

The Iconography of Hunting in the Ancient Worlds Call for Papers

Conference organized by Marlène Nazarian, Laetitia Phialon, Delphine Poinot and Margaux Spruyt, in Paris (Collège de France), week of April 22 to 26, 2024 (exact days to be specified).

Beyond the economic framework of subsistence, hunting is a ritual and social practice. It takes place in multiple contexts (ceremonial, sporting or educational, etc.). Widely practiced, it is also abundantly put into pictures, especially for the benefit of the elites. However, hunting scenes are not limited to the representation of the latter, but also evoke popular activities or relate to mythological stories. Ancient societies have provided a rich and varied iconography of hunting, whose study deserves to be renewed by an updated methodological approach and the contribution of unpublished documents. The aim of this conference is to explore the diversity of images related to the human practices of hunting in the ancient worlds, to question the existence of models, codes and visual schemes specific to hunting iconography.

The hunting theme is particularly well-suited to long-term reflection, and papers linking Antiquity with Prehistory or the Middle Ages are most welcome. The approach will be diachronic and transcultural, ranging from the Bronze Age to Late Antiquity, covering the Mediterranean basin, from Spain to the Levant, through North Africa, as well as West Asia, from Turkey to Iran. The reflection specifically on iconographic corpus is open to art historians, historians, archaeologists and archaeozoologists, philologists, zoologists, biologists, etc. It could be built around the following axes.

Axis 1 – Building up the iconography of hunting

In this axis, we will be interested in the formal construction of the hunting repertoire, in the way in which the image of a practice shared by differentiated cultural groups is translated, between common iconographic schemes and cultural singularity. The reflection, taking into account the methodological and theoretical questions specific to the history of art, will be deployed through the following aspects, among others:

- the formal elements that constitute a hunting scene, that allow it to be recognized
- iconographic codes and conventions
- the expression of artistic individuality
- the circulation of forms.

Axis 2 – Images of hunting, an historical source

Intervening as a major source for understanding the practice of hunting, the image studied as a document, can provide information on the realia of this practice. Moreover, confronting textual and archaeozoological sources with images allows for fruitful dialogues on hunting, animal history and technical gestures. It will be a question of highlighting their rapprochement but also their autonomous functioning. The hunting image intervenes then as a source for:

- the identification of species, in connection with zoogeography and connected history
- the diversity of the animals represented, witnesses of exchanges and circulations
- specific practices and technical gestures
- the typology of weaponry.

Axis 3 – Images of hunting and power's ideology

The relationship between the hunter and the hunted immediately induces a link of domination. The representation of the hunt can then function as a distinctive social marker used by the elites of ancient societies. The hunting images, reproducing an actual or fictitious hunt, resemble the visual and allegorical expression of power. The communications gathered under this axis will aim to study the hunting representations linked to aspects of power. The socio-political contexts in which these images appear will be essential to their understanding. We will look at:

- the nature of the prey as an object of social distinction (e.g. big game, birds)
- the diversity of hunting themes represented in the sphere of the powerful, likely to shed light on the dominant ideological systems
- hunting as a royal privilege, a pillar of the education of princes, or a definition of good government, whether monarchic or civic
- hunting as a discursive and legitimizing tool of power and authority.

Axis 4 – The hunt and its staging: ritual stakes

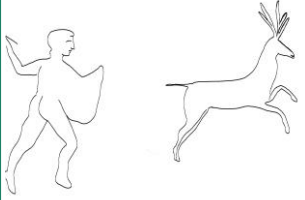
Hunting practices can have particular symbolic meanings reinterpreted for ritual, cultic, religious or magical purposes. The killing of an animal can have a sacrificial dimension, where the act is represented through a hunting show or relayed by the image of a dying animal. It will thus be appropriate to question:

- the analogy between hunting and sacrifice (human or animal)
- the performative function of hunting images in a sacred or funerary context
- the staging of hunting practices and the functioning of show hunts
- the metaphorical dimension of animal death (e.g. eschatological beliefs).

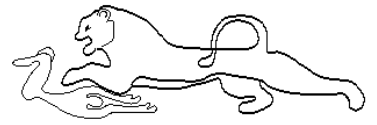
Axis 5 – Mythology and hunting iconography

The hunting themes, frequent in the mythological literature of Eastern and Classical Antiquity, illustrate the numerous variations in the components of oral or written narratives. This diversity is also found in the way the hunt is portrayed, whether it is similar to an archetypal iconography or, on the contrary, whether it is linked to a narrative, historical or mythological referent. The distinction between generic hunting and mythical hunting can also be tenuous, depending on the iconographic components chosen by the illustrator. The hunt is thus part of a mythological imaginary, specific to each ancient culture. Several lines of research can then be developed:

- the mode of distinction and the influences at play between mythical and generic hunts (stories and/or iconographic schemes)
- the nature of the episodes privileged by the illustrators and their context of exhibition
- the identification of the chosen episodes and their iconographic variants
- the circulation of mythological hunting images.



Practical Information



Organizers and Contact:

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Date and Place:

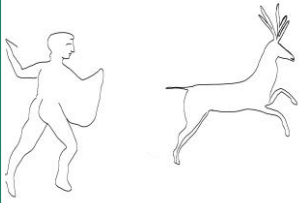
- Week of April 22 to 26, 2024 (exact days to be specified)
- Collège de France, Ulm site, Signatures' room
3, rue d'Ulm 75005 Paris

Submissions:

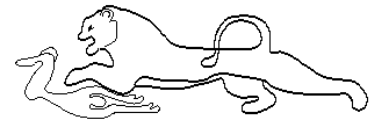
- Proposals for papers of 300 words maximum must be submitted by **October 15th, 2023** to the following address:

@: iconochasse2024@gmail.com

- Proposals for papers must also include the following information (not including in the 300 words):
 - Title of paper
 - First and LAST name
 - Affiliation
 - Preferred contact e-mail address



Scientific Committee



Pierre Briant, Emeritus Professor, Collège de France

Anne Bridault, CNRS UMR 7041 Archéologie et Sciences de l'Antiquité

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