

## **Memory as Capital in Iron Age Levant and Adjacent Regions**

Collège de France, 23–24 February 2018

Workshop Location: Fondation Hugot du Collège de France, 11 Rue de l'Université, 75007 Paris

This workshop focuses on the way in which ancient societies understood their past and how they used this knowledge to manipulate their present. The role of memory has been explored in numerous studies that have analyzed the materialization of memory in texts, rituals, monuments, and landscapes, and that have considered its ability to adapt under changing societal conditions, including duration and obliteration. Consequently, we wish to deal with memory as capital (following Bourdieu's definition of the term as all nonmaterial resources of status, prestige, valued knowledge, and privileged relationships), and to explore its application in the study of ancient societies. We will examine how memory was used to create cohesion in the formation of group identities, and how it was used to structure social hierarchy and to replicate it; how it was kept, perceived, adjusted, and presented to the public; and how it was erased from the collective mental map for the advantage of individuals or small groups.

We will focus on the Levant and neighboring regions in the Iron Age, a formative period wedged between two eras of imperial control and characterized by the emergence of a tapestry of polities and multiple regional identities. The imperial heritage was treated in multiple ways in the former imperial heartlands and in the Levant. The memory of the imperial past was manipulated by the new social structures established in both Egypt and Mesopotamia while at the same time, Levantine societies adopted new identities and renegotiated them, and, during their later phases of existence, they encountered and resisted the emerging new imperial order.

It is against these similar historical circumstances that we will explore the similarities in the role of memory in each society while remaining aware of peculiarities of given arenas with given social structures.

**Friday, February 23rd**

12:45 Gathering

13:00 *Introduction: Memory as Capital*

Ido Koch (Tel Aviv University) and Thomas Römer (Collège de France)

13:45 *Shaping Collective Memory at (Collective) Grave Sites: The Representation of Death as a Tool for Creating Shared Memories in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age Northern Levant*

Sarah Lange (University of Tübingen)

14:30 Coffee Break

15:00 *Recycling Orthostats and Collecting Capital in the Iron Age Syro-Hittite Kingdoms*

Virginia Herrmann (University of Tübingen)

15:45 *The Construction of a New Collective Memory in Phoenicia as a Response to Achaemenid Power: Material Culture as an “Objectified Cultural Capital”*

Tatiana Pedrazzi (Istituto di Studi sul Mediterraneo Antico [ISMA], CNR – Roma)

16:30 Coffee Break

17:00 *Between Continuity and Change: Collective Memories of the Assyrian Elites in the 2nd and 1st Millennia*

Aaron Schmitt (University of Mainz)

17:45 *Memories of an Empire: Egypt under the 21st–22nd Dynasties*

Shirly Ben-Dor Evian (Tel Aviv University and Israel Museum, Jerusalem)

**Saturday, February 24th**

10:00 *Visibility and Invisibility: Political Landscapes in Israel and Judah*

Yuval Gadot (Tel Aviv University)

10:45 *Consented Violence in Collective Memory: The Lachish Case in the Perspective of Epigraphical and Iconographical data*

Laura Battini (Collège de France)

11:30 Coffee Break

12:00 *Memories of the Cities of the Past: Tel Rehov and the Israelite Identity*

Omer Sergi (Tel Aviv University)

12:45 *Cultural Forgetting: The Strategy of Fading Out Narrative in the Book of Genesis. A Suggestion for its Interpretation*

Regine Hunziker-Rodewald (University of Strasbourg)

13:30 Lunch Break

15:00 *From Israel to Judah: Collective Memory in the Making*

Matthieu Richelle (Faculté libre de théologie évangélique de Vaux-sur-Seine)

15:45 *Jeroboam's Golden Calves: Constructing a Counter History of the Levites in the Books of Chronicles*

Jaeyoung Jeon (University of Lausanne)

16:30 Coffee Break

17:00 Concluding Remarks and Final Discussion

**Shaping Collective Memory at (Collective) Grave Sites:  
The Representation of Death as a Tool for Creating Shared Memories  
in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age Northern Levant**

Sarah Lange (University of Tübingen)

