Palmyra and the East

April 18 and 19, 2019

The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Villa
Los Angeles, CA, USA

Organizers:
Kenneth Lapatin (J. Paul Getty Museum, USA)
Rubina Raja (Aarhus University, Denmark)

The J. Paul Getty Museum

UrbNet
CENTRE FOR URBAN NETWORK EVOLUTIONS
The Danish National Research Foundation

Danmarks Grundforskningsfond
Danish National Research Foundation

CARLSBERG FOUNDATION

AARHUS UNIVERSITY

View of colonnaded street in Palmyra. The columns carry consoles for display of statues, now lost. In the background tower tombs are visible (Copyright: Rubina Raja).

Table of contents

Outline 5
Program 6
Moderators 8

Abstracts
Rubina Raja: Palmyran Art and the East 10
Khodadad Rezakhani: A Road That Never Went That Far: The Silk Road and the Palmyran Trade, *c.* 130 BC – AD 272 11
Touraj Daryaee: Palmyra, Sasanians, and the New World Order in the Third Century AD 12
Katia Schörle: Palmyra's Maritime Trade 13
Jean-Baptiste Yon: From Palmyra to India: How the East Was Won 14
Maura Heyn: Assurbanipal and the Reclining Banqueteer in Palmyra 15
Fred Albertson: So-Called Servants or Pages in Palmyran Funerary Sculpture 16
Lisa Brody: A Palmyran Child at Dura-Europos 17
Michael Blömer: Edessa, Palmyra, and the Sculpture of Syro-Mesopotamia in the First Three Centuries AD 18
Ted Kaizer: Gods in the Streets of Tadmor: Relative (In)Visibility of Palmyran Deities Outside Their Cult Centers 19
Catherine Bonesho: Language as Power: Aramaic at Palmyra 20
Nathanael Andrade: Zenobia and the East 21
Emanuele E. Intagliata: The Fate of Palmyra and the East after Zenobia 22

Organizers 23
Notes 24

View of grave monument, a so-called temple grave, located on the main street in Palmyra (Copyright: Rubina Raja).

Outline

Inaugurating the Getty Villa's "Classical World in Context" exhibition series, *Palmyra: Loss & Remembrance* brings to Los Angeles audiences some of the finest surviving sculpture from the fabled ancient Syrian caravan city. Located at an oasis in the Syrian desert, the ancient caravan city of Palmyra, a significant point of contact between the Roman and Parthian empires, has long been the focus of studies of cross-cultural encounters, for it was a locus of the movement of goods, peoples, and ideas between the Mediterranean and the Near East, India, and even China. Most work on the site, however, has focused either on the distinctive cultural mix of Palmyran art, architecture, religion, and society or the city's relations with Rome and the West. Palmyra's links to the East have hitherto been less fully explored.

This symposium, co-funded by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Carlsberg Foundation, seeks to address that lacuna. Over 1 ½ days, experts from diverse disciplines will explore the Palmyran links with the East as expressed through the art, architecture, and the social and religious life of the city across the three centuries when it flourished, before the sack by the troops of the Roman emperor Aurelian after Zenobia had successfully conquered large parts of the territory surrounding the city towards the north, south, east, and west.

The papers of the symposium will focus on evidence from the city and will do so in the light of new knowledge about these objects and sources and how they may inform us about the dynamic relationship of Palmyra with its eastern neighbours – a relationship that was as intense and tense as the one the city had with Rome, one difference being that Parthia was much closer than Rome was.

While Palmyra has often been described as a melting pot, which simply adopted and adapted what it could from other cultures, it has become clear over the past decades that Palmyran culture was distinct, and that the society of the city indeed positioned itself to a much larger degree than hitherto thought.

The intention of this symposium is to begin to explore such developments and trends in more detail, addressing a variety of topics, ranging from Palmyra's position on the silk roads, its languages and inscriptions, politics and religion, to its distinctive funerary art, which is the subject of *Palmyra: Loss & Remembrance,* the inaugural exhibition in the Getty Villa's "Classical World in Context" series, on display until May 27, 2019.

