

## **Program**

**06.07.2022**

until 14.00 **Arrival** (Rothenberge 83A, 48493 Wettringen)

15.00 **Felix Arens** (Münster): *Everything in God: The Development of an Idea in the Alexandrian School of the Roman Imperial Period*

15.45 **Jonas Derichs** (Münster): *The πατρῷοι θεοί on Mt. Pion in Ephesos: Supernatural Ancestors of a Hybrid Society?"*

16.30 **Coffee break**

17.00 **Lukas Kerk** (Münster): *Permanent Body Modifications: Expressions of Idealisation, Aestheticisation or Stigmatisation? Body Marks as Divergent and Interconnecting Phenomena in the Mediterranean, the Near East and beyond*

17.45 **Final Discussion**

18.15 **Dinner**

**07.07.2022**

8.30 **Breakfast**

10.00 **Michele Valandro** (Nijmegen): *Tradition and Innovation in North African Cities*

10.45 **Mareike-Beatrice Stanke** (Münster): *Was Orphan-Care in Ptolemaic Egypt Based on a Greek Model?*

12.00 **Lunch**

14.30 **Alexander Thies** (Bern): *Relics for the Royals – Holy Objects and the Ruling Families between the Eastern Roman and the Sasanian Empire*

15.15 **Joost Herman** (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam): *Marduk Narratives in Sargonid Assyria*

16.00 **Coffee break**

16.45 **Matthias Sandberg** (Münster)

17.30 **Final Discussion**

18.00 **Dinner**

*Neighbouring Cultures & Beyond – Interconnectedness and Divergence in the  
Mediterranean and the Near East*

**08.07.2022**

**8.30 Check Out & Breakfast**

10.00 **Giuseppina Marano** (Toulouse): *Naming the Gods after  
Toponyms in Near Eastern Antiquity*

10.45 **Nadine Riegler** (Wien): *Ideas and Images about Distance and  
Mobility in Letter corpora of the Later Roman Empire*

12.00 Lunch

14.00 Final Discussion

16.00 Departure

*Neighbouring Cultures & Beyond – Interconnectedness and Divergence in the  
Mediterranean and the Near East*

MSAC (Münster School of Ancient Cultures) - OIKOS (Onderzoeksinstituut  
Klassieke Oudheid Studiën) 6 - 8 July 2022, Landhaus Rothenberge /  
Münster

The geographical features of the Mediterranean and the Middle East have always favoured contact, exchange and movement of people, material goods as well as the transfer of knowledge. The great migratory movements of the Phoenicians, Greeks, Iranians, Romans and others contributed to the emergence of a world that, while politically, culturally and economically heterogeneous, was remarkably characterised by the development of local, transregional, global and intercultural links and entanglements. The recurring efforts of people to transcend religious, political and cultural boundaries intertwined regions and the whole world, penetrated social, historical, linguistic and geographical borders. The emergence, consolidation, decline and erosion of communities and intercultural exchange can be understood and analysed as a fundamental phenomenon of the history and development of the ancient Mediterranean and the Middle East, their cultures, bodies of knowledge, societies, economies and communities.

In recent years, considerable scholarly efforts have been made to improve our understanding of the forms of contact, exchange and entanglement. Building on this, our workshop aims to bring together a broad and interdisciplinary range of ancient studies disciplines to discuss material, literary and theoretical evidence related to the societies and cultures of the prehistoric and ancient worlds in the Mediterranean and Middle East (and beyond). The focus of the workshop "Neighbouring Cultures & Beyond - Interconnectedness and Divergence in the Mediterranean and the Near East", organised by the Münster School of Ancient Cultures (MSAC) and OIKOS, the National Research School in Classical Studies in the Netherlands, lies on the different modes, perceptions and designs of interconnectedness and divergence in societies and cultures of the ancient Mediterranean Near East, but also of individuals as actors and shapers of cultural exchange in the broadest sense.

