

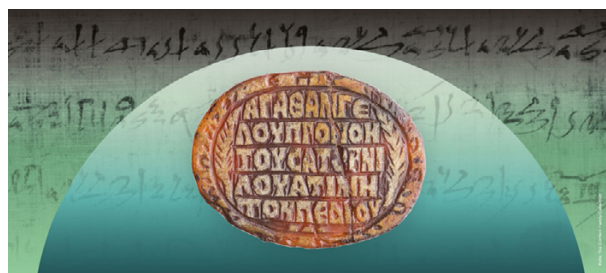


Beste lezer,

Het nieuwe academisch jaar is weer begonnen en we zijn ontzettend bezig met activiteiten, lezingen, congressen en natuurlijk ook colleges. Onze postdoc Diederik Halbertsma heeft de eerste weken van zijn college “Human Resilience in the Ancient Near East” bij de MA-opleiding Classics and Ancient Civilizations achter de rug en geeft daarbovenop nog een aantal colleges in BA- en MA-vakken bij de opleiding Oude Nabije Oosten Studies en de Faculteit Archeologie. Passend bij zijn onderwijsactiviteiten gaat Diederik op 26 en 27 november de zevende NINO Postdoctoral Conference verzorgen waar onder meer studenten ook actief aan deelnemen. Dit is een fantastisch moment voor onze nieuwe postdoc Nicola Barbagli, die we begin september konden verwelkomen, om mee te kijken en te ondersteunen. Hij stelt zich in deze nieuwsbrief voor, en we kunnen ook volgende jaar weer een spannend thema voor het congres en MA-vak verwachten. Nicola was niet de enige nieuwe medewerker bij het NINO die we bij onze welkomst/afscheidsborrel eind augustus konden ontvangen. Lena Siegmann heeft van Kiki Freriks het stokje overgenomen als redactieassistent bij ons tijdschrift Bibliotheca Orientalis. Lena vertelt in deze nieuwsbrief wat haar achtergrond is.



*Vorbereidingen voor het bakken van brood in de oostelijke woestijn van Egypte (foto Diederik Halbertsma).
‘Resilience and Adaptation in Ancient West Asia’
is het thema van de NINO Postdoc Conference 2026.*



Week van het Oude Schrift 2026

Een week geleden heeft het NINO weer in samenwerking met het RMO de Week van het Oude Schrift georganiseerd. Dit jaar stond er geen regio centraal, zoals vorig jaar met Noord-Afrika. Wij hebben in 2026 ervoor gekozen om jonge talenten in het licht te zetten, het rijkdom aan taalonderwijs bij de Universiteit Leiden te presenteren en inzicht te geven in het taalonderwijs bij de universiteit. Martin Baasten gaf een boeiende introductie met een panorama van bijna alle talen ter wereld, en toonde hoe hij nieuwe studenten in dit talenpanorama introduceert. In aansluiting gaven Henric Janssen, Kiki Freriks, Tim Claessen en Mark Eertink – respectievelijk promovendus, net afgestudeerd MA-student, en MA-afgestudeerde met een baan bij het RMO – inzicht in hun onderzoeksexpertises en specialisaties. Er was van alles bij: van geheimschrift in het Oude Griekenland tot het begin van het alfabet, het Egyptische cursiefschrift en Akkadische woordenlijsten. Willemijn Waal, net als Martin docent bij de universiteit, rondde de week af met een overzicht van schriftdragers en wat de materialiteit voor de ontwikkeling van schriften betekende. De Week van het Oude Schrift was weer heel goed bezocht en wij danken alle sprekers en medewerkers van het museum voor de goede organisatie.

Ook bij onze collecties is er op dit moment veel activiteit. Bruiklenen gaan naar het buitenland voor aankomende tentoonstellingen en spannende projecten vinden plaats met de kleitabletten. Onderzoek naar het NINO-archief brengt meer en meer details uit de geschiedenis van het instituut naar voren. Maar hierover meer in de volgende nieuwsbrief. We hebben ook voor het najaar weer een aantal activiteiten gepland. Een overzicht is in deze nieuwsbrief te vinden. Veel plezier bij het lezen!

MM



Nieuws uit het NINO- onderzoekscentrum

The Afterlife of the Seleukids: Receptions and Reinterpretations from Antiquity to the Present

Rolf Strootman (Universiteit Utrecht)

De belangstelling van historici voor het Seleucidische Rijk is flink gegroeid. Er is daarbij veel aandacht voor de Nabij-Oosterse en Iraanse aspecten van dit imperium, dat zich in de derde eeuw voor onze jaartelling uitstreckte van de Egeïsche Zee tot het Pamir-gebergte. Niet langer gezien als een 'westers' Fremdkörper in het Oude Nabije Oosten wordt nu ook langzaam de plaats van het rijk in de wereldgeschiedenis beter begrepen. De Seleuciden waren echter zelden tot nooit onderwerp van receptiestudies.

Vooraf dankzij de ruimhartige steun van het NINO vond van 12 tot en met 14 november 2025 in de Universiteitsbibliotheek Utrecht het internationale congres *The Afterlife of the Seleukids* plaats, georganiseerd door Pim Möhring (Nederlandse Numismatische Collectie) en Rolf Strootman (Universiteit Utrecht), in samenwerking met Altay Coşkun (Waterloo University, Ontario). Het congres was de achtste editie van de tweejaarlijkse *International Seleukid Study Days*. Het doel was een dialoog te beginnen over de verschillende, vaak tegenstrijdige 'postume' interpretaties en appropriaties van het



'Stratonice en Antiochus', Jean Grandjean (1775),
Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, RP-T-1921-66

Seleucidische Rijk – een rijk dat in de eerste helft van de twintigste eeuw in verband gebracht werd met een veronderstelde 'Hellenisering' van het Nabije Oosten, en dus in de tweede helft van de twintigste eeuw onvermijdelijk gezien werd als een vorm van Europese koloniale overheersing, maar net zo makkelijk in de westerse tradities benaderd werd met een scala aan Oriëntalistische stereotypen. Het rijk is in het verleden door historici getypeerd als Grieks, Macedonisch, Babylonisch, Iraans of simpelweg 'Oosters'. Wie het weet mag het zeggen.