Program

Day 1: Thursday, April 18	
2:00 p.m.	**Session 1: *Location*** **Moderator: Kenneth Lapatin** **J. Paul Getty Museum, USA**
2:00 p.m.	**Welcome and Introduction** Jim Cuno J. Paul Getty Trust
	Palmyran Art and the East Rubina Raja Aarhus University, Denmark
	A Road That Never Went That Far: The Silk Road and the Palmyran Trade, *c.* 130 BC – AD 272 Khodadad Rezakhani Princeton University, USA
	Palmyra, Sasanians, and the New World Order in the Third Century AD Touraj Daryaee University of California, Irvine, USA
	Break
4:40 p.m.	**Palmyra's Maritime Trade** Katia Schörle Brown University, USA
	From Palmyra to India: How the East Was Won Jean-Baptiste Yon Laboratoire HiSoMA, France

Day 2: Friday, April 19	
10:00 a.m.	**Session 2: *Art*** **Moderator: Joan Aruz** **The Metropoolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA**
	Assurbanipal and the Reclining Banqueteer in Palmyra Maura Heyn University of North Carolina Greensboro, USA
	So-Called Servants or Pages in Palmyran Funerary Sculpture Fred Albertson University of Memphis, USA
	Break
11:45 a.m.	**A Palmyran Child at Dura-Europos** Lisa Brody Yale University, USA
	Edessa, Palmyra, and the Sculpture of Syro-Mesopotamia in the First Three Centuries AD Michael Blömer Aarhus University, Denmark
1:00 p.m.	Lunch Break
2:30 p.m.	**Session 3a: *Religion*** **Moderator: M. Rahim Shayegan** **University of California, Los Angeles, USA**
	Gods in the Streets of Tadmor: Relative (In)Visibility of Palmyran Deities Outside Their Cult Centers Ted Kaizer Durham University, UK
	Language as Power: Aramaic at Palmyra Catherine Bonesho University of California, Los Angeles, USA
	Break
4:15 p.m.	**Session 3b: *History*** **Moderator: M. Rahim Shayegan** **University of California, Los Angeles, USA**
	Zenobia and the East Nathanael Andrade University of Binghamton, USA
	The Fate of Palmyra and the East After Zenobia Emanuele Intagliata Aarhus University, Denmark
	Concluding Remarks M. Rahim Shayegan University of California, Los Angeles, USA
6:00 p.m.	Reception

Moderators

Kenneth Lapatin (Moderator and co-organizer) is Curator of Antiquities at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. A graduate of Berkeley and Oxford, he has excavated in Greece, Italy, Israel, and England, both above ground and under water. His principal research interests include the materials, techniques, and functions of ancient art, luxury, the histories of collecting and scholarship, and forgery. He is the author and/or editor of 15 books and over 100 articles and other publications, and he has curated over a dozen exhibitions on topics ranging from Athenian vases, polychrome sculpture, Hellenistic bronzes, Roman silver, and ancient gems to antiquity in the Middle Ages and the modern reception of Pompeii — most recently *Palmyra: Loss & Remembrance*, at the Getty Villa from April 18, 2018 to May 27, 2019.

Joan Aruz (Moderator) is Curator in Charge Emerita of the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Her work focuses on cultures in contact in the eastern Mediterranean and the ancient Middle East, and she has mounted a number of special exhibitions around this theme, including *Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus* (2003), *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.* (2008), and *Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age* (2014), which all focus on cross-cultural encounters and their impact on the visual arts. As a Senior Fellow at the Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, Koç University, she worked on Mesopotamian seals in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum in 2017. She was a Getty Museum Scholar at the Getty Villa in 2018 and organized the symposium *Palmyra: Mirage in the Desert*, which was published in 2018.