The contributions to the workshop will trace the various phenomena of interconnection and divergence in the Mediterranean and the Middle East in local, regional as well as global contexts, covering as broad an interdisciplinary tableau as possible. This methodologically as well as theoretically open cut "beyond borders" invites case studies on a wide range of topics and questions, e.g. myth and religion, language and texts, material culture and trade, innovation and change, conflict and identity, social and ecological practices, etc. These and other phenomena, or their literary and material transmission, can be studied from topographical-geographical, socio-political, historiographical, economic, sociological, religious and/or technological-historical perspectives. We encourage participation from doctoral candidates of different disciplinary backgrounds in order to ensure a variety of perspectives and inspiring comparative discussions.

The three-day workshop will be held 6 - 8 July 2022 at the Landhaus Rothenberge of the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster (Landhaus Rothenberge: Rothenberge 83A, 48493 Wettringen). Contributions consist of presentations of 25 min (max. 30 min), followed by 10-15 min discussion. For all participants, vaccination plus booster is required. Compliance with the then applicable Corona Protection Ordinance of the State

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of North Rhine- Westphalia will be necessary. Any adjustments will be announced in due time.

Accommodation will be provided, the cost of meals is 70 EUR p.p. (Travel from Münster can be organized if necessary).

The organizers ask interested parties to send concept papers (in English, maximum 500 words) by April, 15, to the following address: [msac@uni-muenster.de](mailto:msac@uni-muenster.de).

If you have any questions, please contact:

*Prof. Dr. Gerry C. Wakker, Directeur Onderzoeksinstituut Klassieke Oudheid Studiën  
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat 26, k.1312.402 9712 EK Groningen  
[g.c.wakker@rug.nl](mailto:g.c.wakker@rug.nl)*

*Evelien de Graaf / Robin van Vliet, coordinators in the Onderzoeksinstituut Klassieke Oudheid  
Studiën -Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat 26, k.1312.402 9712 EK  
Groningen [oikos@rug.nl](mailto:oikos@rug.nl)*

*Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Johannes Hahn, M.A. Sprecher Münster School of Ancient Cultures WWU  
Münster, Domplatz 20-22, 48143 Münster [hahnj@uni-muenster.de](mailto:hahnj@uni-muenster.de)*

*Matthias Sandberg, M.A., Geschäftsführer Münster School of Ancient Cultures WWU  
Münster, Domplatz 20-22, 48143 Münster [msac@uni-muenster.de](mailto:msac@uni-muenster.de)*

*Felix Arens (Münster): Everything in God: The Development of an Idea in the  
Alexandrian School of the Roman Imperial Period*

*felix.arens@uni-muenster.de*

In 1828 the German Philosopher of Idealism Karl Christian Friedrich Krause coined the term 'Panentheism' to describe his theory of *Wesensschauung*. Despite that Krause's philosophy as a whole received very little attention during his time, the theory of panentheism became very popular in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as an alternative model of relating God and the world. In general it states that "the Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in Him, but (as against pantheism) that His Being is more than, and not exhausted by, the universe".<sup>1</sup> Although today often referred to as a modern Philosophy of Religion, the idea that everything exists within the divine Being can be found throughout the whole intellectual history.<sup>2</sup> Krause himself was convinced that panentheism not only corresponds to the biblical tradition (e.g. Acts 17:28a) but was also advocated by the early church fathers, such as Augustine.<sup>3</sup>

This presentation aims at tracing the roots of the idea behind panentheism further back in history, focusing on Philo (ca. 20 BCE–50 CE), Clement (ca. 150–125 CE) and Origen of Alexandria (185–253/54 CE), who picked up a specific notion from the *Physics* of Aristotle and developed it into the theological idea that God contains the universe. It will be demonstrated that there exists a direct historical link between the theories of these thinkers, showing the interconnectedness between Pagan, Jewish and Christian Philosophy in Antiquity. Furthermore, it will be asked, what exactly the three representatives of the Alexandrian School of the Roman Imperial Period (Philo, Clement and Origen) meant, when they stated that God encompasses (*περιέχειν*) everything. Did the idea of God enclosing the universe have an effect on how the three Alexandrian philosophers understood the relation between the creator and his creation?