Twintig sprekers en de organisatoren behandelden een variëteit aan receptie-thema's, grofweg te verdelen in (1) Antieke en Middeleeuwse receptie en (2) vroegmoderne en moderne receptie. Sprekers waren

afkomstig uit Oekraïne, Australië, Tasmanië, Canada, de VS, het VK, Israël, Duitsland, Italië, Spanje, China en Nederland. In het kader van het congres werd ook een masterclass voor RMA-studenten georganiseerd. In een belendende zaal richtte bibliothecaris Andrea van Leerdam een expositie in met oude drukken gerelateerd aan de Seleuciden.

In de Oudheid genoten de Seleuciden veel prestige in het Nabije Oosten vanwege hun rol als stedenstichters en voorouders van lokale vorsten. In contemporaine Griekse en Romeinse bronnen bestond daarentegen ook een uitgesproken vijandig beeld dat de Seleuciden wegzette als 'Aziaten' en de 'Nieuwe Perzen'. Een rode draad in de lezingen over vroegmoderne en moderne receptie was de vraag in hoeverre de Seleuciden als 'Westers' of 'Oosters' getypeerd werden (of als beide tegelijk).

Een veelvoud aan thema's uit de receptiegeschiedenis van het Seleucidische Rijk kwam aan bod. Omlijst met muziekfragmenten uit de vele achttiende-eeuwse opera's waarin de Seleuciden centraal



*Aankondiging van de Iranist Raúl
Navas-Moreno (Barcelona)*



Groepsfoto in de UB Utrecht

stonden, liet radiomaker Hein van Eekert zien dat de dynastie ooit alomtegenwoordig was in het Europese culturele landschap, juist vanwege het exotische beeld dat ermee werd geassocieerd. Terugkerend in verscheidene lezingen was het verhaal van Antiochus en Stratonice – een populair thema in de vroegmoderne Europese schilderkunst, literatuur en muziek.

De antieke receptie was vertegenwoordigd door lezingen over het Parthische Rijk, de steden van Romeins Klein-Azië, laat-Romeins Antiochië, Seleucus I als stichter van Dura Europos, Arabische en Perzische literatuur, Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, het Bijbelboek Daniël, de Seleucidische tijdrekening, de Alexanderroman en de zelfpresentatie van de Palmyreense monarchie.

Post-antieke thema's waren – naast de reeds genoemd vroegmoderne opera's, beeldende kunst en literatuur – de bepalende rol van Seleucidische munten in het ontstaan van de numismatiek als wetenschappelijke discipline in het zeventiende-eeuwse Nederland, het optreden van de Seleuciden als boemannen in moderne Israëlitische kinderliteratuur, en een twintigste-eeuwse fantasy-novelle die zich afspeelt in Seleucidisch Iran. In het laatste panel stonden computer games centraal. Vier sprekers bogen zich over de representatie van de Seleuciden in spellen als *Civilization* en *Rome: Total War*, en lieten zien dat daarbij soms wél en soms niet werd teruggegrepen op Oriëntalistische clichés. Met de Seleuciden kun je blijkbaar alle kanten uit.

Incoming Mobility Grant

Richard Bott (Macquarie University)

In March of this year, I was fortunate enough to visit Leiden with the help of a NINO Incoming Mobility Grant to work on an article examining the market for the Sheikh Ibada fakes in the mid-20th century. The Sheikh Ibada fakes are a group of stylistically related 'late antique Egyptian' sculptures that surfaced on the market in the late 1950s and were widely accepted and published by scholars during the next two decades. Given the widespread acceptance of these fakes and their impact on scholarship, this corpus is one of the most successful known cases of forgery from the 20th century, yet little work has looked to trace these fakes through the market. My article addresses this gap.



RMO F 1962/8.2 (in temporary exhibition "Collectie// Reflectie: Echt of nep?" until mid-November 2026 at RMO)

By following these fakes through the market, we can begin to see the behaviours of market participants that result in fakes being mistakenly authenticated and the ways in which authenticity is constructed and communicated to buyers. Understanding the mechanisms by which authenticity is 'proven' within the market is a crucial step towards designing policy that prevents fake antiquities from entering collections and scholarship, and thereby distorting our understanding of the past.

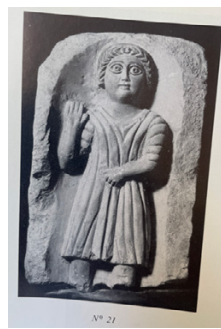
While in Leiden, I split my time between the Leiden University Libraries and the RMO Library, where I worked through the collections of exhibition and sales catalogues. For historic market research, the materials held in both libraries are truly outstanding resources, and both collections complement each other well.



After sorting through 20 years of auction, dealer, and museum catalogues, I have been able to demonstrate that these pieces were sold almost exclusively through dealers. Of particular interest was the ways the descriptions for these sculptures developed as the corpus became more well known and publicised. After locating a few lesser-known catalogues from museums in Egypt, I was also fortunate enough to locate several pieces that have not yet been formally identified as belonging to the Sheikh Ibada corpus. I am currently hunting further information down about these pieces. I also began to compile a database of the Sheikh Ibada fakes I located while in Leiden along with those already published as inauthentic. It currently includes 96 examples with, I suspect, many more entries to be included.