Deceased individuals have been commemorated throughout all periods, be it as historical personages or ancestors. On the one hand, historical personages are usually commemorated for their deeds and specific events in which they were involved. On the other hand, the act of commemoration can refer to one's own ancestor and thus emphasize the genealogical relation to the departed. Dead individuals can, depending on their social status, become part of the family's or the society's collective memory. But how are these memories created? Is it only the person's actions during their lifetime that make them leave an impression or are there other measures to create, maintain and recreate memories? What role do the grave sites play in this narrative? And does it influence the collective memory whether an individual remains in their primary resting place or is moved to a collective grave? How, then, did the commemoration of the dead change over time? To address these questions, I will examine the relationship of collective memory, of the dead's collective and of collective burials by comparing the evidence of textual and iconographic sources as well as grave sites from Late Bronze Age and Iron Age examples from the Northern Levant.

**Recycling Orthostats and Collecting Capital in the Iron Age Syro-Hittite Kingdoms**

Virginia Herrmann

*University of Tübingen*

The practice of decorating important facades with relief-carved stone orthostats not only survived the collapse of the Late Bronze Age empires, but flourished among the much smaller successor states of the Iron Age northern Levant and southeastern Anatolia. The production of such monuments is thought to have been an important means of manifesting royal sovereignty and staging integrative political rituals—in other words, producing symbolic capital. The secondary reuse of older Syro-Hittite sculptures constitutes an interesting variation on the traditional monumental practice. This paper will examine cases of the recycling of reliefs at Karkemish, Zincirli, and Malatya and explore the possible meanings of this practice. Were monuments of the

past used as a resource for the production of symbolic capital through the activation and manipulation of collective memory? The reuse of monuments has the potential to transfer their “history of value” to someone else. Did rulers who reused older monuments seek legitimation through the restoration or revival of the past? Would this reuse have been perceived by local audiences positively, as a pious renewal or celebration of a golden age, or negatively, as an illegitimate appropriation or sign of scarcity?

Though such questions are not easily answered, these engagements with collective memory should be recognized as an important element of building the new sociopolitical landscapes of the Iron Age.

**The Construction of a New Collective Memory in Phoenicia  
as a Response to Achaemenid Power: Material Culture as an “Objectified Cultural Capital”**

Tatiana Pedrazzi

*Istituto di Studi sul Mediterraneo Antico (ISMA), CNR – Roma*

During the Persian period, in Phoenicia, material culture reflects the attempt to respond actively to imperial Achaemenid power. Faced with a substantial cultural continuity, clearly perceptible in the ceramic tradition and in many other categories of the local material culture, nonetheless new iconographies and new architectural solutions spread in this period. These refer (explicitly or implicitly) to the imperial Achaemenid world, and constitute therefore a tangible “memory” of motives well known in Persian homeland. This process has still to be further investigated in its historical causes and implications. Indeed, material culture could be interpreted and studied as an “objectified cultural capital”, that is a peculiar type of cultural capital through which a community can construct a sort of active memory. In this specific case, therefore, it is not so much the use (or manipulation) of the past to influence the present through collective memory, but rather the conscious and active selection (free or forced) of elements (images, objects, or architectural elements) that allows to build a “new memory”, and become the key-point of a “meaning-making through time” process.

**Between Continuity and Change:  
Collective Memories of the Assyrian Elites in the 2nd and 1st Millennia**

Aaron Schmitt

*University of Mainz*

In this paper we will investigate how and why the Assyrian elites, and especially the Assyrian kings, made use of the past during the Middle and Neo Assyrian periods. Material culture and written sources will be taken into consideration for this purpose. The Middle Assyrian period seems to be a good starting point for this endeavor as the founding of a first Assyrian empire can be witnessed during this period. We will ask which past events were referred to and employed during this crucial phase of Assyria's rise to a superregional power. Following, we will analyze continuity and change of certain aspects of Assyrian collective memories during the latter parts of the Middle Assyrian and during the Neo Assyrian period. The case studies chosen to build our arguments are mainly based on the Assur excavations.

