

Bridging the Gap – Volume 2



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Bridging the Gap: Disciplines, Times, and Spaces in Dialogue

Volume 2

**Sessions 3, 7 and 8 from the Conference
Broadening Horizons 6 Held at the Freie
Universität Berlin, 24–28 June 2019**

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Access Archaeology





ARCHAEOPRESS PUBLISHING LTD

13-14 Market Square

Bicester

Oxfordshire OX26 6AD

United Kingdom

www.archaeopress.com

ISBN 978-1-80327-728-8

ISBN 978-1-80327-729-5 (e-Pdf)

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Cover: Broadening Horizons 6 conference logo, designed by Rana Zaher.



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To Christian W. Hess,
who left unannounced.

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Foreword

These volumes represent the proceedings of the conference Broadening Horizons 6, hosted by the Institute for Ancient Near Eastern Studies and the Institute for Near Eastern Archaeology at the Freie Universität Berlin from 24–28 June 2019. Taking the long-standing partnership of the two institutes and the multidisciplinary tradition of Ancient Studies in Berlin as inspiration, the general theme of ‘Bridging the Gap’ was chosen to encourage approaches to the study of the Ancient Near East which transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries in bringing a range of evidence and methods into dialogue.

The Berlin conference was fortunate to include over 100 papers presented by participants from over 22 countries and 70 universities. These were divided into eight thematic sessions, each framed by an introductory keynote. Since its first incarnation at the University of Ghent in 2006, Broadening Horizons has developed into a regular venue for young scholars in the field. In many respects, it remains the only conference of its kind, taking both ‘ancient’ and ‘Near East’ in the broadest sense possible, from the prehistoric to the Islamic periods. It is a particular point of pride that the conference is not confined by field, but remains open to any philological, archaeological, and methodological approaches to the material. As a conference for and organized by young scholars, it thus provides a uniquely wide snapshot of current work.

Berlin was chosen as a venue for Broadening Horizons 6 by the members of the Organizing Committee of the previous conference that took place in Udine in 2017, and to whom we are grateful. In agreement between the two committees and in the spirit of international cooperation, the organization of the conference in Berlin also included members of the preceding one. We are happy to express our enormous thanks to the institutions and persons without whose support the conference, and these proceedings, would not have been possible. Funding for the conference was provided by the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Office of International affairs of the Freie Universität Berlin, and the Ernst-Reuter Gesellschaft. The university’s administration and staff, the Department of History and Cultural Studies, Prof. Dominik Bonatz (Institute for Near Eastern Archaeology), and Prof. Jörg Klinger (Institute for Ancient Near Eastern Studies) all provided generous logistic and administrative support during the organization and the conference itself. Rana Zaher designed our brilliant logo, which contributed greatly both to conference identity and now the cover of these volumes. Members of our Scientific Committee, some of whom joined us during the conference, provided generous advice and encouragement.

The smooth and timely flow of the individual sessions was largely due to the tireless efforts of the numerous student assistants and session chairs. It is only fitting that we mention here explicitly the catering and hosting offered by Cosimo Dalessandro and the Ristorante Galileo, which has long since become an institution of its own within the Freie Universität Berlin, and which kept the breaks of the conference amply supplied with coffee and refreshments. The conference’s opening and closing events hosted at the Museum Europäischer Kulturen (MEK) by EßKultur provided the ideal setting for social interaction and exchange.

These volumes were only possible due to the perseverance of the participants who submitted their contributions despite the closure of libraries, difficulties in accessing resources, and the many hardships

the pandemic imposed on our lives in 2020 and 2021. Our thanks are due especially for their heroic efforts in the timely submission of their papers during a most difficult year. We also express our sympathy and understanding to those who decided to withdraw their papers as a result of the imposed limitations. Finally, we are especially grateful to the many referees who graciously agreed to donate their time and efforts to the reviews, even as their crucial contributions remain anonymous.

