



WORKSHOP, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, 22-23 MARCH 2018

Shedding Light on the Matter: Ideascapes and Material Worlds in the Land of Thales

The land of Ionia became the cultural, economic and intellectual powerhouse of the Greek world between the 8th and 6th centuries BC. During this era of intense pan-Mediterranean trade and interaction, Ionian cities began monumentalising their settlements and sanctuaries, they set up colonies around the Black and Mediterranean Seas, and ultimately they became embroiled in wars and revolts against the major terrestrial force of the era, the Persian empire. In addition, these cities were intellectual incubators, and many of the earliest identifiable philosopher-scientists (especially Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, later Pythagoras, Heraclites, Xenophanes, Melissus, Anaxagoras) were active in or originated from this region, or from its colonies. *How, then, can we explain this florescence of intellectual production, known more generally as the 'Ionian Enlightenment'? To what extent were these ideas generated by international connections, or by the specific social contexts of Ionia? In what ways did the material and natural environment of archaic Ionia play catalyst for philosophy? Can the same dynamics or concerns - those experienced by philosophers, tyrants and humble city-dwellers alike - be documented in the material imprint left by the contemporary society?*

Modern archaeological research now offers the opportunity for a richer insight into Ionia's industrial and knowledge economy, but so far the archaeology of the region has been studied according to isolated material categories (ceramics, metals, terracottas, sculpture etc.). Similarly, textual studies of early Greek science and philosophy have, for the most part, ignored any potential insights from primary archaeological data. A surprising and hidden lacuna thus lies between apparently allied disciplines, a void which nonetheless offers opportunity for radical new methodologies which treat these distinct research traditions.

This workshop aims to create a new approach to the origins of the earliest Greek scientific thought in light of the material and archaeological contexts of archaic Ionia. Through participation in cross-disciplinary dialogue, we shall consider how it is possible to identify correlation between the natural and spatial characteristics of archaeological evidence and ancient textual discourse. Our objective, therefore, is to explore the 'ideascapes' and 'material worlds' which inhabited the archaic plain, and to uncover the relationship between these two concepts, which fundamentally drove the 'Ionian Enlightenment' in synergy.

The organisers invite abstracts for papers at this workshop from a range of disciplines, including but not limited to: *Ancient History, Ancient Literature, Ancient Philosophy, Anthropology, Bioanthropology, Classics, Classical Archaeology, History of Architecture (Bauforschung), History of Art, Landscape Archaeology, and Numismatics.*

Abstracts of no more than 400 words should be sent by e-mail to the organisers by Friday 30th June 2017, and notifications of acceptance will be announced at the start of October 2017.

Send abstracts to workshop@ionia.eu as plain text, RTF or Word doc formats.

Workshop organisers:
Anja Slawisch and Michael Loy

Details on: <http://ionia.eu/workshop>