṭabba, which is the focus of a new German-Israeli excavations project, was founded in the first half of the second century BCE, most likely by Antiochos IV (175–164 BCE) who re-founded the Ptolemaic settlement of Scythopolis as a Seleucid urban center on Tell Iẓṭabba and renamed it Nysa. However, the city was only short-lived. It was violently destroyed by the Hasmoneans at the end of the 2nd century, probably in 108/107 BC in a military campaign headed by John Hyrcanus. After the Hasmonean destruction, the site seems to have remained unoccupied until the Roman and Byzantine periods providing archaeologist with a unique insight into half a century of Seleucid settlement history realia.

Archaeological research has been taking place on Tell Iztabba since the 1950s and affluent remains of the destroyed Seleucid settlement were found. The settlement consisted of courtyard built houses and the pottery (e.g. amphorae) and other artefacts of material culture underline close trade relations with the Aegean. While the previous excavations were more rescue in nature, the new German-Israeli Tell Iẓṭabba Excavation Project aims at a more systematic and holistic understanding of the Seleucid settlement. During the first three campaigns of fieldwork (2019–2020) we undertook a geo-magnetic survey of the entire site. This survey resulted in a better understanding of the city planning which was only partly orthogonal and, in several areas, also followed the natural topography, underlining that a so-called Greek city planning concept had not

been fully implemented. After the magnetic campaign, two seasons of excavations were undertaken. These seasons resulted in publications that provide better insights on overlooked aspect of the site settlement history. Thus, for example, archaeobotanic analysis of the site's botanical remains proved an embeddedness of the settlement in the regional agricultural knowledge cultures, as did the archaeometric analysis of the mudbricks recovered from the unearthed structures, showing that the Seleucid-period settlers used local technologies and followed local traditions. Textile finds follow this trend suggesting that the settlement was deeply rooted in local knowledge and cultures. More "global" connections are visible in the archaeometallurgical analysis, opening up the possibility that the raw materials came from Iranian ores. This however would not come as a surprise, since Iran was in the heartland of the Seleucid empire.

In our paper we will discuss the character of Seleucid Tell Iẓṭabba as a newly founded Hellenistic center and the role of its material culture in a larger Afro-Eurasian world of exchange.

K. Stevens: **Objects and culture in Hellenistic Babylonia**

Viewed as a whole, the surviving source record from Hellenistic Babylonia presents an ambiguous, even apparently contradictory picture of cultural life in the period after Alexander. On the one hand, there are signs of strong and self-conscious cultural continuity: the persistence of typical Babylonian architectural and artistic forms; the ongoing functioning and renewal of the major temples; the conservative content of scholarly cuneiform tablets produced by the priestly elite. Yet other elements suggest significant change: the frequency of Greek-derived motifs on seal impressions or among the terracotta figurines found in their thousands across the region; the appearance of characteristically Greek ceramic forms in otherwise typically Mesopotamian assemblages; the precipitous decline in numbers of cuneiform tablets, for all their continuity of content, which led within a few centuries to the extinction of both cuneiform writing and the millennia-old Sumero-Akkadian scholarly culture it had supported.

These differing impressions of cultural life in Hellenistic Babylonia to some extent correlate with different media, with a concomitant impact on modern historical reconstructions: those working with cuneiform scholarly texts have tended to stress conservatism and cultural separation between 'Babylonian' and 'Greek' or 'Greco-Macedonian' spheres; those who deal with the figurines or glyptic evidence to emphasise contact, cultural exchange and hybridity, and to challenge the utility of categories such as 'Greek' and 'Babylonian'. Considerable uncertainty persists. This paper focuses on three types of object – cuneiform tablets, terracotta figurines and seals – to approach the longstanding problem of how communities and individuals in this region responded to the broader political and socio-cultural changes inaugurated by the Macedonian conquest.

V. Messina: **A Journey with Dionysus. The moving models of Hellenistic kingship. From Seleucia on the Tigris to Parthian Nisa**

In the Hellenistic world, revolutions alternated with continuities in complex interaction processes that concerned different aspects of society, culture, ideology. Materiality is a clear indicator of such processes, though the examples it provides are not always completely understood because our comprehension is hindered by the lack of information and our interpretation is often retrospectively oriented. Indeed, in the objectscape of cities hosting apparatuses and official institutions we see the emergence of a new visuality, which elaborated concepts originated in the Greek lexicon, but it soon evolved to be adapted globally to local contexts.

