



Broadening
Horizons 5

Civilizations in Contact

Proceedings of the 5th “Broadening Horizons” Conference
(Udine 5-8 June 2017)

VOLUME 2

Imperial Connections.

Interactions and Expansion

from Assyria to the Roman Period

Edited by
Katia Gavagnin
Rocco Palermo





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Verità e Giustizia per Giulio Regeni, ricercatore appassionato

Truth and Justice for Giulio Regeni, passionate researcher





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Preface

With the proceedings of the 5th edition of the “Broadening Horizons” Conference we have the pleasure to open the monograph series of the electronic journal “West & East” to the publication of international congresses and workshops whose topics fall within the main themes covered by the journal (for a presentation see <https://www.openstarts.units.it/handle/10077/10886>). We believe that West & East, although a mere youngster compared to other more renowned and prestigious journals, offers an appropriate (perhaps even ideal!) base for the promotion and diffusion of – in particular, though not only – the work of early career researchers. Thanks to the possibility of publishing with a “Gold Open Access” policy – i.e. immediate access to the articles or other features that can be downloaded from the website of the publisher EUT – and adhesion to the international rules of high quality standards for academic work – double peer review (which for West & East is also blind, i.e. the reviewers do not know who the author is) – we think that West & East is a scholarly journal well qualified to publish work that makes a significant contribution to the advancement of archaeological research in the Mediterranean basin and the Levant/Near East. The three volumes of the “Broadening Horizons” Proceedings undoubtedly belong to this category, and their publication opens the journal to stimulating future developments.

The editors of West & East

*M. Iamoni
L. Rebaudo
F. Zanini*

Foreword

Broadening Horizons is a series of international conferences on the archaeology and history of the Ancient Near East, dedicated to students and early-stage researchers. The fifth edition was held in Udine from 5th to 8th June 2017, hosted by the University of Udine, and organized by Marco Iamoni, Costanza Coppini, Katia Gavagnin, Rocco Palermo and Francesca Simi. It followed the conferences in Torino (Italy) in 2011, Barcelona (Spain) in 2010, Lyon (France) in 2007 and Ghent (Belgium) in 2006. The main topic of the 5th edition, *Civilizations in Contact*, was specifically intended to emphasize the importance of cross-cultural interactions on the *longue durée* in the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean world.

Particularly, the present volume stems from the collection of papers presented in Session 3 (*Imperial frontiers: the Assyrian periphery and interactions between Assyria and neighbouring kingdoms during the 1st millennium BC*) and Session 5 (*West vs East: from Hellenism to the Roman expansion in the Near East*).

The long historical period that goes from the formation and development of Assyria after the political crisis of the Late Bronze Age in the 10th c. BC to the Hellenistic and Roman impact in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East is widely known as Age of Empires. For the first time in history, territorial expansion and multi-faceted relationships over diverse socio-political entities contributed to the formation of global polities that affected culture, communities and daily life activities for more than 1500 years. And yet, the degree of

assimilation or autonomy that diverse polities might have adopted or retained while being incorporated within larger trans-regional states, fostered processes of cultural innovation, the creation of certain peculiar hybridity or – where the case – the persistence of resilient factors, only marginally touched by inevitable globalizing phenomena.

The role of the Neo-Assyrian politics over peripheral landscapes, expressed through warfare, monumentality and mobility, as well as material culture entanglement and mutual socio-cultural relationships is well treated in the papers of Session 3. From rock-cut reliefs to ceramics, and from textual (royal) propaganda to urbanization of marginal territories, all the papers succeed in emphasizing the inter-exchangeable role of local decision-making processes and forms of state authority.

A similar – and perhaps more geographically extended – approach is employed throughout the papers of Session 5, in which the *contact of civilizations* that brought elements of Graeco-Roman and Near Eastern cultures in strict correlation is well expressed through a series of phenomena. From the adaptation and re-configuration of eastern architectural models to Roman-Parthians interactions in the steppe, as well as from forms of landscape urbanization and ruralization to the persistence of local ceramic traditions within a global context, the authors perfectly grasp the cross-cultural dynamics proper of the Hellenistic and Roman Near East.

All these processes are also very well discussed in Daniele Morandi's and Matteo Cadario's

papers, which originated from the lectures that served as introductory keynote to Session 3 and 5 respectively. We are extremely grateful to them for their exhaustive talks and for having set the place for the younger scholars who presented in Udine and contributed in this book.

Daniele Morandi's paper, in particular, focuses on such phenomena from a purely archaeological perspective, somewhat bridging a research gap in the Assyrian Empire studies, traditionally focused on textual and art-history based analyses. The massive physical and cultural re-shape of part of the proper Assyrian core – roughly located in what is current Northern Iraq and the autonomous region of Kurdistan – is explored by Morandi in order to connect aspects of political authority and propaganda to the exploitation of the natural landscape and the maximization of the agricultural potential. The construction of large-scale irrigation features and the ideological significance of rock-cut reliefs that paralleled such an engineering endeavor are discussed in the framework of the impact of the Assyrian Empire in its very own core region.

The imperial impact – observed through a different lens – is central to Cadario's paper, in which a core element of the Graeco-Roman culture like the cuirassed statue is analyzed in its Near Eastern context, highlighting characteristics of resilience and disruptions with the western tradition, as well as the diverse transmission of the propagandistic and political message.

The papers collected in this volume offer indeed a comprehensive panorama of all those connections and interactions that took place in the greater Near East in the age of Empires, being also enriched by the lively and constructive debates that sparked from the presentations delivered in Udine. We do hope this volume might eventually serve as a stepping stone for young and passionate archaeologists and historians who strongly desire to venture in the fascinating Near Eastern world. We also auspicate a more inclusive academic dialogue between Near Eastern and Classical Archaeology specialists, in the attempt to connect the greater Mediterranean world to its eastern roots and traditions and viceversa.

Organizing such a conference, with multiple international guests is not an easy task, and we would be lying in not acknowledging those very important people that helped us before, during, and after the Broadening Horizons days. First and foremost, we would like to thank the University of Udine, and its Department of Humanities and Cultural Heritage Studies in particular, for having accomplished this successful conference in a most stimulating environment. Our warmest thanks to our keynote speakers, especially Daniele Morandi Bonacossi and Matteo Cadario – whose papers are part of this volume.

Our warmest thanks go to all those reviewers who carefully went through the texts, with invaluable suggestions and challenging comments. Their work was critical for the making of the present volume. A special thank goes to our friends and co-organizers Marco, Costanza and Francesca for the time and the commitment that we shared. It was sometimes not easy, but definitely one of those experiences a young scholar will retain for a very long time.

The publication of this volume would have not been possible without the indispensable support of the former (B. Callegher) and current (F. Fontana) director of the Inter-University Post-Graduate School in Archaeology (SISBA) and the EUT staff, in particular G. Clabot. For the support in the organization of the conference, we are immensely grateful to the Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Authority and to the Department of Humanities and Cultural Heritage of the University of Udine.

Last but not least, we would like to add a dedication to the one already mentioned at the beginning of the book. The editors of the present volume have spent most of their formative years in Syria, and we would like to dedicate this book also to our many Syrian friends and colleagues hoping that peace will soon return in their life.

Groningen and Pordenone, October 2020

*Katia Gavagnin
Rocco Palermo*