*Jonas Derichs (Münster): The πατρώοι θεοί on Mt. Pion in Ephesos:  
Supernatural ancestors of a hybrid society?*

*j\_der02@uni-muenster.de*

When discussing forms of contact, exchange, and entanglement in antiquity, one particularly debated field of research remains religion. By addressing specific gods, by venerating them in a certain way, or by telling stories about the local topography and distant past of local society, conscious representations of a person's or a group's religious 'identity' become detectable in our evidence. At times, the process of shaping such 'identities' may seem rather stable. Religious traditions in remote areas of the Mediterranean were passed from one generation to another and, over centuries, cultic practice does not seem to change at all – even though, one has to admit, that upon closer

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<sup>1</sup> Art. Panentheism, in: Frank L. CROSS/Elizabeth A. LIVINGSTONE (Hg.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 31997, 1213.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the comprehensive study of John W. COOPER, *Panentheism. The Other God of the Philosophers. From Plato to the present*, Nottingham 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Karl C. F. KRAUSE, *Vorlesungen über das System der Philosophie*, Göttingen 1828, 256f.

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examination more than often there *is* change. Urban nodes of transregional networks, on the other hand, appear as religious melting pots: Situated at the crossroads of trade routes, they attracted migration of ‘ordinary’ people as well as political powers – and created especially heterogeneous environments, in which divergent religious belief systems stood next to each other or, by influencing each other, created new forms of divinities and veneration.

During the workshop, I would like to present a case study on the sacred landscape of Mt. Pion (modern name: Panayır Dağı), the central hill of ancient Ephesus. On its northern and eastern slopes, rock sanctuaries of *theoi patrooi*, consisting of several terraces, have been excavated in 1926 by Josef Keil. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Michael Kerschner supervised an excavation of the seventh terrace, in which stratigraphic analyses of the finds were possible for the first time and suggest a relatively short period of usage from the fourth century BCE to c. 250 BCE – while some other terraces may be dated within the timespan from c. 400 BCE to the mid of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, even though this, ultimately, has to remain a matter of debate. In my opinion, this sacred landscape and the finds from it (inscriptions, votive reliefs, and cult material) are especially well suited to address such questions of hybrid religious ‘identities’ as the ones sketched briefly in the opening sentences.

To begin with, the monumentalization of sacred mountains through terraces with rock-cut niches shows a specifically Ionian blend of diverse religious traditions from the Aegean to the Near East. The same geographical sphere of influence is valid for the group of gods venerated there – consisting of Meter, Zeus, and Apollo. Called *theoi patrooi*, the hybrid society meeting on Mt. Pion to worship together thought of them as their supernatural ancestors. Nonetheless, one should not underestimate the possibilities of individualizing matters on behalf of specific persons or groups. Selecting a certain divinity and calling it by a meaningful *epitheton* or adducing other supernatural beings into the sacred landscape are only two obvious examples of doing so. Finally, the decline of the sanctuaries in Hellenistic times has to be examined further: One wonders if the societal changes following Ephesus’ refoundation to the other side of Mt. Pion by Lysimachus led to the abandonment of the rock sanctuaries and the forging of new but not less diverse divine ancestors.

*Lukas Kerk (Münster): Permanent Body Modifications: Expressions of  
Idealisation, Aestheticisation or Stigmatisation? Body marks as divergent and  
interconnecting phenomena in the Mediterranean, the Near East and beyond*

*lukas.kerk@uni-muenster.de*

Permanent body modifications, including tattoos, artificial cranial deformations and dental modifications, have been documented as an ancient phenomenon through various material and literary sources from almost all parts of the world. As an object of study, such permanent modifications provide important indications of a function of the human body as a socio-cultural entity and projection surface of culturally determined messages. The visible otherness of body-modified individuals raises questions about how they were dealt with within past socio-cultural communities and what conclusions can be drawn from this about the attributions of meaning to these manifestations as an expression of idealisation, aestheticisation or stigmatisation.

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The presentation will use various examples to illustrate the possible divergent and interconnecting functions of permanent body modifications in both intra- and intercultural contexts in the Mediterranean, the Near East and beyond. The primary focus will be on the human body as an independent archaeological source, but figurative and pictorial representations as well as written sources will also be included.