The use and adaptation of concepts, vehiculated by Greek iconographies, seems particularly evident in celebrative programs and royal propaganda. Following the example of Alexander, some of the Diadochi and their descendants pursued a policy of assimilation to Dionysus. We are able to reconstruct such a policy, at least in part, thanks to epigraphic and (especially) iconographic evidence. When the available documentation is examined, it appears that assimilations to Dionysus could have been envisioned to celebrate victories (often ephemeral) in regions exotically perceived as locations faraway from the Mediterranean, at the borders of what was deemed as the *oikumene*. From a Seleucid point of view, these were regions of the far East, namely Central Asia and the Indian Subcontinent, and assimilations to Dionysus seem consequently framed in the narrative on the famed journey of Dionysus to India. In such a frame, especially non-official portrayals of Seleucid kings, such as portraits on seals used by private individuals, do show assimilations to Dionysus. Based on the occurrence of these portraits, the relation Dionysus appears to have had with kingship is deemed as acquired in scholarship. Seleucia on the Tigris offers some examples of such a relation. This said, it must be also added that Dionysus was a vehicle of propaganda for dynasts of non-Greek origin. At Parthian Nisa, the abode of the Arsacid dynasty, Dionysus is continuously recalled in luxury objects likely used in the dynastic ceremonial.

Is there any possibility to reconstruct the appropriation of kingship models based on the figure of Dionysus through the comparative analysis of the materiality of Seleucia and Nisa? Can we re-contextualize in such a frame also materials (such as architectural decorations) that echo other Seleucid symbols? Is the presence of such symbols in the objectscape of Seleucia and Nisa to be reconsidered upon? The present lecture addresses these topics from a glocal perspective.

J. Ma: **Asia Minor and its global second century BCE: intensification, connectivity and Afro-Eurasian networks**

The city of Priene, in Asia Minor, can illustrate the "Hellenistic revolution" in two snapshots. In 196 BCE, it deals with the Seleukid vice-roy for Asia Minor, Zeuxis

Kynagou, Makedôn, “official left in charge of the affairs on the other side of the Tauros”, over the dispatch of foreign judges from Laodikeia. The geography, the trace of the passage of the king, the administrative network, the royal supervision of inter-polis interactions, all these elements belong to a particular world, the “high hellenistic” third century of large, supra-regional empires; the Ptolemaic presence in Asia Minor had barely been uprooted by military action on the part of the Seleukids. In the 130s, Priene honours a benefactor for multiple service: financial, taking the place of royal patronage, and travelling as an ambassador— to Rome but also to Petra. The contrast between the two snapshots shows the passage to a differently interconnected world, that of the “global second century”. In the case of Asia Minor, a number of related phenomena appear. The first is the intensification of the network of cities in peer-polity interaction, a very old phenomenon but one boosted by the new situation in high politics. The phenomenon can be seen in the epigraphical but also numismatic and monumental record, and has received ample study (notably in A. Bresson, R. Descat, ed., *Les cités d’Asie Mineure occidentale au Iie siècle* (2001), to be read with the recent volume on the same region in the third century BCE and indeed with P. Debord’s volume on C4th Asia Minor, to get a sense of continuities and ruptures). The second phenomenon is that of inter-regional connections, within Asia Minor but also beyond: with Greece and the Balkans, with the Levant (as shown by numismatic hoards), with the west. This phenomenon has not been studied in detail: it notably raises the question of the impact of the big changes (rise of Delos, connection with Italy, decline of Rhodes, intensified slave trade in inland Anatolia as well as the “Kilikian” pirates) in terms of economic history. The third phenomenon is the place of Asia Minor and Anatolia in a global, “axial” structure stretching from Spain to the Indus valley, in the late Hellenistic period: this has hardly been thought about at all. In my paper, I will try to approach this last, third theme, after looking at the earlier place of Asia Minor in global ensembles (the Achaimenid, the high hellenistic) and after examining the better known themes of peer-polity interaction and regional connectivities in the second and first centuries BCE.

G. Lindström: **Objects and beyond: Ritual practice and innovative production techniques in Hellenistic Bactria (328-c. 140 BC)**

The Hellenistic period of Bactria (today’s southern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan) is characterized by a material turn in the sense of an apparently sudden increase in object types, styles and materialities. Although systematic excavations took place at only very few Hellenistic sites, these brought to light thousands of small finds, often with figural or ornamental decoration. The artefacts are of diverse function, such as statues and figurines, furniture, arms and armour, tools and instruments, vessels, coins, and jewellery; they are made of precious metal, bronze and iron, stone, glass, gypsum, terracotta, unbaked clay, ivory and bone, and other materials. In contrast, the sites of the preceding period, when Bactria was part of the Achaemenid Empire, are relatively poor in finds; what is known is mainly architecture and pottery.