*Collections of
catalogues in RMO*



*Catalogue image of a
Sheikh Ibada relief*

Finally, I was also lucky enough to manage to include a visit to the Allard Pierson Museum to meet Ben van den Bercken, Curator of the Collection of Ancient Egypt and Sudan, into my itinerary. Alongside some insightful conversations about the excellent provenance work being undertaken in the museum, I had the opportunity to examine the Allard Pierson's outstanding collection of casts. For someone interested in authenticity within museums, this was an amazing opportunity.

The progress I was able to make on this article during my visit to Leiden would not have been possible without the support of the NINO Incoming Mobility Grant, or the help of Daniel Soliman and Mariëlle Bulsink of the RMO, and Mariëtte Keuken and Anita Keizers at the Leiden University Libraries. For all their help, I am incredibly grateful.

DUSANE 2026

Eloïse Golding

On April 16th, the **Dutch Symposium of the Ancient Near East (DUSANE)** was hosted in the Trajanus room at the National Museum of Antiquities. The annual symposium highlights the rich culture, history and archaeology of Southwest Asia. This year's theme "Rising from the ashes" introduced a spin on 2025's DUSANE "To go down in flames". Instead of revolving around literal pyromania, the theme underlines persistent resilience and (re)emergence of societies in the ancient Near East following (catastrophic) sociopolitical, economic and/or environmental stressors. The symposium was organized by study associations L.A.S. Terra (Archaeology) and Pleyte (Ancient Near Eastern Studies), and generously funded by NINO and Archon. Additionally, we thank RMO for hosting and facilitating the symposium this year, including the support of a livestream.

To kick off the symposium, Daniel Soliman (RMO) took us to Deir el-Medina, a popular focal point of lectures on the ancient Near East, though in this lecture the prominent tombs of the Valley of the Kings were left aside. Instead, a detailed analysis of the workmen's daily lives was provided, in relation to the short yet sudden relocation of the royal cemetery to Amarna. In the following lecture, PhD-candidate Jack Tillman (LU) pushed back the timeline to the Chalcolithic on Cyprus, to study the sociocultural implications of the emergence of cemeteries and associated funerary practices. The prevalence of co-burial and the orderly re-use of tombs indicate that inter-generational social ties continued in death, and signify a social shift towards inherited power in Cypriot societies.



*Jack Tillman illuminating
communal choices made
for funerary deposition
(photo D. Smets).*



*Mirko Surdi presenting
microscopic 3D-scans of
Ghent University's cuneiform
tablets (photo D. Smets).*



Erwin Dijkstra, also a PhD-candidate at Leiden, ventured to discuss the reactions and (non-) adaptations of societies to drastic environmental disaster, as recorded in texts from Hamoukar, Tell Brak and Tell Leilan. While these stories or tales may provide the experiences of the literate and elitist few, their narration in the past may anchor in the collective memory and imagination of these disasters, and in turn impact the pathos of decision-making in future calamities.

Anne Goddeeris and Mirko Surdi (University of Ghent) presented more research on textual archives. The former investigated the demographic composition of scribal schools in Old Babylonian Nippur, while the latter investigated the different stylus impressions through microscopic 3D modelling to refit fragmented tablets. While the methodologies differ strongly, each research sought to personalize the scribes typically remaining hidden 'behind' our translations.

After the break, Shana Zaia (VU) provoked our thinking, or rather the Assyrians' thinking, about the potential fall of contemporary society and states. The Neo-Assyrians proved to engage with the possibility of the downfall of their empire through varying denial, referring historical lessons learnt or by expressly setting these stories in an imaginative future.

In our final two lectures, Nico Staring and Lauren van Kruijssen (LU) geographically moved the symposium back to Egypt, where their lectures compared the architecture of the sequential necropoleis at Amarna and Memphis, and addressed the Late Period archaism prevalent in Theban temples, respectively. To round off the symposium after a full day of lectures, we welcomed all attendees to enjoy a sunny reception at North End.



Drinks at North End
(photo E. Golding).

The symposium was a wonderful melting pot of students and professors, Near Eastern studies and archaeology, with travelers from Ghent to Groningen. Many thanks to all the speakers for their engaging lectures, the enthusiastic public for their questions, and to our sponsors. We hope to see everyone again next year, at DUSANE 2027!

Babylon, Mirror of the Hellenistic Near East

Bert van der Spek, Shana Zaia,
Shiyanthi Thavapalan, Bas ter Haar Romeny
(VU Amsterdam)

Many historians of the Hellenistic period tend to overlook the fact that cuneiform culture continued to exist for several centuries after Alexander the Great. In fact, there was a flourishing of historical and astronomical cuneiform texts, and their testimony is indispensable for our understanding of the Hellenistic world. Until recently, however, most of these texts were difficult to access. This situation changed in May 2025, when Bert van der Spek, Irving Finkel, Reinhard Pirngruber, and Kathryn Stevens published a critical edition with translations and commentary of all the so-called *Babylonian Chronicles* and historical sections of the *Babylonian Astronomical Diaries*, including the Babylon and Uruk king lists and the Antiochus Cylinder: *Babylonian Chronographic Texts from the Hellenistic Period* (Atlanta: SBL Press 2025).

With the support of NINO, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam organized a symposium on Friday 5 June 2026 to mark the publication. The event brought together leading scholars to explore Babylon as a prism through which political, social, and religious developments in the Hellenistic Near East can be better understood. Questions addressed included: How did the city of Babylon respond to the new world in which Greeks and Macedonians ruled the Near East? How did Babylonians identify themselves, and to what extent were they conservative or innovative? How typical was Babylon as a Hellenistic city? What forms did 'glocalization' take?