### *Michele Valandro (Nijmegen): Tradition and Innovation in North African cities*

*michele.valandro@ru.nl*

The landscape of North Africa is a perfect case study in historical stratigraphy of political traditions and mutual influences, in this respect, between different cultures. Phoenicians/Punics created their colonies on the coastline, extending their influence on pre-existing communities located there and in the immediate hinterland. Other local groups, like the Numidians, managed to maintain a more distinct identity, albeit in a context of frequent exchange with Carthage and the Graeco-Roman world. The instalment of Roman citizens in North Africa, whether through official colonization or spontaneous migration to newly available lands, contributed to introduce another element to the intricate network of collectivities.

It also came with a re-definition of spaces and with application of new labels to denote the difference in status between communities, groups and territories. We thus find familiar names for major cities, like colonies (*coloniae*) and *municipia*, next to more complex denomination for smaller settlements, like *pagi*, *ciuitates*, *gentes* and *castella*, often related to already existing socio-political entities.

Indeed, by looking at locally produced inscriptions, we can identify at least two phases in the way institutional language was used. The first one coincides with what we might call *the organization of conquest*, i.e. the process that led to the construction, even in semantics, of a new legal order. In practice, this meant that two separate groups (Roman colonists and locals), located in the very same settlement, would get different denominations, usually as *pagus* and *ciuitas*. The most notable example of this is *Thugga* (Dougga), conceived as an archetype for the African ‘double-communities’.

In a second phase, Roman institutional language became part of the political discourse of these groups, not only in their relationship with authorities, but also to express their own internal dynamics in new and creative ways that exude from traditional administrative practice. Echoes of pre-Roman institutions, like the *sufetes*, were recorded in Latin script. Elites from both groups became progressively entangled over time, ultimately creating new, joint communities, which later Rome officially recognized by bestowing the official title of colony or *municipium* on them. Institutional language, through its use and re-use, thus shows that tradition and innovation were both key elements in shaping collective identities. It also puts into question the idea of an existing rigid dichotomy between Romans and locals that could have prompted either assimilation or resistance. Instead, we see an adaptive and transformative movement, which could lead to similar or different outcomes among communities. By bringing together some examples of how cities around Carthage evolved from Punic domination to Rome's, I aim

to show that different cultural elements could contribute to the formation of new, local identities.

### *Mareike-Beatrice Stanke (Münster): Was Orphan-Care in Ptolemaic Egypt Based on a Greek Model?*

mstanke@uni-muenster.de

Alexander's campaigns led to a profound rearrangement of the eastern Mediterranean and to the spread of Greek culture. Previously, the Greek presence was limited to individual places, such as the (trading-)polis of Naukratis. From the end of the 4th century a.B.C. onwards, however, Greek presence increased sharply, and an administrative apparatus was established that favoured immigrated *Hellenes* – mostly mercenaries and their families – over native Egyptians. In the beginning, Greeks and Egyptians did not blend, but, over time, they assimilated, creating a hybrid population. Within this population, the chances of becoming a half-orphan or an orphan before coming of age were high due to low life expectancy.

To better understand socio-legal practices in dealing with orphans in Ptolemaic Egypt, the central question of my presentation will be, to what extent orphan-care-practices in Egypt correlated with Greek ones and if they were based on a Greek model. If this was the case, it could indicate that there was a transfer of political and legal ideas, perhaps even in both directions. To investigate this, it is necessary to work out what happened when a child became an orphan and what the social status of the child was in Greece and Egypt respectively. For instance, the question of who took care of the orphan already reveals a first cultural difference in the role of women, since in Egypt they seem to have had more freedom to make legal decisions. Furthermore, it will be helpful to analyse to whom orphans or their guardians could turn in case of problems. Were there state institutions such as the *ὀρφανοφύλακες* in Greece or did the complainants turn to influential advocates without political function? Also of interest is whether linguistic similarities can be found in the sources from Greece and Egypt that might suggest unilateral or mutual influence. These questions have already been addressed in various publications, such as Jens-Uwe Krause's four-volume monograph "Witwen und Waisen in der römischen Kaiserzeit". There are, however, not many comparative studies between Hellenistic Greece and Ptolemaic Egypt.