**Memories of an Empire: Egypt under the 21st–22nd Dynasties**

Shirly Ben-Dor Evian

*Israel Museum, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University*

Post-imperial Egypt at the turn of the second millennium BCE traversed between two opposing political conditions: a decentralized state and a unified kingdom. While the rulers of the 21st Dynasty in Tanis continued to be challenged by the reigning High Priests of Amun in Thebes for over a century, the founder of the 22nd Dynasty, Sheshonq I, took less than a decade to subjugate the entire kingdom to his rule. Sustaining the governance of Tanis over Egypt in its entirety required various ideological strategies, of which the use of collective memory was no doubt one. Elements from Egypt's past as an empire were repeatedly implemented in Egyptian society, cult and culture by the kings of the early 22nd Dynasty (from Sheshonq I to Osorkon II). Among these one can count the renaissance of the New Kingdom triumphal reliefs, the establishment of the military position of "king's son of Ramesses", and the practice of imperial rhetoric within Egypt and beyond it.

**Visibility and Invisibility: Political Landscapes in Israel and Judah**

Yuval Gadot

*Tel Aviv University*

Much has been written regarding the symbolic capital of monumental architecture in general and palaces in particular. It is agreed by most scholars that these buildings were symbolizing the elite authority into space. But what happens with those buildings at times of political power shift? In my lecture I will focus on cases where monumental structures were deliberately obliterated from the landscape. By presenting case studies from Ramat Raḥel, Jerusalem, Samaria and Megiddo, I will show intentional attempts to wipe-out the memory and symbols of the former political order, even at the expense of not reusing a structure that can still be used. I will claim that the invisibility of such structures is also a form of “political capital.”

**Consented Violence in Collective Memory: The Lachish Case in the Perspective of Epigraphical and Iconographical data**

Laura Battini

*Collège de France*

The reliefs in Room XXXVI (so-called Lachish reliefs) belong to a broad and well-thought-out program of rewriting the history, that Sennacherib applied to his entire palace. The connection between palace and reliefs may be more important than the exact identification of the described siege. Between the ambiguity of the image, the numerous silences of texts, and the possible audiences, the significance of the Lachish reliefs could be overestimated.

**Memories of the Cities of the Past: Tel Rehov and the Israelite Identity**

Omer Sergi

*Tel Aviv University*

Tel Rehov was the wealthiest urban center in the Beth-Shean Valley, on the north eastern edge of the Samaria Hills. Settled continuously since the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, Tel Rehov exhibits remarkable growth and accumulation of economic and political wealth throughout the

LB–Iron IIA, even when other important urban centers in its vicinity (e.g., Megiddo, Shechem, Kinneret) were completely destroyed (and abandoned). Moreover, epigraphic finds from Tel Reḥov and its surroundings (e.g., Tel Amal) indicate that the town was probably the residence of a strong ruling family from the Beth-Shean Valley—the Nimshide family, who by the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE came to rule the kingdom of Israel for almost 100 years. Tel Reḥov was completely destroyed during Hazael’s campaigns against Israel in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, and even with the restoration of Israelites urban centers in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century, Reḥov never regained its former power or wealth. Furthermore, in spite of its tremendous economic and political importance as an urban center in the kingdom of Israel, and probably also the hometown of an Israelite ruling dynasty, Tel Reḥov is not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, not even once.

In this presentation, I intend to review the occupational history of Tel Reḥov, in light of settlements oscillations in the entire region of Samaria and the Jezreel-Beth-Shean Valleys, in order to assess its role in local political and social formations, especially during the early Iron Age and in relations to the formation of Israel. In light of that I shall discuss the memory (or the lack of memory) from Tel Reḥov and its meaning for clarifying questions of social and political identity.