Michael Jursa (Vienna) explained how historiography was shaped in this period, how historical texts on king Kurigalzu II were products of the Hellenistic period and thus showing the world view of that time.

Julietta Steinhauer (UCL London) discussed the expression "offering in the Greek fashion" in Babylonian chronicles and diaries and in a Greek inscription from Marmarini (Thessaly) with instructions for a cult of a Syrian goddess.



Céline Debourse (Harvard) spoke on the frequent mentions of offerings at the gates of the Babylonian temples. Greek influence or not?

Cindy Meijer (PhD graduate VU Amsterdam) compared three pseudo-prophetic texts: the *Dynastic Prophecy* from Babylon, the biblical book of Daniel, and the Greek *Oracle of the Potter* from Egypt.

Lucinda Dirven (Nijmegen) lectured on the religious developments in Hellenistic Mesopotamia in the Hellenistic and Parthian periods, as mirrored in Babylon.

Kathryn Stevens (Oxford) spoke on the expression “it was heard in Babylon” and “I heard” in the Babylonian diaries, in her view referring to hearing official (royal) letters being read out loud.

Anchoring Urban Lived Experience in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages

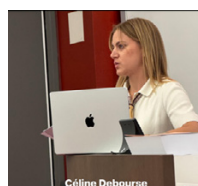
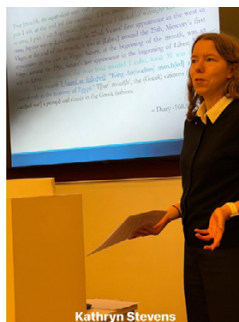
Marlena Whiting (University of Groningen)

On June 16, 2026, the workshop *Anchoring Urban Lived Experience in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* was held at the University of Groningen. This workshop, organized by Marlena Whiting, and partly funded by a NINO Conference Grant, examined the relation of “innovation” to the late antique and medieval city as a lived space. We asked: how do city dwellers adjust to new circumstances, incorporate disruptions into their routines, or reinterpret familiar spaces in the face of crisis? The goal of the workshop was to bring together scholars from the Netherlands and abroad to explore methodologies recovering the lived experience of everyday urban life from archaeological and literary evidence. Scholars specializing in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages in Europe and the Islamic world were invited to share their insights.

Participants were also invited to consider transformation and response through the lens of Anchoring Innovation, a heuristic model for understanding how innovations, be they technological, political, or cultural, achieve acceptance by building upon recognizable, “anchored” elements of the past. The speakers additionally engaged with themes of resilience, sustainability, and place-making.

The first keynote address was by Louise Blanke (University of Edinburgh), on urban resilience and responses to seismic disaster in Early Islamic Jerash. Drawing her recent excavations in the city’s southwest quarter, Blanke pieced together how inhabitants responded to earthquakes, and how urban life continued after large-scale destruction.

Sofie Remijnsen (University of Amsterdam) spoke about how changes in Late Antiquity to the timing of dinner parties from evening to afternoon



The ruins of ancient Gerash with the modern city of Jerash in the background (© Marlena Whiting).

It was encouraging to see how the new book inspired the speakers and stimulated lively discussion. The symposium concluded with a round table session with responses by Marc Van De Mierop (Columbia University, New York), Milinda Hoo (Utrecht), Melanie Gross (VU Amsterdam), and Bas ter Haar Romeny (VU Amsterdam). All lectures will be published in a special issue of *Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux*, scheduled to appear at the end of 2027.

We are grateful to NINO and VU Amsterdam’s LUCE Fund for subsidizing this event.



*Organizer Marlena Whiting and keynote speakers
Javier Martínez Jiménez and Louise Blanke
explore Groningen (© William Merrow-Smith).*



*Organizer Marlena Whiting
and keynote speaker Javier
Martínez Jiménez in the podcast
studio (© Marlena Whiting).*

fundamentally changed the structuring of social time among urban elites. Sabrina Corbellini (University of Groningen) demonstrated how the innovation of public libraries in Italy and the Netherlands in the later Middle Ages was anchored not only in a monastic tradition but also in the humanistic principles of the Renaissance and the deep Classical past. Willem Flinterman (University of Groningen/Amsterdam) applied the modern concept of “wasting” as a relational act that affirms inequality and difference within socio-economic systems to understand the role played by ethnicity and religion in waste management in medieval Islamic cities. Mariëtte Verhoeven (Radboud University) shared her ongoing work on how the water supply system of Byzantine Constantinople adapted to crises, and how historical water heritage can increase public awareness of challenges in water management in modern-day Istanbul.

The workshop finished with a second keynote lecture, by Javier Martínez Jiménez (University of Granada). Using Place Theory to discuss daily experiences around water infrastructure in post-Classical cities, he observed that because the engineering requires water installations to remain in one spot, the generation and regeneration of cultural meaning around these installations are thus innovations on an anchored space.

Short reflections from the individual speakers, along with podcast interviews conducted with Blanke and Martínez Jiménez, will be available in due course on the *Anchoring Innovation* website, anchoringinnovation.nl.

Outgoing Mobility Grant report: Seminar for Arabian Studies in Bologna

Lidwien Meulenkamp

From July 30th to August 1st, the University of Bologna hosted the annual Seminar for Arabian Studies, which covers research from the fields of history and archaeology to epigraphy and art, and temporal ranges from the Palaeolithic to the modern-day, across the Arabian Peninsula. As research master student at the Faculty of Archaeology in Leiden, I had the opportunity to attend the conference with the support of the NINO Outgoing Mobility Grant. As an attendee I also presented a poster on emergent domestic ceramic production technologies during the Umm an-Nar period (Bronze Age, ca. 2700–2000 BCE), at the Bat oasis, Oman.