Costanza Coppini
Georg Cyrus
Hamaseh Golestaneh
Christian W. Hess
Nathalie Kallas
Federico Manuelli
Rocco Palermo

Berlin, 18 July 2021



Introduction

Nathalie Kallas

The second volume of the proceedings of the conference ‘Broadening Horizons 6 – Bridging the Gap: Disciplines, Times, and Space in Dialogue’ compiles papers presented in three enlightening sessions: Session 3 – Visual and Textual Forms of Communication; Session 7 – The Future of the Past. Archaeologists and Historians in Cultural Heritage Studies; and Session 8 – Produce, Consume, Repeat. History and Archaeology of Ancient Near Eastern Economies. Within this volume, the 20 papers traverse diverse topics spanning multiple periods, from the 5th millennium BCE to the Roman Empire, and encompass a wide array of geographical regions within the Near East.¹

As Foucault so brilliantly illustrated in his first chapter of the *Archaeology of the Human Science*, any object stripped of its layers of meaning, of its historical context and of our gaze as observers, represents nothing more than itself.² Through their diverse contributions to **Session 3** the authors strive to unveil these layers offering readers a glimpse into the concealed life behind textual or visual representations.

Marian Feldman’s keynote contribution serves as a foundational exploration of the premises outlined in this session, specifically delving into communication, meaning, and the concept of meaningfulness. She introduces diverse theoretical approaches employed by archaeologists and historians in deciphering messages conveyed through visual and textual forms of communication. Feldman then applies this theoretical discussion to the architectural program of the Third Dynasty of Ur and how it responded to the legacy of the preceding Akkadian rulers, unravelling its implications.

The subsequent contributions within this session embark on an illuminating journey through case studies spanning ancient Iran to Egypt. These studies showcase the many ways in which scholars examine specific aspects of textual and visual communication, seeking to decode the meanings carried within and gain insights into their inherent meaningfulness.

Certain authors have chosen to concentrate their attention on visual representations across various art forms, aiming to uncover the cultural, social, political, or religious narratives embedded within them. Delphine Poinsot investigates the animal iconography found on Sasanian bullae at the site of Qasr-I Abu Nasr, with a specific focus on the depiction of sexual determinant characteristics within the portrayed species. Her research highlights that the male body was frequently chosen for representation due to its ability to encapsulate the most representative elements of the species, irrespective of gender. Furthermore, these depictions offer insights into the observer’s experience of nature. Elisa Roßberger contributes insights into the role of mould-pressed clay miniatures portraying chariots and thrones as visual media linked to oath taking. Through a meticulous comparison of evidence from Old Babylonian

¹ This volume is dedicated to Christian W. Hess, who assisted with reviewing proofs. Though he is no longer with us, his support and encouragement will always be remembered. The editor extends heartfelt gratitude to Federico Manuelli for his invaluable efforts in reviewing the proofs and for his constructive feedback. These proceedings benefited from the contribution of Rocco Palermo during the initial stages of preparation. This publication was financed in part by the open access fund for monographs and edited volumes of Freie Universität Berlin.

² Foucault 1970, 27-40.

written records and the visual representations impressed on clay artefacts, she underscores how the latter ensured the future adherence to the conditions and consequences of binding oaths. Margaux Spruyt's comprehensive examination of a hunting scene featuring onagers from the Neo-Assyrian period goes beyond figurative representations. She reveals how every element of the composition, including spaces, frames, voids, and choice of posture, among others, collaborates to convey the intended message more effectively to the viewer.

