

Glass between Cultures

Thilo Rehren
The Cyprus Institute

For millennia, glass has inspired artists and given a medium of cultural expression, as well as exchange between cultures. Its unique properties make it most suitable for long-distance transport, while the magic involved in its making provides unparalleled evidence for the role of craftspeople in transferring the particular skills to make glass in a specific manner.

In this talk I will be exploring the evidence for the exchange of glass and related know-how in the Late Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean, in the Roman and later period between the West and the East, and reference a unique case of glassmaking in West Africa. The overall question is how the material glass by itself can travel and result in very different technical and cultural responses compared to the movement of actual glassworkers.