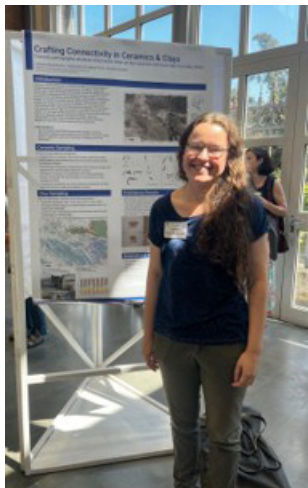
During the three-day conference, the sessions on Bronze Age nomadic-settlement dichotomies and human-environment interactions were particularly enlightening. Until recent decades, Silvia Lischì argued, research on mobile nomadic societies and their transition to permanent settlement in Oman structurally considered the former less orderly and less institutionalized. More recently, however, the question of mobility across arid landscapes is addressed from a more multi-scalar perspective, to seek the driving forces behind the exchange of shared knowledge and practices in domestic architecture, specialized craft production and funerary practices between mobile communities. Valentina Azzarà demonstrated how knowledge transmission on local, micro- and meso-regional scales may have created this regional coherence apparent from the archaeological material record, while specialized craft knowledge was likely transferred by itinerant specialist. For research on the ceramic production at Bat, this provides a framework to compare the local and micro-regional interactions between Bat and nearby Umm an-Nar sites, and investigate technological similarities



*Opening of the 59th
Seminar for Arabian
Studies (photo Z.
van Litsenburg).*



in pottery production. Furthermore, several new approaches to investigate human-environmental interactions were presented. Research by PhD-candidate Antonios Koutroumpas combined remote sensing, predictive modelling and analysis of geochemical soil signatures to identify locations utilized by humans in the past. With less reliance on visible architectural remains, this approach can improve our understanding of resource exploitation by (highly) mobile, persistent communities. Together, the development of these new approaches to exchange networks and resource exploitation strategies across the landscape provided valuable inspiration for my thesis methodology to investigate the emergence of ceramic production at Bat.



Poster presentation at the Arabian Seminar (photo J. Swerida).

In the poster session on Friday morning, I displayed the preliminary methodology and results of our analysis into Umm an-Nar domestic ceramics and clay resources from the Bat Archaeological Project (BAP) 2026 fieldwork season. Microscopic study of the ceramics indicates four ware groups in domestic assemblages at Bat during the Umm an-Nar period, which we will investigate further via petrographic thin-section analysis in the upcoming months, and compare to results from the surveyed and experimentally fired clays. The poster session enabled me to discuss this methodology and ceramic assemblage from Bat in more detail with the al Tikha research group and Sophie Méry, who established the ceramic typochronology at Hili, an Umm an-Nar site in the UAE.



Members of the Bat Archaeological Project 2026 team at the conference.

Overall, many thanks to Jennifer Swerida, Martina Revello Lami and Aleksandre Prosperini for their feedback and supervision of my thesis research, and to the amazing BAP 2026 fieldwork team! Additionally, many thanks to the NINO for financially supporting this opportunity to attend the Seminar for Arabian Studies, to gain valuable insights and contacts for my thesis research and future conferences.

Outgoing Mobility Grant report

Aiyana I.W. Plasman

From the 30th of July till the first of August I attended the 59th Seminar of Arabian Studies, held in Bologna, Italy. This was made possible by a NINO Outgoing Mobility Grant. In the past two winters I have been part of the Bat Archaeological Project excavations in Oman, directed by Jennifer Swerida. At the Seminar of Arabian Studies I presented a poster based on research which I have done as part of this excavation project. This was a very valuable opportunity for discussing my research and connecting with academics in my field, especially now that I am completing my RMA studies in archaeology and hope to continue in academia in the future.

During excavations at Bat in Oman, I worked on excavating an Umm an-Nar period building (RaM3) in the Rakhat al-Madrh basin together with a number of other archaeologists. A key focus of these



Pyrotechnic feature in Bat oasis, Oman

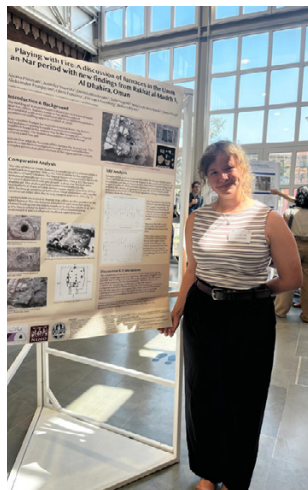
excavations was a pyrotechnic feature which was located in a half-wall inside of the courtyard space. This feature appeared to have been built up using mudbricks and had associated channels and pits which were filled with ash. We wanted to establish what this was being used for and how this related to the craft function which had been previously attributed to the space.



I carried out XRF analysis on samples from this feature at the Faculty of Archaeology at Leiden University with the help of Dennis Braekmans and Eric Mulder of the Material Cultures Lab. The aim of this analysis was to establish whether the pyrotechnic feature had been used for copper metallurgy. The XRF analysis showed limited evidence for metallurgy, but some chemical traces suggested the use of dung as fuel in this feature and a possible association with food preparation. Besides the XRF analysis, I also did some comparative analysis with other pyrotechnic features in the region to consider possible uses for this feature.



Samples for XRF analysis



Poster presentation at the Arabian Seminar (photo J. Sverida).