Three more authors direct their attention to textual sources, surpassing the confines of the inscribed text itself to explore broader contextual dimensions. Marta Pallavidini's paper transcends the apparent meaning of specific texts, unravelling the significance of metaphors in diplomatic discourse. By deciphering Hittite expressions rooted in verbs of motion and those suggesting specific orientations, Pallavidini illuminates how these linguistic nuances were universally understood, establishing them as cross-cultural indicators. In Olivia Ramble's contribution, a multidisciplinary approach draws on insights from anthropologists, historians, and archaeologists across diverse regions. Ramble's exploration shifts away from a macro-scale perspective, intricately examining the cumulative nature of texts at Persepolis. Her analysis focuses on the interplay between the inscriptions themselves, their contextual relationships, and the medium through which they are conveyed, providing a nuanced understanding of their interconnected significance. Federica Pancin's work explores the intersection between religious tradition and textual sources. By scrutinising mentions of sacred trees in the 'geographical lists' of the Graeco-Roman temple tradition, Pancin reveals the materialisation of extensive knowledge encompassing both local and national traditions. She concludes that these references serve as agents in transmitting Egypt's cultural memory, highlighting the profound connection between religious practices and the preservation of heritage within textual sources.

The combination of textual and pictorial elements was frequently employed in the ancient Near East to construct compositions capable of conveying multi-layered messages and facilitating diverse interpretations by the audience. In her examination of the semantics of mathematical diagrams on Old Babylonian clay tablets, Adeline Reynaud explores the pictorial representations and their interaction with the accompanying discursive text. Her findings reveal how the close integration of visual and textual components aimed to minimise ambiguity, ensuring the conveyed messages were as unequivocal as possible. Benedetta Bellucci probes into the text-image relationship on Late Bronze Age ring seals, specifically those featuring composite creatures from Hittite and Syro-Hittite corpora. Her study sheds light on the magical and protective attributes of these creatures, emphasising their embedded meanings. Iria Souto Casto considers the interaction between iconography and text on votive stelae from Ramesside period Egypt. She examines the role of these stelae as a means of private communication between humans and the divine, serving as identity markers and expressions of personal beliefs. Additionally, Souto Casto underscores the distinction between the perspectives of the literate few who could comprehend the texts and those who viewed the stelae without understanding the written content.

The dynamic interplay between medium and visual communication comes to light in three compelling contributions. A collaborative effort by Agnese Vacca, Valentina Tumolo, Georges Mouamar, and Stephen Lumsden scrutinises the Early Bronze Age seal-impressed vessels from the Northern Levant. This joint paper systematically dissects both the characteristics of the ceramics and the iconographic repertoire, aiming to unveil the meaning behind the depictions and discern the vessels' functions. Metoda Peršin, in her contribution, endeavours to unravel the messages conveyed by potmarks incised on vessels from Early Bronze Age contexts along the Lebanese coast. By scrutinising the signs themselves, their placements, and the pairings of signs with vessels, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the elaborate system to which this relatively undeciphered medium of communication belonged. Maria Silvana Catania's study explores the private Tombs of the Theban Necropolis. Here, she

meticulously disentangles the complex relationship between text and scenes, rituals and recitations, monumentality, and location. Catania's work reveals how these tombs play a vital role in preserving and transmitting personal, family, and cultural memories, showcasing the profound connection between visual representation and the perpetuation of cultural memory.

As argued by Bernbeck and Pollock, archaeological work is inherently entangled in the 'production of heritage', carrying in the process a myriad of paradoxical cultural, political, social and intellectual 'underpinnings'.³ The two contributions in **Session 7** offer a direct and indirect exploration of various aspects related to the intricate relationship between archaeology and cultural heritage. These aspects include the underlying processes shaping heritage development, the reflection of political ideology and colonialism in museology, and the ensuing politics of objectification, memory, and memorialization. Both contributions underscore the pivotal role played by sound archaeological research and the formulation of timely research questions.

Lamia Sassine critically deconstructs the labelling of specific materials as Phoenician, both in research and museum contexts. Tracing this classification back to an inherited graeco-roman view of the ancient world. Her case studies shed light on the challenges associated with adhering to a so-called Phoenician identity in research. Sassine advocates for a balanced contextual approach to the study of material culture, proposing that museums hold the key for archaeologists to re-examine artefacts in a more comprehensive light.