Against this background, the material wealth of the Hellenistic period seems to be something new, related to the political integration of Bactria into the Hellenistic world.

However, the material wealth of Hellenistic Bactria is also due to the archaeological contexts, for a large number of objects were found in the sanctuaries. They were obviously donated as votive offerings and remained on site as possessions of the deity, often intentionally deposited within the holy precincts. Thus, their preservation results directly from a practice that is indeed a Hellenistic novelty in Bactria: the symbolic gift exchange with the deity, that is human communication with the deity by donating material objects in thanks for, or in anticipation of an immaterial return gift. The practice of gift-exchange to establish human bonds and its transfer to human-deity-relations is familiar from Graeco-Roman culture, but is by no means limited to it. However, the appearance of this practice in Bactria with the Hellenistic period suggests its "Greek" or Western genealogy. Symbolic gift exchange is obviously accompanied by the principle, also transferred from social practice, that we know from Greek as the *ouk ekphorá* rule. According to this, the gifts must remain in the possession of the recipient, i.e., the votive offerings remained in the sanctuary with the deity, where they were recovered archaeologically. As far as ritual practice is concerned, again, the contrast with the pre-Hellenistic period is revealing, for nothing that could be interpreted as a votive offering was found in the sanctuaries of this period.

After discussing the ritual practices and thus the connectivity of Hellenistic Bactria on the ideological level, the lecture will turn to the object level, and in particular to three groups of objects. Statuary, musical instruments and glass demonstrate the cultural interconnectedness and potential for adaptation to Bactrian conditions as well as for local innovations. With the Hellenistic period, three-dimensional large-scale figures of gods and rulers enter the sanctuaries and the public squares of Bactria. These statues in Greek style (subjects, poses) were not made of marble and bronze, but mainly of unbaked, tempered clay, covered with stucco and painted. Because there were no marble deposits in Bactria, the sculptors apparently resorted to a material that has a long-standing local tradition, especially in architecture. In doing so, they created figures of great detail and expressiveness. Finds of auloi, flute-like musical instruments, from the Oxus temple testify to the musical connection with the Mediterranean region. They also form the first material evidence of a highly sophisticated invention that met the need of Greek music for mode shifting. The innovative power of the Hellenistic Bactrian craftsmen is also demonstrated by the example of glass. Finds from Ai Khanoum and their scientific investigations show that – unlike in the Mediterranean region and also in post-Hellenistic Bactria – no Levantine soda glass was imported, but own Central Asian recipes were developed.

But do these dramatic changes, cultural interconnectedness and enduring innovations actually occur at the very beginning of the Hellenistic period of Bactria? As we know from the few historical sources on Bactria, under Alexander and the early Seleucids

thousands of mercenaries and other settlers from the West came to Bactria, so it might be assumed that this influx of people and their need for a Greek life-style led to these processes. The small finds cannot be dated more precisely within the Hellenistic period, but the pottery allows to assess the chronology of Greek influence in Bactria. Recent studies have shown that new ceramic forms, such as the Megarian bowl, are significantly produced mainly after the middle of the 3rd century BC, when the local satrapies became independent of the Seleucid Empire and founded the so-called Graeco-Bactrian Empire (c. 240-140 BC). Significantly, it is only in this period of political separation from the western Hellenistic world that a stronger need seems to have developed to express the affiliation to the Hellenistic *koiné* through the production and use of corresponding products.

M. Hoo: **A Hellenistic revolution in Central Asia? Material claims to Eurasian localism in the second century BCE**

The first three centuries BCE saw the emergence of cultural and material phenomena across Eurasia, which have long been understood in terms of Hellenization or Hellenism, credited to the achievements of Alexander the Great and his Successors. Although 'the coming of Alexander' in Central Asia (329–327 BCE) has been considered a watershed in the cultural and material history of the region, archaeological remains of Hellenistic sites indicate that the distinct emergence of Greek culture in Central Asia took place only later, in accordance with wider developments across Eurasia. The third century BCE saw important shifts in power across the Eurasian landmass with the emergence of new polities and kingdoms that entered the Eurasian stage, reconfiguring relationships with the Macedonian dynasties of the Antigonids, Ptolemies, and the Seleukids. While Central Asia witnessed the growing independence of Graeco-Bactrian rulers simultaneously with the rise of Arsakid Parthia in the second half of the third century BCE, it is during a later generation of kings in the second century BCE, that the effects of a 'Hellenistic revolution' of interconnected material and cultural innovations becomes prominently visible.