This research was the focus of the poster which I presented at the Seminar of Arabian Studies. This allowed me to talk to a number of interested scholars working in the region on similar topics. These academics had a variety of research focuses which helped me see my research from new perspectives. There were archaeologists who had applied similar methods to other sites who were keen to discuss their results, there were academics who focused on craft production who were interested

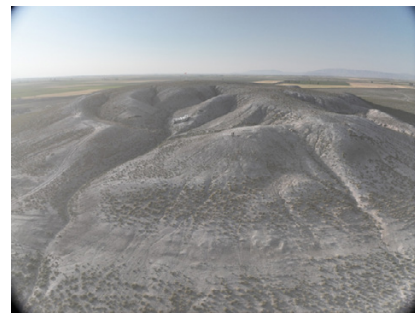
in hypothesizing what such a feature could have been used for, and scholars who had studied similar pyrotechnic features who could offer useful comparative insights. These discussions have helped me to find new ways of deepening my research and will aid me in transferring this poster into a more in depth article in the future.

Besides presenting my own research, attendance of the conference proved fruitful for making new connections in my research field. I had the opportunity to talk with academics working in this area from across the world as well as attending a wide range of talks on Arabian Archaeology.

Outgoing Mobility Grant report

Dries Daems (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

A NINO Outgoing Mobility Grant supported my 2026 summer fieldwork activities at the archaeological site of Türkmen-Karahöyük (south-central Anatolia), a massive tell one hour drive outside of modern-day Konya. Excavations at the site, initiated in 2024 by the Türkmen-Karahöyük Archaeological Project (TKAP) under the joint direction of Bilkent University and Chicago University, have yielded impressive amounts of material from the Middle Bronze Age to Hellenistic times (2000-50 BCE).



The site of Türkmen-Karahöyük (photo Harrison Morin).

I have been working at TKAP as the Head of the Ceramics Lab and Hellenistic pottery specialist since 2024. The aims of the 2026 campaign were to continue the development of an interdisciplinary analytical environment for pottery studies and lay the foundations for the typo-chronology of the pottery from Türkmen-Karahöyük, starting with its Hellenistic phase.



Members of the TKAP Ceramics Lab in 2026 (photo Nüriyen Çakmak).

The Hellenistic pottery assemblage of Türkmen-Karahöyük is remarkable in its diversity and state of preservation. As the site was likely abandoned over the course of the 1st c. BCE, the lack of subsequent occupation phases has led to relatively limited amount of disturbances affecting the material. The stunningly rich material record documented in the last couple of seasons points to a wide range of connections such as the Banded



Painted Ware pots typical of Central Anatolia, Eastern Sigillata A indicating connections with southeastern Anatolia and the northern Levant, unguentaria and other types of perfume bottles suggesting the participation in trade of aromatic oils hailing from the Aegean, Cyprus and the Levant, and many more. The attested material clearly shows Türkmen-Karahöyük was a vibrant community participating in large-scale interaction networks across Anatolian, Aegean, and Levantine regions in the Mediterranean.



Hellenistic pottery from Field 1 (photo Nürriyen Çakmak).

We have only just begun to scratch the surface of the rich history of Türkmen-Karahöyük. Yet, the first results have been highly encouraging for everything that is still left to be uncovered. The support offered by NINO has been essential for starting up the interdisciplinary and innovative research structure that is necessary to unlock the full potential of this material, and improve our understanding of Türkmen-Karahöyük and its role within the wider Mediterranean and Near Eastern world.

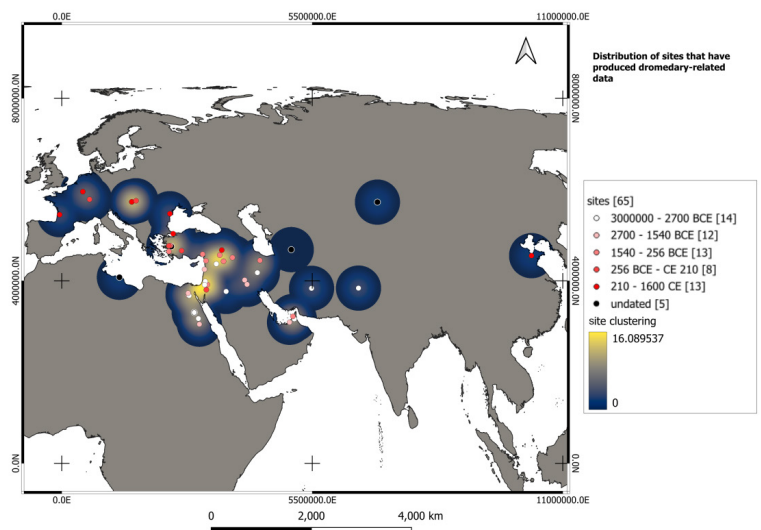
Student Research Assistantship report: The first millennium BCE dispersal of Old World camels

Vlad Ungureanu (University of Groningen)

Since February 2026, I have worked as a student assistant for Canan Çakırlar on the topic of geotracking Old World camelid domestication and diffusion across Eurasian and North Africa. My tasks consisted of digitising, managing and visualising the most important archaeological, iconographic and historical evidence compiled over the last century for this millennia-old process.

In many ways, this has been a continuation of the Wenner-Gren “Hidden Hybrids” project which concluded in 2022. Most of the literature I have consulted here has previously been collected by the collaborators on the “Hidden Hybrids” project. There has also been an underlying curatorial focus present because we aimed to repurpose legacy zooarchaeological data for modern analytical workflows dedicated to identifying taxonomically distinct clades through multivariate statistics in R.

This literature corpus exhibited an exciting potential for cartographic visualisations. Through an extensive review, I collected documentations of the Bactrian camel's (*Camelus bactrianus*) and the dromedary's (*Camelus dromedarius*) domestication, as well as tracking their hybridised offspring into dedicated spreadsheets. Among the most important characteristics, I was interested in the taxonomic identification, dating and the geographical localisation of proxies. I combined these spreadsheets with the data collected within the “Hidden Hybrids” project into a relational database and imported the result as a point layer in QGIS (v. 3.44.14). While this literature review composed the subject for the subsequent analysis steps, it also helped me familiarise myself with the long history of camel husbandry.



