

About the Sponsors

Columbia University Department of Classics

The Department of Classics at Columbia University is one of the most dynamic centers for the study of Classical Antiquity in the United States. It offers an unparalleled range of undergraduate and graduate courses in Greek and Roman literature, languages, art, history, material culture, and philosophy. Faculty are committed to innovative scholarly projects, which reflect the shifting contours of Classical study in the twenty-first century. Situated in the heart of New York City, the Department of Classics at Columbia University is at the crossroads of the cultural and classical life of North America.

Columbia University Center for the Ancient Mediterranean

The Center for the Ancient Mediterranean is an interdepartmental initiative at Columbia University in the City of New York which seeks to link together all of the faculty, students, and numerous departments that have an interest in the cultures of the ancient Mediterranean and adjoining areas. It is simultaneously a mechanism for coordinating courses, an information source, and a means of organizing conferences and other scholarly encounters.

UCLA Yarshater Center

The Yarshater Center for the Study of Iranian Literary Traditions, established in 2023, is a leading research hub for the publication and dissemination of ancient Iranian literary traditions worldwide. Its research endeavors encompass the creation of an *Encyclopædia of Ancient Iran*; the establishment of the *Iranian Library*, conceived as a bilingual repository of Iranian literary traditions that shall introduce, in standardized form, canonical Old and Middle Iranian as well as early New Persian texts to a learned and informed audience; and the continuation of *A History of Persian Literature*. Through the active dissemination of its research ventures and publications, the Yarshater Center seeks to impact the study of the Iranian world by setting new standards of excellence.

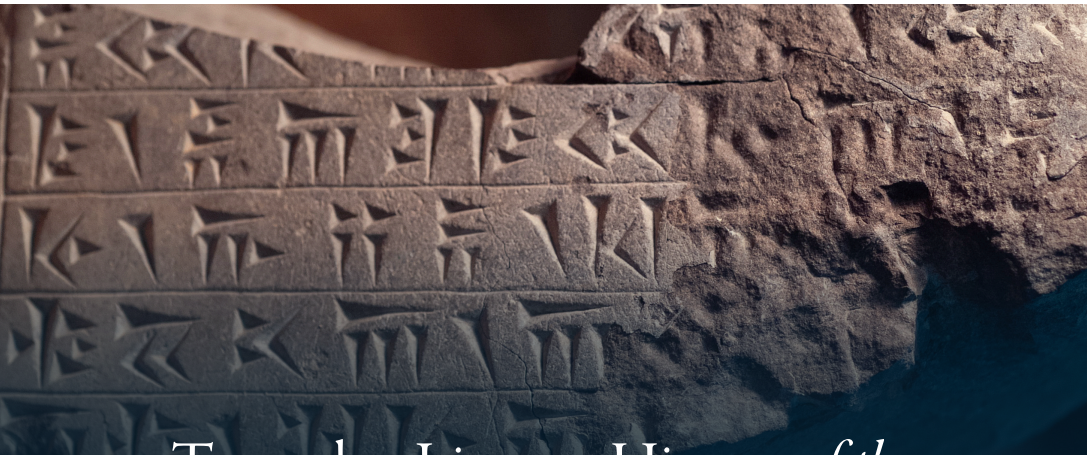
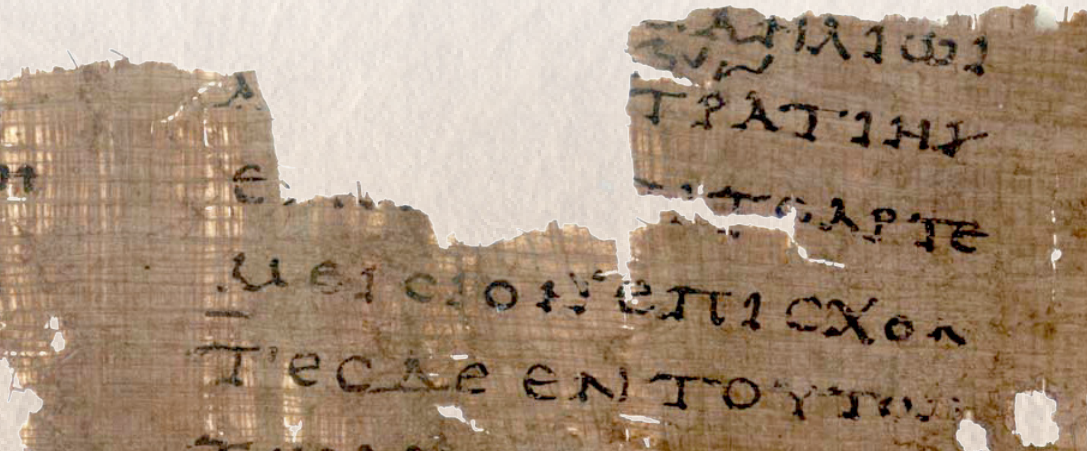
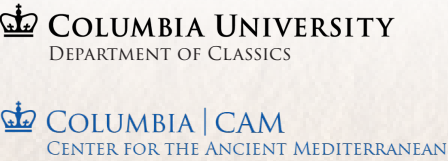
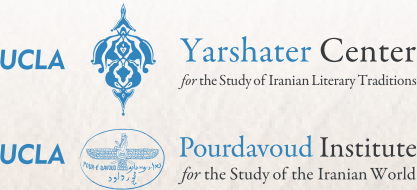
UCLA Pourdavoud Institute

