

# THE ANCIENT THRONE

THE MEDITERRANEAN, NEAR EAST, AND BEYOND,  
FROM THE 3<sup>RD</sup> MILLENNIUM BCE TO THE 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY CE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKSHOP HELD AT THE 10<sup>TH</sup> ICAANE  
IN VIENNA, APRIL 2016

SONDERDRUCK

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DANA BROSTOWSKY GILBOA (EDS.)

Liat Naeh – Dana Brostowsky Gilboa (Eds.)  
The Ancient Throne

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Liat Naeh – Dana Brostowsky Gilboa (Eds.)

# **The Ancient Throne**

**The Mediterranean, Near East, and Beyond,  
from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium BCE  
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Proceedings of the Workshop held at the 10<sup>th</sup> ICAANE in Vienna, April 2016

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Interdisciplinary Research Center in  
the Humanities and Jewish Studies

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Picture on the opposite page:

Reconstructed ivory throne, Salamis (after M. H. Feldman, *Communities of Style. Portable Luxury Arts, Identity, and  
Collective Memory in the Iron Age Levant* [Chicago 2014], pl. 16, drawing: U. Naeh; cf. Johnson, this volume, fig. 2).

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## Preface

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*Liat Naeh*<sup>1</sup> – *Dana Brostowsky Gilboa*<sup>2</sup>

The present anthology, entitled *The Ancient Throne: The Mediterranean, Near East, and Beyond, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium BCE to the 14<sup>th</sup> Century CE*, brings together studies on various aspects of art, archaeology, and texts focusing on thrones. The volume was first conceived as published proceedings of a workshop, entitled *The Throne in Art and Archaeology: From the Dawn of the Ancient Near East until the Late Medieval Period*. The ‘Throne Workshop’ – as it was colloquially known – took place on 27 April 2016, as part of the tenth International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (ICAANE), which was held in Vienna on 25–29 April and graciously hosted by the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Since its inauguration in Rome in 1998, ICAANE has become one of the top arenas for international scholarly exchange on issues pertaining not only to the Ancient Near East, but also to later Islamic culture. As the editors’ respective fields of study were situated at the two ends of this chronological spectrum, we found ICAANE to be the ideal venue for the ‘Throne Workshop’. This choice also reflects ICAANE’s long-standing tradition of providing a shared meeting space for scholars from around the world and thus generating both new avenues of discourse and new global collaborations. For this, we are most grateful to the organising committee of the 10<sup>th</sup> ICAANE and to the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

The idea for the workshop emerged during our time as Ph.D. students at the Mandel Scho lion Interdisciplinary Research Center in the Humanities and Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. During that time, from 2012 to 2015, we were student-members of the *Picture/Power* research group, sub-titled *Cultural Continuity in Changing Worlds – The Representation of Government in the Near East from the Late Fourth Millennium BCE to the Early Modern Period (ca. 3200 BCE – 1600 CE)*. The senior and founding members of the group set out to explore and compare the images of kings in the Near East. It was there, under the guidance of senior members Prof. Rachel Milstein, Prof. Tallay Ornan, Prof. Galit Noga Banai, and Prof. Arlette David, and alongside our colleagues – likewise students at the time – Dr. Anna Gutgarts and Dr. Raanan Eichler, that we took our first steps in studying royal imagery. We would like to express our gratitude to all members of the *Picture/Power* research group. During that period, we became increasingly intrigued by what appeared to be a relationship between some of the thrones depicted in the corpora of our respective fields of study – Bronze and Iron Age Levant (Liat Naeh) and Islamic culture (Dana Brostowsky Gilboa). Whatever ties existed between such thrones, which were separated by millennia and also often by geography, were difficult to trace and interpret, and seem to have been seldom explored in scholarly literature. The workshop and consequently the present volume are therefore an initial attempt to focus upon thrones as a category of study that is helpful for inquiring into issues of royal, elite, and ritual ideology, and the diverse articles in this volume explore these subjects from a broad comparative perspective.

In addition to the editors, the original ‘Throne Workshop’ included the following participants (in alphabetical order): Prof. Cory Crawford (Ohio University), Dr. Sam Crooks (La Trobe University), Prof. Arlette David (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Dr. Cheryl Hart (University of Wales Trinity Saint David), Christina R. Johnson (University of Texas at Austin), Prof. Aaron Koller (Yeshiva University), Dr. Niccolò Manassero, (Il Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino), Prof. Rachel Milstein (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Prof. Heba Mostafa

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(University of Toronto), Prof. Tallay Ornan (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Dr. Claudia E. Suter (University of Bern), Prof. Hana Taragan (Tel Aviv University), and Dr. Caroline Tully (University of Melbourne). It is our pleasure to acknowledge and thank them for all their contributions. While not all the workshop's participants chose to be part of this current volume, we have welcomed new contributors, thereby broadening our volume's scope far beyond our original discussion. We therefore extend our thanks to the authors who kindly agreed to join us along the way (again in alphabetical order): Dr. Allegra Iafrate (Kunsthistorisches Institut Florenz – Max Planck Institut), Dr. Vassilis Petrakis (Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Institute of Historical Research, National Hellenic Research Foundation), Prof. Elizabeth Simpson (Bard Graduate Center), Prof. Sheila Blair (Boston College and Virginia Commonwealth University), and Dr. Yael Young (Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Shenkar College of Engineering, Design and Art).

Each article in this volume went through a process of double-blind peer review, and we deeply appreciate the work, expertise, and time invested by the anonymous reviewers. We also thank the many colleagues who offered us their advice along the way, and particularly Dr. Anna Gutgarts (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and Dr. Renana Bartal (Tel Aviv University), who made some much-needed suggestions. We would like to thank Academic Language Experts (Jerusalem) for editing and formatting the text, and especially Dr. Adrian Sackson, who masterfully headed the editing project, and Dr. Irina Oryshkevich, for her superb language editing. Finally, this volume could not have been published without the continuous support offered by the Mandel Scholion Interdisciplinary Research Center in the Humanities and Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. We would thus like to express our most genuine and profound gratitude to its academic head, Prof. Daniel R. Schwartz, as well as to its executive directors, first Maya Sherman and now Keren Sagi, for their ongoing encouragement over the years, and especially for their generous support for language editing in the project's final stages.

*The Ancient Throne* provides readers with a collection of articles that either study specific thrones known from historical texts, artistic depictions or excavations, or offer an overview of the role of thrones from as early as ancient Mesopotamia in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE to as late as Iran and China in the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE. The volume thus collates the work of scholars who specialise in diverse cultures and who have all found thrones to be helpful vehicles for promoting unique inquiries into such issues as royalty, society, ritual, and religion within their areas of expertise. The breadth of their collective efforts offers a comparative view through which the dissemination of political and ideological concepts may be better explored. The following collection of articles, however, does not attempt to provide a single answer to the question of what a throne is or is not, but instead presents the authors' individual – and sometimes conflicting – outlooks. While the volume is far from being a comprehensive survey of thrones in Eurasian cultures across the ages, it nevertheless offers readers a specialised bibliography and draws attention to scholarly trends that will be useful to future studies on thrones in general. Most of all, the volume cohesively suggests that thrones have been a meaningful category of material culture throughout history, one that may inspire both inter-cultural and intra-cultural studies of the ways in which types of chairs can embody, execute or induce notions of kingship and a range of concepts pertaining to the religious, ideological, and social spheres.