

Global Dynamics in Antiquity.
Situated experience in an extended ancient world: worldviews, objects and environments (ca. 750 BCE – 750 CE)

International round table organized by Olivier Hekster, Ineke Sluiter
& Miguel John Versluys
in the framework of the Anchoring Innovation research program
<https://anchoringinnovation.nl>

Leiden University, November 27-29, 2024
Venue: National Museum of Antiquities (RMO), Leemanszaal

In the Afro-Eurasian sphere, a dramatic (if uneven) increase of the scale of connectivity and intensity of contact took place in the period from ca. 750 BCE to 750 CE. This increased connectivity had a pronounced impact on the wider Mediterranean area and the Near East (large parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, including the Arab world) and its repercussions are felt until today. While in the West the Greco-Roman world was long considered central to these developments, expanding scholarly horizons have revealed how 'Classical' Antiquity in fact depended on supra-regional networks. This resulted in imperialism, massive slavery, and identity-wars but equally in crucial and long-lasting innovations in science, economy, and culture.

Connectivity is a driver of change in the social, economic and political domains. It confronts societies with new, previously unknown possibilities. It also makes people experience their own situatedness: becoming part of a bigger world results in heightened attention for one's own sense of place and time. This, in turn, leads to the creation of new world views. In this meeting we will investigate the situated experience of people and social groups 'on the ground', in the ancient wider Mediterranean and Near East, through an analysis of their worldviews and their reactions to changing objects and environments.

What differences have the dramatic changes taking place in this period made to the lived experience of people 'on the ground'? What was it like for them? How was increasing complexity cognitively managed, and how did situated differences impact failure or success in such management? And can investigating these historical experiences, as we do in this conference, create critical distance from explosive debates on dealing with change in the present and shed new light?

To participate please register via: s.m.van.de.velde@arch.leidenuniv.nl

Program

Note that all regular lectures have a slot of 45 minutes and consist of max. 20 minutes of presentation followed by a 25-minute discussion.

Wednesday November 27

17.15 -18.30 National Museum of Antiquities, Tempelzaal

Keynote lecture 1 (and public lecture) by Chris Goden (Oxford): *Global dynamics: a very deep historical perspective on the history of Humanity*

Thursday November 28

10.00-11.00 Keynote lecture 2 (with discussion) by Miguel John Versluys (UL): *Global dynamics in Antiquity: from networks to cognition*

11.00-11.15 Coffee and tea

11.15-12.00 Shana Zaia (VU) *Pedagogy without borders: Education in the imperial 'peripheries' of Mesopotamia*

12.00-12.45 Caroline Waerzeggers (UL) *The politics of silence: experiencing the first decades of Persia's global empire in Babylonia (c. 539-500 BCE)*

12.45-13.30 Lunch

13.30-14.15 Tazuko van Berkel (UL) *Money: a tool for connective thinking?*

14.15-15.00 Luuk Huitink (UvA) *Causal adventures in Antiquity's space-time continuum*

15.00-15.15 Coffee/Tea

15.15-16.00 Maaïke van Berkel (RU) *Water management in the hinterland of Damascus (7th-8th centuries): Experience on the ground in Syria after the Muslim conquest*

16.00-17.00 Wrap up by Ineke Sluiter (UL), followed by a final discussion

Friday November 29

10.00-11.00 Keynote lecture 3 (with discussion) by Wu Xin (Bryn Mawr College): *Kyzyltepa and the role of Central Asia in the global network of the ancient world*

11.00-11.15 Coffee and tea

11.15-12.00 Danielle Sloopjes (UvA) *Global dynamics and boundaries: a mismatch or match made in heaven?*

12.00-12.45 Els Rose (UU) *Christian cults and the performativity of freedom in the Latin West, c. 100 CE – c. 750 CE*

12.45-13.30 Lunch

13.30-14.15 Bas ter Haar-Romeny (VU) *The Rise of Syriac, Armenian, and Coptic in Late Antiquity*

14.15-15.00 Bettina Reitz-Joosse (RUG) *tba*

15.00-15.15 Coffee and tea

15.15-16.00 Felix Budelmann (RUG) *Situated cognition. What cognitive Classics can do for the study of Antiquity*

16.00-17.00 Wrap up by Olivier Hekster (RU), followed by a final discussion

17.30-19.00 **Lipsius building, room 0.28.**

Keynote lecture 4 (and public lecture) by Jo Quinn (Oxford): *How the world made the West: a 4000-year history*