Established in 2017 as the premier research center for the study of ancient Iran, the mission of the Pourdavoud Institute for the Study of the Iranian World is to engage in transformative research on all aspects of Iranian antiquity, including its reception in the medieval and modern periods, by expanding on the traditional domains of Old Iranian studies and promoting cross-cultural and interdisciplinary scholarship. The Pourdavoud Institute serves as a disciplinary home to stimulating intellectual encounters and exchanges for scholars working on ancient Iran and the ancient world, and contributes to the development of collaborative research projects in such diverse areas as Assyriology, Biblical Studies, Central Asian studies, Classics, Egyptology, ancient History, Indology, Sinology, and the Study of Religion.



Achaemenid Workshops

Coordinated by UCLA’s Pourdavoud Institute and Yarshater Center in conjunction with AchWorks’ Organizing Board, the Achaemenid Workshops aspire to become an intellectual hub for Achaemenid studies, while also affording an institutional framework to foster future generations of scholars working on the Achaemenid world.



Towards a Literary History of the ACHAEMENID EMPIRE

ACHAEMENID WORKSHOP 3

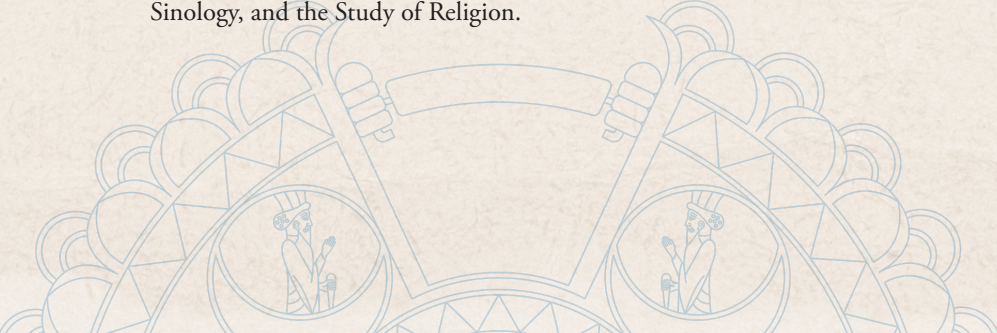
February 21–22, 2025  
Columbia University  
807 Schermerhorn Hall &  
the Stronach Lounge

CONVENED BY

John Ma & Marc Van De Mieroop,  
Columbia University  
M. Rahim Shayegan, UCLA

FRONT COVER  
(1) Fragment from Herodotus’ Histories,  
Book VIII on Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 2099  
(2) Detail of Darius I statue from Susa  
(3) Old Persian fragment, Museum of  
Ancient Iran, Tehran

BACK COVER  
Old Persian fragment, Museum of Ancient  
Iran, Tehran





About Achaemenid Workshop 3

*Towards a Literary History of the Achaemenid Empire*, the third Achaemenid Workshop, seeks to investigate the various literatures of the Achaemenid Empire, their impact on the empire, and the empire’s impact on them.



What does it mean to produce and consume literature in a multicultural world-empire—indeed in the first such entity? To answer this question, one must discern the outlines of a *literary history of the Achaemenid Empire*.

Primarily, it is imperative to gain a thorough understanding of the landscape of local literate cultures within the geographical ambit of the Achaemenid Empire. Examples of these cultural literary forms include Hebrew sacred literature, Demotic tales, Akkadian antiquarianism and scientific writing, and Aramaic hymns and wisdom literature; a capacious definition of “Achaemenid literatures” might also include royal discourse (in Old Persian but translated into local vernaculars), as well as texts produced in the Greek world, starting with Herodotus.

