CAAS 2017 Abstract for "Ancient Iberia" Panel

This panel will present three papers on Ancient Iberia.

The first paper will be presented by Dr. Denisse Demetriou of the University of California, San Diego. The title is "Beyond Hellenization in Iberia: How Greek Inscriptions from Emporion Challenge Roman Texts."

Here is the author's abstract:

From antiquity onward, ancient Greek settlements in the western Mediterranean, especially in Gaul and Iberia, have been considered critical examples of Hellenization. Emporia are frequently seen as places that actively spread Greek culture among non-Greeks, because as commercial settlements they facilitated contacts among different ethnic groups. Although scholars have challenged the notion of Hellenization repeatedly and convincingly over the past few decades, this problematic interpretation of cultural change persists. A key reason, I argue, is the privileging of literary texts at the expense of other types of evidence, particularly epigraphic sources.

In this paper, I challenge the concept of "Hellenization" by examining cross-cultural interactions and transformations in multiethnic and multilingual emporia through the lens of cosmopolitanism, which allows a treatment of both the indigenous and Greek populations as active agents and, at the same time, products of their encounter with one another. More specifically, I juxtapose epigraphic sources from the sixth and fifth centuries BCE from Emporion in Iberia with Roman-period texts that describe the linguistic interactions between Greeks and indigenous populations in this region, to examine how cultural contacts influenced linguistic practices in emporia. I begin with an examination of the use of local scripts, names, and languages in Emporion, before turning to literary texts that discuss the use of language in this region. A wide range of evidence related to language comes from Emporion and its environs. For example, several inscribed texts have survived from this area written in different languages, including Greek, Etruscan, and Iberian. In addition, ancient authors such as Strabo and Pompeius Trogus provide an unusual number of comments regarding linguistic practices in Iberia and Gaul.

The epigraphic evidence from the sixth and fifth centuries BCE is at odds with the literary texts of the Roman period. While the former reveals peaceful interactions between Greeks and Iberians, who cooperated as business partners in commercial transactions, the latter suggest the imposition of Greek language and culture onto the indigenous populations. For instance, Strabo suggests that the Greeks forcefully taught Greek to the Gauls and Iberians, especially in religious and legal contexts. In contrast, inscriptions reveal that the presence of Greeks in Iberia precipitated linguistic changes for both Greeks and Iberians: it resulted in the presence of Phoenician loan words in Greek; the adoption of the Greek or Phoenician scripts to write down the Iberian languages; and the sudden spread of literacy among Iberians in the region of Emporion. Later texts such as Strabo have influenced subsequent scholarship to the point that the implantation of Emporion in Iberia is often seen as a catalyst for "Hellenization." I argue that these later literary texts were shaped by Roman imperialistic discourse rather than a Greek practice of earlier periods.

The second paper is by Dr. Raymond Capra. The title of the paper is "The Temple of Artemis of Ephesus in the Palaiopolis of Emporion."

Here is the abstract:

The Greco-Roman literary sources that discuss the foundation of Emporion in Iberia note the presence of a temple to the cult of Artemis of Ephesus (*e.g.* Strabo 3.4.8. However the excavations of the 'Neopolis' of Emporion have revealed no such temple, only later temples to Zeus Serapis and possibly Asclepius. In this paper I present the thesis that the temple was built on the original settlement, the 'Palaiolpolis' and was situated at the present site of the church of Sant Martí d'Empúries. Constant occupation since the sixth century has obscured the history and this is further emphasized by the nearby archaeological site, uninhabited and largely untouched since the end of occupation in the late Imperial period. I shall attempt to combine the literary mentions of the temple with the few architectural remains from the original site, these include not much more than a few bas-reliefs with griffins and other sculptural motifs, in order to present a picture of a rather modest temple, by Ephesian standards.

The third paper is by Dr. Benedict Lowe of Royal Halloway, University of London. The title of the paper is "Cornelia Tyche and the Phocaean Shore."

During the second half of the second century AD Iulius Secundus erected an altar in honour of his 39 year old wife Cornelia Tyche and their eleven year old daughter Iulia Secunda (CIL 6.20674). The altar bears an inscription in dactylic hexameter that recorded the fate of his wife and daughter: that they were deprived of their life on the Phocaean shore by the violence of the sea - litore Phocaio pelagi vi exanimatas. The poem does not specify where the litore Phocaio lies: previous scholarship has suggested the coast of Southern France.

However, this is contradicted by the inscription itself: the poem specifies the area of the Tagus and the Ebro: illic, unde Tagus et nobile flumen Hiberus / vorsum ortus, uorsum occasus fluit alter et alter, / stagna sub cceani Tagus et Tyrrhenica Hiberus –'there where the Tagus and the noble Ebro flow, one to the west, the other to the east, the Tagus to the waters of the Ocean and the Ebro to those of the Tyrrhenian' (lines 7-12).

It is the contention of this paper that the litore Phocaio refers to the region of ancient Contestania. According to the Greek geographer Strabo three very small towns τρία πολίχνια Μασσαλιωτῶν – were established south of the río Sucro by Phocaean Greeks from Massilia (3.4.6) – an account that is derived from the periploi of Greek sailors operating along the Eastern coast of Iberia.