M. Rahim Shayegan (Moderator and concluding remarks) is the Jahangir and Eleanor Amuzegar Professor of Iranian, and director of Pourdavoud Center for the Study of the Iranian World. He received his PhD from Harvard University, and was a Junior Fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows, before joining the NELC faculty at UCLA. He has received a number of awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship (2013–14). He has authored and co-edited several books, among them *Arsacids and Sasanians: Political Ideology in Post-Hellenistic and Late Antique Persia* (CUP, 2011); *Aspects of History and Epic in Ancient Iran* (Harvard UP, 2012); *The Talmud in Its Iranian Context* (Mohr Siebeck, 2010); and *Persia beyond the Oxus* (Bulletin of the Asia Institute, 2012). He is currently working on a number of edited volumes on the Achaemenid and Sasanian empires, among them the forthcoming volume *Cyrus the Great: Life and Lore* (Harvard UP) and *Companion to the Sasanian Empire* (Wiley-Blackwell).

Abstracts

View of the Temple of Bel in Palmyra (Copyright: Rubina Raja).

Palmyran Art and the East

Rubina Raja
Aarhus University, Denmark
rubina.raja@cas.au.dk

Palmyran art and architecture has been a topic of broad interest for centuries. Since the rediscovery of Palmyra in the 17th century, the city's art and archaeology have fascinated travelers and scholars alike. The first surge of interest in the art and architecture of the city came with the immense work of Wood on the ruins of Palmyra, a delicate publication with drawings of numerous monuments from the city, which he visited in 1751 with his fellow traveler Dawkins.

The earliest objects to enter European collections that we know of are the funerary portraits, which arrived in the late 18th century to collections in France and Denmark after a string of travelers visited the site and reported on the fascinating art of the city. From then on, interest grew and objects dispersed into a wide range of collections and museums. The Palmyran art fascinated the European eye. However, the focus has usually been on the relations between Palmyra and Rome, on how the Palmyran art was influenced by and embraced Roman trends and styles. This focus developed as a result of the obsessive attention given to the, often unreliable, sources which reported the third century crisis of Palmyra, which culminated in Aurelian's sack of Palmyra, a sack initiated by Zenobia's insistence on liberating Palmyra from Rome and expanding its territory. When looking at the city's art and architecture, however, it remains unclear how the dynamics between Palmyra, the West, and the East indeed developed, and in which directions Palmyra oriented itself.

This paper focuses on exploring case studies, which might be one way of better understanding Palmyra and its situation between East and West.

Rubina Raja is professor of Classical Archaeology at Aarhus University, Denmark, and centre director of the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Urban Network Evolutions (UrbNet). Rubina Raja's research revolves around urban development and religious identities in the eastern Roman provinces and the Levant. She heads the investigation of the largest corpus of Roman funerary portraits outside Rome, found in Palmyra, Syria, and co-directs a large-scale excavation in Jerash, Jordan, focusing on the Northwest Quarter of the ancient city of Gerasa. Her work has received widespread, international acclaim and earned her a number of distinctions, including the prestigious EliteForsk Award of the Danish Ministry for Research and Education and the Silver Medal of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters.

A Road That Never Went That Far: The Silk Road and the Palmyran Trade, *c.* 130 BC – AD 272

Khodadad Rezakhani
Princeton University, USA
krezakhani@princeton.edu

With the ever-expanding use of 'the Silk Road' as an all-encompassing concept for the pre-modern trade in Eurasia comes the pitfall of considering all Trans-Eurasian trade to have been part of a single network. Whether the trade network extending from western China to Central Asia was ever connected or integrated into those to its west is a matter of debate. However, exploring the possible routes of such connection, through the Iranian plateau, Mesopotamia, and Syria to the Mediterranean, is worth serious research.

The present paper focuses on the case of Palmyra and its unique political, geographical, and social position, both within the empires that surrounded it and in its own local, Syro-Mesopotamian context. By exploring Palmyra's position in the trade networks, from the supposed 'opening of the Silk Road' in 130 BC to the fall of Palmyra as an independent kingdom, this paper addresses historiographical issues relating to the concept of the Silk Road, as well as Palmyra's place within the trade networks of Eurasia.

