

Imperial Materialities and Political Transculturation in Hellenistic Asia and the Post-Achaemenid Iranian World

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This lecture considers luxury objects and commensal politics as a crucial tool by which political and personal identities were created and contested after Alexander. This lecture seeks to understand their roles as objects of political transculturation, creating and contesting elite bodily and practical states of being within a wider Afro-Eurasian context focusing on evidence from a number of interconnected and mutually antagonistic spheres emerging from the former Persian Empire. In reconstructing the formation of a new “Perso-Macedonian” tradition in the late fourth and early third centuries in the fledgling courts of Babylon, Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, Lysimachia, and Alexandria and later developments in political centers in Iran, it puts the artistic evidence into dialogue with epigraphic and literary evidence and archaeological assemblages in Egypt, the Balkans and Central and South Asia. While doing so, this lecture considers range of theoretical debates have the potential to provide tools for analyzing luxury material’s impact from the point of view of an object in the hands of a single individual to an imperial system’s orchestration of resources.