### **Cultural Forgetting: The Strategy of Narrative Fading Out in the Book of Genesis**

#### **A Suggestion for its Interpretation**

Regine Hunziker-Rodewald

*University of Strasbourg*

Forgetting as a cultural technique is impossible (Eco), as it always produces traces of deletion, that is the reason why we can talk about it. Searching in a culture for traces of deletion as a form of intentional forgetting means asking for tangible references to forgetting, for example in traditional texts. In texts, oblivion is discursively set in scene and can be traced back to competing social group memories (Bourdieu): certain elements of the past are deleted by the memory of other elements. In the Book of Genesis, intentional deletion can be recognized by the fact that several narrative characters are, without any death notice, simply faded out. So to say, they lose themselves east of the Jordan and southeast of the Dead Sea. The paper is an attempt to confront the strategy of cultural forgetting in the Book of Genesis with an alternative discourse.



### **From Israel to Judah: Collective Memory in the Making**

Matthieu Richelle

*Faculté libre de théologie évangélique de Vaux-sur-Seine*

Ever since Jan Assmann published his seminal book *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, the concept of cultural memory has proved a useful tool to analyze the ways in which Israel and Judah shaped their remembered past. This paper addresses an aspect of Judah's mnemohistory that may have been less studied: how the appropriation of some of the Northern Kingdom's traditions and memories by Judean redactors led a significant recasting of Judah's (and Yehud's) own cultural memory. I shall explore two different kinds of Northern traditions and memories that were taken up by Judean redactors and embedded in their own literary corpus: the prophetic oracles attributed to Hosea and Amos (with a special focus on Hosea), on the one hand, and two foundational myths of origins, namely the Exodus and the Jacob story, on the other. In both cases, I will first discuss the original anchorage of these traditions in Israel's cultural horizon and the process of their appropriation by Judeans. Then I will attempt to show that this process was accompanied by important changes for Judeans in terms of regime of historicity, as well as by the recasting of their own myths, whether foundational or contrapresent.

### **Jeroboam's Golden Calves: Constructing a Counter History of the Levites in the Books of Chronicles**

Jaeyoung Jeon

*University of Lausanne*

The Temple of Jerusalem as a social space in Persian Yehud is marked by a gradual development and perpetuation of the priestly prerogatives of the Zadokite priestly family. The Zadokites could strengthen and reproduce their higher social status by developing, according to Pierre Bourdieu's term, their cultural capital: for instance, the priestly texts found in the Hexateuch and Ezekiel as objectified form of cultural capital and the hierarchal order of temple service as institutionalized capital. The growing importance of the temple in the Yahwistic community of Yehud and the expected leadership of the high priest provided the Zadokites also symbolic capital and power, which were often used violently.

The symbolic violence of the Zadokite priests in the temple society may be exemplified by their degradation of the Levites, their potential competitors in temple service, as secondary temple personnel (e.g., Num 16; Ezek 44). Especially through the redaction of Ezek 44.10-16, the Zadokite scribe describes that the Levites' service in idolatrous worship is the origin of such degradation as well as the exclusive priestly right of the Zadokites.

Nevertheless, from the mid-Persian period and later, also the Levitical groups seem to have been able to convert their economic capital to cultural capital, producing their own scribal works such as Chronicles and a number of Psalms. Especially the former reveals that they formulated their own cultural capital not only by compromising with the Zadokites but also through resisting the Zadokites' symbolic violence.

Against the sinful origin of the Levites in Ezek 44, the Chronicler, most likely from the Levitical circle, provides an alternative history of the faithful Levites. For instance, in the revised account of the Jeroboam's golden calves, all the Levites left the northern kingdom and settled in Jerusalem (2 Chr 11.13-17); also in the account of the Josiah's reform (2 Chr 34.1-7), the Chronicler totally omits the gathering of the priests of the local sanctuaries in Jerusalem (2 Kings 23.8-9), which was probably the origin of the stratification among the Levitical priests – i.e., the historical origin of the non-priestly Levites. According to Chronicles, therefore, the Levites have been always faithful and royal to the legitimate YHWH worship in Jerusalem from the early Monarchic period and never involved in idolatrous ritual service in local sanctuaries in North and South. As such, the Chronicler denies any possible link between the Levites and the idolatrous worship, creating an alternative social (collective) memory of the faithful Levites among the readers or listeners of his scribal work. The invention of such an honorable counter history not only strengthened the Levites' class-consciousness but also functioned as a way of resisting the cultural capital and symbolic violence of priestly class.