Spatial heat map of archaeological sites that have produced dromedary-related data.

In QGIS, the data was subset based on taxonomic identification. I then visualised distribution densities of points through heatmaps generated

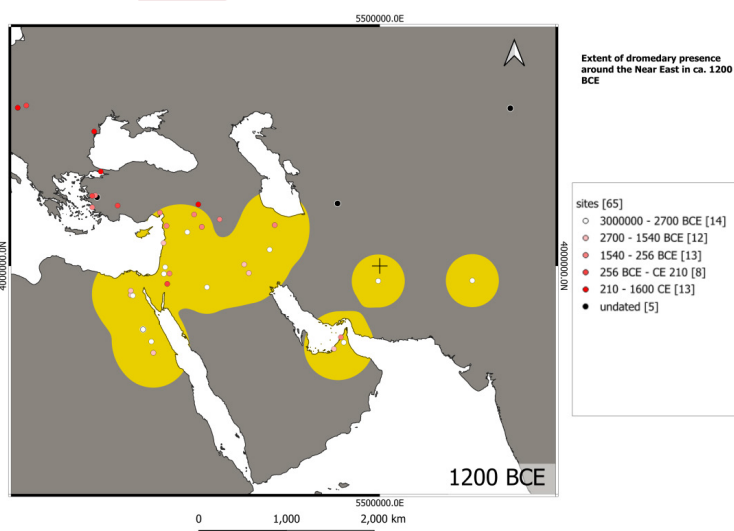


using the Kernel Density Estimation (KDE) method. The bandwidth choice for the KDE algorithm was based on Silverman's Rule-of-thumb formula. Finally, through a combination of programmatic additive selection-exportation in Python and PyQGIS scripting, I created chronologically ordered sequential polygonal extents from the initial point dataset. These were merged as separate features in the same vector layer and parsed through QGIS's temporal controller to animate them.

Through this experience, I learned that, as far as livestock species are concerned, camels have played a crucial role in the development and consolidation of ancient civilisations of the Old World. Through their strength and resilience (Bactrian camels can comfortably carry loads up to 250 kg over long distances), they have contributed to the development of major archaeological cultures across the Fertile Crescent and beyond. In a westward expansion, Bactrian camels served as excellent pack animals for both trade and military logistics, helping to establish trade routes across today's Syria, Iraq, Iran, Turkmenistan and China during the second and first millennium BCE. Whilst the dromedary has fulfilled similar functions across the Arabian Peninsula and into Eastern Africa, epigraphic historical inscriptions also attest their superiority as war mounts during events such as the Battles

at Qarqar (853 BCE), Thymbra (547 BCE), and Magnesia (190 BCE), within or against Assyrian, Persian, and Roman armies. This attribute was facilitated by developments such as the 1200 BCE emergence of the South Arabian saddle design, allowing riders to fully exploit the speed and maneuverability of the animals.

The results of these endeavors consist of both tabular and visual distribution statistics of large-scale multi-proxy data on camels' domestication and diffusion. I am particularly excited to have been able to animate the historical spatial distribution of camelid presence using documented chronologies. My intention is to soon develop this into a publicly available visualisation tool. This project has not been without challenges however, as evidenced by my unfruitful attempt at identifying taxonomically distinct clades through supervised classification of osteometric variation. As is the case with many zooarchaeological datasets, the fragmentary nature of ancient data and the general inter-species osteomorphological heterogeneity represent an impediment for statistical analysis. Nevertheless, it showed its potential as an initiative to centralise the existing knowledge on the topic of historical camel herding and its value as an analytical tool to overview spatially diffuse data and identify gaps.



The extent of dromedary presence around the Near East in ca. 1200 BCE (development of the Arabian Saddle design).

NINO funding: upcoming deadlines

15 November: Incoming Mobility Grant, Outgoing Mobility Grant, Conference Subsidy, Student Research Assistantship, Incoming Senior Fellowship, Outgoing Senior Fellowship

15 November–15 February: call for articles on the Ancient Near East or Egypt (Jaarprijs Cuijpers-Opdenakker)

continuous: Visiting Research Fellowship, Outreach Allowance



Even voorstellen



Nicola Barbagli (NINO Postdoc 2026–2028)

I am the new NINO Postdoctoral Researcher in Egyptology, and my research centres on the relations between Egypt and Rome. Over the past few years, I have focused particularly on the written and visual representations of

Roman emperors in Egypt,

drawing on a varied and multilingual body of evidence in order to examine how local individuals and communities received and adapted imperial power, and the extent to which participation in the Roman empire shaped Egyptian society.

My interest in Roman Egypt began to develop during my years at the University of Florence, where I obtained a BA with a thesis on Roman history (2012). Afterwards, I had the opportunity to pursue interdisciplinary training in Egyptology and Classical Archaeology, studying at the University of Pisa and the Scuola Normale Superiore (2012–2015). During these years, I laid the foundations for my subsequent research on Roman emperors in Egypt, which took shape in my doctoral dissertation in Classics, defended at the Scuola Normale Superiore (2022). Alongside my academic training, I also had the opportunity to collaborate with museums and archaeological teams – including the Museo Egizio in Turin and the Egyptian-German mission at Heliopolis (Cairo) – and to engage in public outreach through lectures, podcasts, and participation in a TV documentary.



Working on the statue of a Roman pharaoh at El-Ashmunein.