Cinzia Pappi presents the integrated approach adopted by her research, the Archaeological Survey of Koisanjaq/Koya Project. Her work exemplifies the significant potential that arises from combining traditional archaeological fieldwork and survey methods with modern radar sensing technology and the inclusion of oral sources. Additionally, she emphasises the crucial role of engaging local stakeholders, academics, and communities in advocating for the development of conscientious measures that ensure proper and sustainable preservation of the cultural landscape. Pappi recognizes that these diverse voices are essential for shaping policies that genuinely reflect the values and needs of the communities involved in the cultural heritage preservation process.

Archaeological material, be it textual sources or material remains, has a great - and mostly unexplored - potential to contribute to our understanding of ancient state economies.⁴ Drawing upon a variety of archaeological findings and textual data, thoroughly examined within the broader socio-political contexts, the papers presented in **Session 8** vividly illustrate the diverse economic landscapes of the ancient Near East. The authors direct our attention towards specific facets such as craft production, specialised working groups, shops and markets, and social and trade networks. Through these lenses, the contributions collectively highlight the significance of employing a spectrum of methodologies to shed light on the intricate mechanisms that governed ancient economies.

Eivind Heldass Seland's keynote contribution lays the foundation for the papers in this session. He provides an overview of the historiographical background of studies on ancient economies, contextualised within recent theoretical and methodological advancements. Emphasising the merits of New Institutional Economics, Seland illustrates how it facilitates the examination of trade through the lens of social networks. His case study on Roman trade networks in the east underscores the utility of various network analysis models in making sense of scenarios with limited evidence.

Takehiro Miki's contribution brings attention to an often-overlooked facet in the analysis of craft production, namely skill. Focusing on six ceramic vessels with identical motifs from the Chalcolithic

³ Bernbeck and Pollock 2007.

⁴ Smith 2004.

site of Tall-e Bakun A in Iran, Miki employs a skill score analysis derived from quantified pottery attributes. The results yield compelling observations, providing insights into the vibrant reality of pottery production.

In a meticulous analysis of 60 texts from the Persepolis Fortification Archive of the Achaemenid era, Yazdan Safaee reconstructs our understanding of the role and identity of a specific specialised working group: female weavers. Through a careful examination of etymology, epigraphic details, and textual content, he sheds light on the multifaceted aspects of the female weavers' presence, enriching our knowledge of their significance within the broader socio-economic context of the Achaemenid era.

Redirecting attention to the economic role of shops within an urban setting, Hassan El-Hajj explores two distinct types of shops uncovered in the Roman Colony of Berytus. Through a thorough examination of these establishments, his paper underscores the complex interplay of factors shaping the economic dynamics within the urban environment.

In the final paper in this session, and this volume, Naseem Raad embarks on an exploration of the maritime commercial networks of the Roman port of Berytus. His comprehensive approach in the study of a distinctive type of amphora employed in the wine trade unveils insights into the economic trajectory, growth, and decline of the city within the broader context of socio-political external developments.

In conclusion, the second volume of the conference proceedings weaves a rich tapestry of scholarly inquiries presented across three insightful sessions. The case studies presented in Session 3 delve into the layers of meaning embedded within the material culture of the ancient Near East, unravelling the concealed life behind textual and visual representations. Session 7 navigates the entanglement between archaeology and cultural heritage studies, underscoring the importance of sound research and timely questions, advocating for an integrated contextual approach and highlighting the merits of combining traditional fieldwork with modern technology and community engagement. The diverse perspectives presented in Session 8 offer a multitude of perspectives that vividly illustrate the diverse economic landscapes of the ancient Near East. Collectively, all these papers not only deepen our understanding of the region but also underscore the interdisciplinary nature of archaeological research, enriching our appreciation of the interconnected facets of this fascinating region.

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