

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

Volume 3

**Sessions 4 and 6 from the Conference
Broadening Horizons 6 Held at the Freie
Universität Berlin, 24–28 June 2019**

Edited by

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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
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Berlin, 18 July 2021



Introduction

Costanza Coppini, Georg Cyrus, and Hamaseh Golestaneh

The third volume of the proceedings of the conference ‘Broadening Horizons 6 – Bridging the Gap’ gathers the papers presented in two sessions: ‘Session 4 – Crossing Boundaries: Connectivity and Interaction’ and ‘Session 6 – Landscape and Geography: Human Dynamics and Perceptions’. The contributions clearly represent the broad and very diverse geographic areas of the Near East, where despite the quite distinct landscapes the cultures seem to have been well-connected and to have widely interacted across this vast territory.

The topic of Session 4, ‘Crossing Boundaries: Connectivity and Interaction’, is clearly reflected in the papers dealing with interactions and connectivity patterns on different levels, for instance in long-distance relations. Two contributions present the contacts between the Arabian Peninsula on the one hand – specifically the Oman Peninsula – and the Indus Valley and the Persian Gulf on the other, respectively during the Iron Age (Fernández Rodríguez) and the Seleucid period (Pachón Barragán).

Further contributions address the topic of the session on a regional level, in which the interacting of local communities in delimited regions is discussed by Luca Forni with Roberto Arciero as well as by Dan Socaciu. In Forni and Arciero’s paper the region of Murghab (Southern Turkmenistan) sets the stage for the analysis of the remarkable material culture of Togolok 1: they propose an interesting interpretation about the interaction of the semi-mobile communities of Togolok with the neighbouring sedentary communities, thus showing how neat boundaries between these societies were probably non-existent. Another case study on the regional level is offered by Socaciu’s investigation of the interaction in political entities such as kingdoms, empires, and states by observing the distribution of the rock-carved inscriptions in the Urartian territories. The study highlights one specific aspect of connectivity and interaction on a state-level and points out the value of detailed investigations of the two topics of Session 4.

Besides landscapes and political systems, interaction and connectivity can also be traced in material culture, as Valentina Oselini shows in her contribution on 2nd millennium BC pottery in Mesopotamia. The author highlights the identification of two vast and very different pottery macro-regions, pinpointing distinctions between the Northern Mesopotamian ceramic tradition, characterised by an abundance of painted pottery, and the Southern Mesopotamian ceramic tradition, which is more complex and characterised by the presence of plain pottery. Nonetheless, points of contact can be detected, as the author shows in her paper.

Boundary-crossings and indications of connectivity and interactions are significantly mirrored in visual art, which plays an important role in the interpretation of underlying contexts and circumstances. In this regard, the multi-disciplinary approach of Sevil Çonka inspects female-figured statues (caryatids) that occur as architectural elements in Eastern Mediterranean and Greco-Roman buildings, evoking a possible precursor in Egyptian and Cypriot peers for these elements, namely Hathoric columns, and delving into potential socio-cultural settings for this motif. In the sphere of female figures, Mari Yamasaki focuses on the representations of sea goddesses. She highlights common traits of these

feminine deities, comparing their representations from the Levant and the Aegean in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages, and pinpoints the cultural hybridisation resulting from the encounter between the individual traditions of various places of provenance.

When it comes to connectivity and interaction in the ancient world, it is almost inevitable to think of Egypt and its diplomatic relations to other contemporary political powers. Along these lines, Marco De Pietri analyses — by means of valuable textual sources such as the Amarna letters — the profile of messengers and envoys appointed for official communication between the Egyptian and Hittite empires.¹ As this research effectively demonstrates, the diverse and cosmopolitan environment surrounding these officials, who possess different titles and designations, is indeed significant, and the knowledge of it certainly broadens our horizons regarding the agents involved in the interactions between Egypt, Anatolia, and Northern Syria. Another topic relating to Late Bronze Age Egypt and its relationship with Levant and Mesopotamia is the role of deportation policies in internal and international affairs: this is the subject of Christian Langer's contribution. Deportees, who were gained through wars and through political treaties with Levantine vassal states, played a very significant role in the economy of the New Kingdom, and Langer's contribution provides crucial data about their position in the economy and the society of Egypt during the Late Bronze Age.

In Session 6 ('Landscape and Geography: Human Dynamics and Perceptions'), various aspects of human dynamics in landscapes are illustrated from different perspectives. Felix Levenson and Monica Pacheco offer an interesting comparison of two very different landscapes: starting from the analysis of high temples in Mesopotamia (Levenson) and Mesoamerica (Pacheco), they highlight the similar interpretations provided in the history of research, and thus enter the sphere of cross-cultural similarities. The understanding of interactions in a settlement area is the main focus of Maria Tamburrini's contribution investigating the Southern Levant shortly after the so-called Late Bronze Age collapse. She identifies how intensively the settlement patterns are connected to the river system in the Southern Levant, criticising models of site hierarchy previously used to explain the society in the Early Iron Age. This study combines different views on connectivity and interaction and underlines the importance of landscape in reconstructing a society.

Another important aspect of the analysis of landscapes is their social construction. This concerns, for instance, their connection to religious practices, and was most famously emphasised by Tilly, although criticised in actual landscape studies for being not well-founded enough.² Francesca Giusto fills this gap in her paper about the Hellenistic and Parthian mountain sanctuary of Shami in Khuzestan, Iran, contextualising the religious site within a wider settlement area and describing methodological challenges in reconstructing such areas.

Southern Mesopotamia in ancient times, blistering with different activities between humans and their environment, is certainly a central point in this session. Indeed, the economic documents from this region in the 3rd millennium BC point toward the importance of fishery and how an intricate network of (human) bureaucratic interaction is implemented and managed to control and exploit the natural environment.³ In this line of investigation, Angela Greco utilises a wide range of sources belonging to Ur-III period Umma, and surveys different bureaucratic and economic material, such as taxes and work obligations, offering in addition a prosopographical analysis of different agents of the bureaucratic apparatus.

¹ Schniedewind and Cochavi-Rainey 2015; Edel 1994; Cordani 2017.

² Tilly 1994; Barrett and Ko 2009.

³ Englund 1990; 1998.

Another possible approach to the topic of this session is to investigate a cityscape in detail to understand diachronic changes in the human use of urban space. This line of research is pursued by Enrico Foietta in his contribution about the development of the city of Hatra in Northern Mesopotamia, in which he shows how a city slowly developed from a small settlement in post-imperial Assyria into an important 3rd century BC regional centre and capital of a small kingdom.⁴ The development of this urban space is depicted in a long-term perspective from its beginning until its abandonment, validating an often lacking perspective in contemporary urban sociology.⁵

This overview provides only a partial picture of the lively scientific exchanges and interactions of the Berlin conference. We are glad to have been able to transfer it into this volume, which would have not been possible without the invaluable support and patience of the papers' authors and of the anonymous peer-reviewers, to whom we are very grateful. We hope that this will be our little contribution in *bridging gaps* between periods, space, and disciplines.

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Berlin and Prato, August 2021

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⁴ Lawrence *et al.* 2017.

⁵ Ortman *et al.* 2020.