For a differentiated answer to these central ideas, written sources will be consulted. For the Greek area, the speeches of Lysias, Isaios, and Demosthenes are suitable. Legal issues can also be examined with the help of inscriptional evidence such as the city law of Gortyn or the decree of Theozotides. For the Egyptian area, papyri are to be consulted above all. Of particular interest here are petitions addressed to state officials, but also private letters. In contrast to elaborate speeches, papyri are in this respect direct testimonies from the everyday-life-practice of the inhabitants of Egypt, which can help not only to uncover problems of orphans in the Egyptian area, but also to draw analogies to the Greek area.



*Alexander Thies (Bern): Relics for the Royals – Holy objects and the ruling  
families between the Eastern Roman and the Sasanian Empire*

alexander.thies@unibe.ch

Maybe the most remarkable aspects of the Late Antiquity – as shown by Peter Brown – was the rise of holy men as influential public figures and the respective emergence of cults around Christian relics. As the main setting of the lives of Christ and His Apostles, the Levant played a central role in this development. Especially in Syria, super-ascetic celebrities like Simeon Stylites soon rose to fame and political power.

My paper will investigate the cultural entanglements between the Levant and the great courts of Constantinople and Ctesiphon between the fourth and seventh century AD. By looking at a shared material culture of relics, I will show that (despite evident religious differences at the Sasanian-Zoroastrian and Christian courts) there was a cross-cultural competition for Christian relics across late-antique Eurasia. For both Eurasian Empires, the Levant thus functioned as a religiously and ideologically charged “area of plunder”. I will also show that the rulers in Constantinople and Ctesiphon had similar reasons for wanting to acquire Levantine relics. Especially royal women at the two courts, showed a particular commitment to the acquisition of Levantine relics. Not being part of official court rituals and ceremonies, these royal women could easily travel to the Levant or actively engage in the trade of relics.

*Joost Herman (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) Marduk Narratives in  
Sargonid Assyria*

j.herman@student.vu.nl

The Sargonid kings (722-609 BCE) were the last dynasty to rule the Assyrian empire. Assyrian imperial ideology required kings to expand the empire continuously, which inevitably led to the Sargonid kings clashing with their Babylonian neighbours to the South. Exerting control over Babylonia posed some difficulties for the Assyrians as it was inhabited by people of different cultural traditions and tribal affiliations. It was always prone to rebellions and uprisings, sometimes instigated by Chaldean tribal groups, sometimes even by outsiders like the Elamites. At the same time, the Assyrians, and the Assyrian elites in particular, had great reverence for Babylonian culture and tradition: Assyrian kings made their scribes compose royal inscriptions and literary compositions in the traditional Babylonian dialect, took on Babylonian royal titles, sponsored Babylonian temples and religious festivals, and even adopted deities from the Babylonian pantheon. Therefore, scholars have argued that the Assyrians had a ‘Babylonian Problem’. This paper will illustrate that the Sargonids tried to solve parts of this ‘Babylonian Problem’ by creating narratives around the Babylonian chief deity Marduk, his cult, and his priesthood. These narratives allowed the Sargonid kings to enter themselves into Babylonian tradition and provided a theological explanation for Sargonid political policies.

Marduk had been adopted into the Assyrian pantheon as early as the fourteenth century BCE, but I will argue that the narratives created by the Sargonids are not necessarily the

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product of the veneration of an ancient cult, but an ideological invention that helped the Sargonids cope with the current political situation. Narratological analysis will illustrate the different ways in which the Sargonid kings engaged with Babylonian religion, Marduk, the Marduk priesthood, Babylon, and the Babylonians themselves. Thus, we will see that Sargon II created a narrative in which Marduk invited him to come into the city of Babylon to oust a rebel leader and even become king of Babylonia. Sargon's son and successor Sennacherib, on the other hand, blamed Marduk and his priesthood for a rebellion and used this as an excuse to raze the city of Babylon. His successors, Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, went to great lengths to correct the narrative Sennacherib had created in order to repair the relationship between Assyria and Babylonia. Even though these narratives are very different, they still illustrate the same phenomenon: there were active attempts by the Sargonid kings to create, or re-create, through complicated constructs, a sort of collective memory, involving the Assyrian king, the god Marduk, and the people of Assyria and Babylonia.

