

CALL FOR PAPERS

Political Memory in and after the Persian Empire

The significance of Achaemenid imperial hegemony for the political thought and aspirations of subject and successor societies is evaluated in starkly different terms in the various disciplines studying the ancient Near East. While Assyriologists treat Cyrus's heirs as legitimate successors of the Babylonian kings, Biblical scholars often speak of a "kingless era" in which the priesthood took over the function of the Davidic monarch. Egyptologists see their land as uniquely independently minded despite conquests, while Hellenistic scholarship tends to evaluate the interface between Hellenism and native traditions without reference to the previous two centuries of Persian rule.

The aim of this conference is to examine local responses to the loss of native kingship in the subject areas of the Persian Empire, both in terms of political reaction and literary reflection. How did recollection of past experiences of kingship inform positions vis-à-vis the reigning (and later the defunct) Persian monarchy? How does the experience of Persian kingship affect discourse on "native" kingship in the Hellenistic successor states? This goal relates not only to responses to kingship in terms of allegiance or rebellion, but also of memory and the conceptualization of "ideal" kingship as it was informed by cultural expectations. What roles do ethnicity, the distance to the royal throne, and the length of a dynasty play in this dynamic?

While the various disciplines and sub-disciplines have traditionally offered contrasting views this conference will explore how far the differing views are based in the sources and in discrete cultural contexts and how much they depend on disciplinary assumptions. New and established scholars from Assyriology, Biblical Studies, Classics, Egyptology and Iranian Studies are therefore invited to consider the intellectual and political implications of their fields for understanding the Persian legacy within ancient Near Eastern kingship in memory and practice.

Abstracts of no more than **400 words** are invited until **15 January 2014**. (send to either j.m.silverman@hum.leidenuniv.nl or jason.m.silverman@gmail.com). The conference will be held in Leiden on 18, 19 and 20 June 2014.

The conference is organized as part of the ERC project BABYLON at the Leiden Institute of Area Studies (<http://www.hum.leiden.edu/lias/rivers-of-babylon>). There are plans to publish the proceedings.