Just to survey all of these literary phenomena for the two centuries 550–330 BCE is a challenging prospect. How should one survey and read all of these literary phenomena for the two centuries 550–330 BCE as a unified corpus of literature representative of the empire? We must examine local literatures not only as reactive to, but also as reflective of the Achaemenid Empire. There are studies of these literary cultures within the empire for different regions, but to gather all of the regional viewpoints under an overarching *problématique* is a new and exciting endeavor.

Achaemenid cylinder seal, © The Trustees of the British Museum

Day One: February 21, 2025

8:00 am	Morning Refreshments
8:30 am	<b>INTRODUCTIONS</b>  Marc Van De Mieroop • Columbia University M. Rahim Shayegan • University of California, Los Angeles John Ma • Columbia University
9:00 – 10:30 am	<b>PANEL I ELAMITE &amp; OLD PERSIAN</b>  Chair: Marc Van De Mieroop • Columbia University  Gian Pietro Basello • University of Naples <i>Royal Inscriptions as Literature: From Elam to Pārsa, and thence to the Empire</i>  M. Rahim Shayegan • University of California, Los Angeles <i>The Great King and His Audiences</i>  Questions & Answers  <i>30-minute break</i>
11:00 am – 12:30 pm	<b>PANEL II BABYLONIAN</b>  Chair: Marc Van De Mieroop • Columbia University  Céline Debourse • Harvard University <i>We Don't Talk About Persia (in Late Babylonian Literature)</i>  Caroline Waerzeggers • Leiden University <i>Literary History of Achaemenid Babylonia</i>  Questions & Answers
12:30 – 2:00 pm	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>
2:00 – 3:30 pm	<b>PANEL III ARAMAIC</b>  Chair: Seth Schwartz • Columbia University  Tawny Holm • Pennsylvania State University <i>When Persians Became Assyrians: Aramaic Literature during the Achaemenid Empire</i>  Catherine Bonesho • University of California, Los Angeles <i>(In)Visible Aramaic Documents and the Achaemenid Empire</i>  Questions & Answers  <i>30-minute break</i>
4:00 – 5:30 pm	<b>PANEL IV BIBLICAL LITERATURE</b>  Chair: David M. Carr • Union Theological Seminary  Konrad Schmid • University of Zurich <i>Reactions to the Achaemenid Empire in the Contemporaneous Literature of the Hebrew Bible</i>  Seth Bledsoe • Radboud University, Nijmegen <i>The Difficulties in “Building” an Empire: Imperial Tensions in the Literature of the Hebrew Bible during the Achaemenid Period</i>  Questions & Answers

Day Two: February 22, 2025

8:30 am	Morning Refreshments
9:00 – 10:30 am	<b>PANEL V GREEK NARRATIVES</b>  Chair: John Ma • Columbia University  Simone Oppen • University of Minnesota - Twin Cities <i>Herodotus on Achaemenid Respect for Foreign Religious Authority</i>  Dominique Lenfant • University of Strasbourg <i>The Impact of the Achaemenid Empire on Greek Local Narratives: An Overview</i>  Questions & Answers  <i>30-minute break</i>
11:00 am – 12:30 pm	<b>PANEL VI LITERARY TRADITIONS OF ASIA MINOR</b>  Chair: Elizabeth Irwin • Columbia University  Johannes Haubold • Princeton University <i>Troy: Achaemenid Stories and Perspectives</i>  Anthony Yates • University of California, Los Angeles <i>Early Hittite Literature and the Emergence of the Annalistic Style</i>  Questions & Answers
12:30 – 2:00 pm	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>
2:00 – 3:30 pm	<b>PANEL VII EGYPTIAN</b>  Chair: Ellen Morris • Columbia University  Hong Yu Chen • University of California, Los Angeles <i>Intellectual Production by Egyptian Elites at Hibis Temple: From Menkheperre Thutmose to Darius</i>  Marina Escolano Poveda • University of Liverpool <i>Rethinking P. Rylands Dem. 9 in the Scribal and Literary Culture of Saïte and Achaemenid Egypt</i>  Questions & Answers  <i>30-minute break</i>
4:00 pm	<b>KEYNOTE SPEECH</b>  David Damrosch • Harvard University <i>Vernacular Cosmopolitans</i>