Khodadad Rezakhani is a historian of first millennium Central and West Asia, specializing in the socio-economic and cultural history of this region in the context of global history. He earned his PhD in Late Antique Near Eastern History from UCLA and has taught and researched at the London School of Economics and Freie Universität, Berlin, and is currently an associate research scholar at the Sharmin and Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies at Princeton University. His publications include *ReOrienting the Sasanians: East Iran in Late Antiquity* (Edinburgh UP, 2017), the forthcoming *Creating the Silk Road: Travel, Trade, and Myth-Making* (IB Tauris, 2019), and numerous articles on the culture and history of Iran, Central Asia, and the Near East.

Palmyra, Sasanians, and the New World Order in the Third Century AD

Touraj Daryaee
University of California, Irvine, USA
tdaryaee@uci.edu

This essay explores the changing relations between Palmyra and caravan cities in the Near East and that of the Sasanian Empire in the third century AD. While the Arsacid and Roman empires allowed Palmyra to function as an important trade center, the Sasanians changed this balance of power. The Sasanians put an end not only to Palmyra's importance, along with the Roman Empire, but also Dura Europos, to put trade directly under their control. By destroying the existence of these local centers of economic and sometimes political power, they attempted to do away with buffer states/local powers between themselves and the Roman Empire. This was part of the general centralization plan of the Sasanians in the third century AD, where towns and kingdoms (Arabia, Armenia, Bactria) were either taken over or defeated.

Touraj Daryaee holds the Maseeh Chair in Persian Studies & Culture and is the director of the Dr. Samuel M. Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture at the University of California, Irvine. His work deals with late antique Iran and ancient Iranian Studies. His books include *Sasanian Persia: The Rise and Fall of an Empire* (IB Tauris, 2009), *The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History* (OUP, 2012), and *Sasanian Iran in the Context of Late Antiquity* (UCI, 2018).

Palmyra's Maritime Trade

Katia Schörle
Brown University, USA
katia_schorle@brown.edu

Palmyra, often referred to as the Pearl of the Desert, has embodied par excellence the caravan city. The city's splendid remains have long been considered as the reflection of the local merchant class's wealth and overall involvement in the long-distance overland trade to the Persian Gulf and as far as China.

This paper explores Palmyra's merchant long-term economic strategies and choices. Through the careful examination of reliefs and inscriptions both in Palmyra and in Egypt, it can challenge a vision of Palmyra as a city engaged in solely overland trade and argue for much wider maritime commercial interests. Technical relief details point to the importance of maritime shipping, which can be specifically related to ship ownership and commerce with the Mediterranean as well as the Indian Ocean, with the development of a presence on the Nile and in Egypt in order to control or at least secure access to major transshipment areas. With the rise of competition, mainly due to the development of maritime routes via the Red Sea, Palmyra had to increasingly consider the effective use of different transport means to beat competition by timely delivery of luxury goods to competitive Mediterranean markets. It also had to bypass intermediary markets in order to obtain goods at their production origin.

Katia Schörle is currently a visiting assistant professor of Roman Archaeology at Brown University. She has worked extensively on the Roman Mediterranean as well as on Palmyra and on the Indo-Roman trade, on topics relating to Roman art, archaeology and architecture, merchant networks and maritime connectivity, and trade and the ancient economy.

From Palmyra to India: How the East Was Won

Jean-Baptiste Yon
Laboratoire HiSoMA, France
jb.yon@ifporient.org

From the 1st century onwards, Palmyra and its merchants seem to have played a predominant role in the eastern trade of the Roman Empire. This impression comes in part from the particularly rich documentation for Palmyra. Obviously, the Palmyrenes must have had competitors on the trade routes. One must, however, question the circumstances and conditions which allowed this development and the establishment of Palmyrene commercial stations in the Persian Gulf and on the Indian coast. In the present state of evidence, it is not possible to go back beyond the 1st century BC, but it may be that the Palmyra expansion was preceded by contacts in the Hellenistic era. This contribution, based mostly on epigraphy and textual evidence, will attempt to provide some answers to these questions to shed light on the prodigious prosperity of Palmyra during the Roman period.