Before coming to Leiden, I held postdoctoral fellowships at the American Academy in Rome and the University of Trier, where I explored Roman hieroglyphic titularies in greater depth, approaching this rich corpus of texts as a source for investigating the agency, networks, and literary culture of the Egyptian priests who composed them. During my fellowship at NINO, my research will address a broader source base within a narrower time frame, examining the representations of emperor Hadrian (AD 117–138) in Egypt in order to explore the dynamics of imperial involvement and local agency in the negotiation and representation of power. I will also organise a conference on Roman emperors in Egypt and teach a R(es)MA course on the representation of power in antiquity.

Lena Siegmann (student-assistent)

Ik heet Lena, en sinds september ben ik redactie-assistent van Bibliotheca Orientalis (BiOr). Ik volg in deze functie Kiki Freriks op, die dit de afgelopen jaren zeer succesvol heeft gedaan.



Mijn bachelor in Oude Nabije Oosten-studies, met een specialisatie in Egyptologie en een minor in Assyriologie, heb ik vorig jaar succesvol afgerond. Ondertussen ben ik al een jaar bezig met de ResMA Egyptology hier in Leiden, en ga ik daar dit jaar ook een master Assyriology aan toevoegen. Mijn interesses liggen vooral bij het aanleren en bestuderen van verschillende talen en schriften, hoe cursiever hoe beter! Daarnaast houd ik me graag bezig met administratieve teksten en contracten, al kun je me zeker wakker maken voor het lezen van een Amarna-brief of een interessante magische spreuk.

Ik kijk ernaar uit om als redactie-assistent veel te leren over het publicatieproces van een tijdschrift en alles wat daarbij komt kijken. Vooral het multidisciplinaire karakter van BiOr spreekt mij erg aan. Ik heb er zin in om de komende maanden veel te gaan leren en me in te zetten voor BiOr. Ik ben regelmatig te vinden in het kantoor van BiOr, of in de bibliotheek van de MEL, dus voel je vooral vrij om een praatje te maken.



Agenda-overzicht

Activiteiten georganiseerd door NINO

Tuesday 20 October 2026, 15:30-16:30 hrs:
Roman pharaohs: Representations of Imperial Power in Egypt (NINO Postdoc Lecture)

Speaker: Nicola Barbagli, NINO Postdoc Researcher. Location: Leiden University, Herta Mohr building, room 0.02. Drinks afterwards in the LIAS Common Room.

www.nino-leiden.nl/event/roman-pharaohs-representations-of-imperial-power-in-egypt

Donderdag 29 oktober 2026, 15.30-16.30u:
Een jaar in Babylon: de culturele context van de Cyruscilinder (NINO/EOL-najaarslezing)

Spreker: Daan Nijssen. Locatie: Herta Mohr-gebouw, zaal 1.76. Aansluitend borrel in de LIAS Common Room.

www.nino-leiden.nl/event/een-jaar-in-babylon-de-culturele-context-van-de-cyruscilinder

Thursday 26 – Friday 27 November 2026:
Resilience and Adaptation in Ancient West Asia (NINO Postdoctoral Researcher's 7th Annual Conference)

Organised by Diederik Halbertsma, NINO Postdoc Researcher. Location: Rijksmuseum van Oudheden.

www.nino-leiden.nl/event/resilience-and-adaptation-in-ancient-west-asia

Wednesday 16 December 2026, 17:30-19:30 hrs:
Veenhof Lecture: The Development of Old Assyrian Studies – A Personal Account

Speaker: Mogens Trolle Larsen. Organised by NINO & RMO. Location: Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Taffeh Hall. Drinks afterwards.

www.nino-leiden.nl/event/veenhof-lecture-2026-the-development-of-old-assyrian-studies-a-personal-account

Friday 29 January 2027: 8th NINO Annual Meeting: Makers, Materials, and Us. Crafts and Industries in the Near East (3000 BCE-now)

Organised by Maaike van Berkel, Lucinda Dirven & Mark de Kreij. Location: Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen.

www.nino-leiden.nl/event/8th-nino-annual-meeting-makers-materials-and-us-crafts-and-industries-in-the-near-east

Middle Eastern Library

Reguliere openingstijden

Leeszaal: maandag t/m vrijdag 9:00-23:00u (na 17:00 toegang via de UB), zaterdag en zondag 9:30-22:30 (toegang via de UB)

Bibliotheekbalie: maandag t/m vrijdag 9:00-17:00u

Aankomende sluitingsdagen en aangepaste openingstijden:

- vrijdag 2 oktober: geopend van 9:00-17:15u
- zaterdag 3 oktober, Leidens Ontzet: gesloten

Online overzicht van alle actuele openingstijden van UBL-locaties:

www.bibliotheek.universiteit leiden.nl/over-ons/locaties/openingstijden

Activiteiten georganiseerd door bevriende organisaties

Wednesday 28 October: Animals and Power in the ancient Near East

Organised by Audrey Crabbé and Eva De Smet. Location: University of Groningen.

www.nino-leiden.nl/event/animals-and-power-in-the-ancient-near-east

Wednesday 11 – Friday 13 November 2026: Annual Meeting on Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology

Organised by Maria Hadjigavriel a.o. Location: RMO & Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University.

<https://sites.google.com/view/poca2026>

Zaterdag 5 december 2027: Nederlands-Vlaamse Egyptologendag

Georganiseerd door Stefan Baumann. Locatie: Koninklijke Musea voor Kunst & Geschiedenis.

www.artandhistory.museum/nl/scientific-research/jaarljkse-studiedag-voor-egyptologen-53e-editie-5-december-2026

Friday 18 December 2026, 10:00-18:30 hrs: Pots and Spots: a special workshop for Joanita Vroom's retirement

Organised by Dionysios Kalatzis-Papadopoulos, Hagit Nol and Jonathan Ouellet. Location: Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University.