This paper presents a chronological overview of the different contexts in which the Sargonid kings produced Marduk narratives using a selection of royal inscriptions, literary compositions, and letters.

Matthias Sandberg (Münster): tba

Giuseppina Marano (Toulouse): *Naming the Gods after toponyms in Near Eastern Antiquity*

[giuseppina.marano@univ-tlse2.fr](mailto:giuseppina.marano@univ-tlse2.fr)

The aim of this paper is to investigate strategies of naming the Gods in Ancient Near Eastern epigraphic and numismatic sources after toponyms (choronyms, oronyms, geonyms, etc.). The abundance of spatial onomastic attributes requires an in-depth analysis of the geographical lexicon mobilized in this context, both from a morphological and semantic point of view. The main questions are:

What do these designations say about the link between the gods and the places attached to their name? Looking in particular to Hawranic epigraphic data we discover a large amount of adjectives born from placenames of the region (Phainesios, Saphatenos, Damaskenos, Kanatenos, etc.), they are all linked to a "Zeus". Does this naming label imply a sort of city-God status? Is this a local way of addressing the god, or is it more a heteronymic strategy?

Is the space a way of "make it local"? In his recent *Localism and the Greek City-State*, Hans Beck proposes to go beyond binary oppositions between local and global, and to rethink the embeddedness of cults and the polis structure. Answering this question, we will interrogate evidence in order to understand if this non-binary Greek model applies to the Near Eastern context.

How names and spaces contribute to the "profile" of divine entities, especially to their representation and presentification? For example, the onomastic sequence "Zeus Heliopolitanus" designate a god venerated in Baalbek and whose origin is part of his

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identity. He has a close relation to the sanctuary, the region, and its inhabitants. In his worldwide famous sanctuary, he is represented through a typical image, which became an “index” of his profile. The image is also a kind of iconographic narrative on the god. The same is for Jupiter Dolichenus.

We will see that these strategies are for most ways of anchoring divine entities to the territory on which they exert their power. In this perspective, it is worth mentioning the rescript of Baitokaïke. In this complex inscription, the *energeia* (power) of the god begins (*katarchomai*) and is exhausted on the village and neighbourhoods (IGLS 7, 4028). This exercise of power on the territory is emphasized by these strategies of worship, perhaps qualifying a god with a toponym seeks to specify what is the outreach of its protective function.

*Nadine Riegler (Wien): Ideas and images about distance and mobility in  
letter corpora of the Later Roman Empire*

nadine.franziska.riegler@univie.ac.at

In ancient times, travelling was more strenuous than it is today. Not only was the transportation lacking in comfort, but the journey also took a lot of time. Bad weather conditions like heat or storms and attacks of pirates or criminals on the streets made voyages very dangerous.

Despite these exertions, some people were very fond of moving. Synesius of Cyrene was looking for practically any excuse to leave home. He even wished for a conflict for his πατρίς Lybia to visit an old friend on a diplomatic mission. Libanius saw in a stay abroad the potential to bring good things back home. Symmachus however disliked travelling, though he loved his regular stays in Baiae, at the bay of Naples. Jerome advised his correspondents to stay away from city centres and to seek God either in the periphery or in holy places.

Mobility stories like these provide an impetus for the ancient authors to talk about *patria* and *peregrinatio* and about the meaning of periphery and centre. How did ancient people face these different concepts of proximity and distance? Did they have a positive or a negative image of mobility? And how can we use this knowledge to further investigate the mobility of the Later Roman Empire?

To tackle these questions, I am going to analyse some exemplary letters by Symmachus, Jerome, Libanius and Synesius. With establishing the antonyms *patria*/πατρίς-*peregrinatio*/ξένη and *urbs-rus/eremum*, I try broadening our understanding of ancient mobility, its representation in different authors, and its value for further investigations. The conclusion of the paper builds the central ground for my PhD thesis, which deals with power structures in mobility stories of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century and is based on an intersectional analysis of letter corpora.

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