This paper considers two aspects of such an innovative revolution in Hellenistic Central Asia: diverse monumentality and anthropomorphic imagery. Engaging with the manifesto by Pitts and Versluys (2021), I address these innovative aspects in the 'objectscape' of Ai Khanum within the timely Eurasian arena of the second century BCE. Located in north-eastern Afghanistan, Ai Khanum remains the most important urban settlement site in Hellenistic Bactria. It was discovered and extensively excavated by the French DAFA under direction of Paul Bernard in the 1960s and 70s, which formed an enormous turning point in studies of Graeco-Bactria, up until then mainly known from coins. Their monumental efforts uncovered the remains of a walled city with an acropolis, a palatial complex, a theatre, gymnasium, mausoleum, an arsenal, large houses, two temples, a cultic podium, and some Greek inscriptions. The wealth of information yielded by the excavations were translated to influential historical narrative

that framed the city as an outpost of Hellenism in the East, protecting the eastern frontier of the Hellenistic *oikoumene* against nomads from the steppes. We can see here the historiographical impact of Polybius, one of the few literary sources that inform us about Bactrian history, whose narrative mentions that the Graeco-Bactrian king Euthydemus appealed to a treaty with Antiochus III with a common cause to ward off a nomadic invasion from the north. Although current scholarship increasingly moves away from interpretations of Hellenism at Ai Khanum as a bastion of Greekness, a distinct uneasiness about Greek culture at this site remains. Those material novelties recognized as Greek culture remain associated with some form of Greek identity, connected to the political dominance of Greek kings, the fidelity of Greek settlers to their Aegean roots, or the desire of local Bactrians to Hellenize to climb up the social ladder.

In recent works (2018; 2020; in press) I argued that concepts from globalization research such as deterritorialization and translocalism can help to create new narratives that include a wider diversity of possible historical scenarios of those material phenomena that have been understood under the heading of 'Hellenism'. Turning to object agency, visual *koine*, and objectscapes as proposed by Versluys, productively adds interpretive depth by highlighting distinct diachronic relationality and social dynamism behind material culture. Although Ai Khanum as a whole can be considered as a novelty – at present it is the only urban site of Hellenistic Bactria of its size and monumentality – the city itself also witnessed important changes in its material environment. It its life-span from the early third century until the mid-second century BCE, Ai Khanum experienced a distinct moment of new objects and materialities in the early second century BCE. This moment is connected to changes in the ceramic assemblage and the beginning of an architectural program which saw the monumentalization of the city, started by the Graeco-Bactrian king Euthydemos and his son Demetrius (r. *c.* 220s-190 BCE, resp. *c.* 190-180 BCE) and more extensively elaborated under the rival king Eucratides I (r. r. *c.* 170–145 BCE). Grand new buildings such as the theatre and the gymnasium were constructed in local mud brick and significant reparations and reconstructions were carried out across the city, including the palatial complex and the enlargement of the main sanctuary. Here, the excavators unearthed fragments of large anthropomorphic statues in naturalistic 'Classical Greek style' – a distinct material novelty in Central Asia. The material innovation of Greek-styled anthropomorphic statues in a religious context is also found at the contemporaneous site of the Oxus Temple at Takht-i Sangin in Bactria. Significantly so, the building activities at Ai Khanum take place around the same time as another moment of monumentalization in Central Asia, namely at the site of Old Nisa. Here, an extensive building and artistic program of the royal citadel was undertaken by king Mithridates I of Parthia (r. *c.* 171–131 BCE), which also included large anthropomorphic statues and monumental buildings constructed of local mud brick. Addressing the translocal relationality of the public buildings and the anthropomorphic imagery, I argue that Ai Khanum's material culture engaged with increasingly diverse material repertoire to evoke social scenarios that were not exclusively Greek nor exclusively local. Instead, I consider the material

novelties of the site in interaction with timely developments in available material idioms to make claims on Eurasian localism in the second century BCE.

S. Hauser: **discussion Eastern Afro-Eurasia**

J.G. Manning: **General discussion: the Hellenistic Revolution in the context of global history**