Jean-Baptiste Yon is senior researcher at the French CNRS in the French Institute for the Near East in Beirut (PhD: Tours, 1999 (*Les notables de Palmyre*); Habilitation: Paris, 2014). He is now the director of the French archaeological mission at Tyre (Lebanon), as well as part of the IGLS team (*Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*) working in Lebanon and Jordan, and a member of the Palmyra Portrait Project. He has worked extensively on the history and the epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Near East. Among his recent publications are the corpus of the Greek and Latin inscriptions of Palmyra (IGLS 17), the catalogue of the Greek and Latin inscriptions in the National Museum of Beirut (IGLMusBey) and an edited volume on the *Ports of the Ancient Indian Ocean* (Primus Books, 2016).

Assurbanipal and the Reclining Banqueteer in Palmyra

Maura Heyn
University of North Carolina, Greensboro, USA
mkheyn@uncg.edu

Almost fifty years have passed since the publication of J.-M. Dentzer's seminal article on the reclining banqueter motif in Sasanian royal iconography and its connection to a similar, albeit much earlier, scene featuring the neo-Assyrian king, Ashurbanipal, and his wife banqueting in a garden from Nineveh. Despite the vast amount of time which separates the two examples, Dentzer asserted that the enduring popularity of the reclining banqueter motif, including at Palmyra, hearkened back to the pose of the neo-Assyrian king and its association with exclusive royal or aristocratic status.

This paper will revisit Dentzer's argument regarding the figure of the neo-Assyrian king as a starting point to interpreting the significance of this motif in Palmyrene sculpture. The banquet scene is ubiquitous in the Mediterranean and Mesopotamian regions in the first millennium BC, and its popularity in Palmyra presents us with an interesting opportunity to juxtapose the modes of presentation from the different regions. Although it is certainly the case that the significance of the scene was context-specific, it is also possible that its perceived provenance added to its effectiveness as a symbol of elite status, as Dentzer argued. Careful examination of the attributes, hand gestures, and dress associated with the reclining figure(s) in the Palmyrene tomb suggests a strong affiliation with the eastern iconographical tradition. The ramifications of this affiliation for the significance of the scene at Palmyra are explored in this paper.

Maura K. Heyn is an associate professor and department head in the Department of Classical Studies at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her PhD in Archaeology is from UCLA (2002), where she studied the art and archaeology of the eastern Roman provinces under Dr. Susan B. Downey. Her main research focus is the funerary sculpture from Palmyra. Her article on the significance of hand gestures in Palmyrene portraiture (*American Journal of Archaeology*, 2010) is one of her most important contributions to the field and has spawned collaborations with other scholars of Palmyrene studies, both in Europe and the United States. In addition to the hand gestures, Maura Heyn has also published and presented on depictions of women in Palmyra and the significance of the different styles of dress in the funerary portraiture. She has more recently become interested in the iconography of banqueting scenes in the Palmyrene tombs and Neo-Assyrian palaces.

So-Called Servants or Pages in Palmyran Funerary Sculpture

Fred Albertson
University of Memphis, USA
falbrtsn@memphis.edu

This presentation examines the group of young male figures appearing as attendants in scenes of sacrifice, banqueting, and preparation for a hunt. Appearing exclusively on sarcophagi and 'small banquet reliefs', this is the group originally labelled by Harald Ingholt as 'servants' or 'pages' and whom he considered to be slaves, thus designating them as individuals clearly originating from a lower social order than that of the banqueters and priests they serve. However, certain aspects of their iconography suggest otherwise. For one, the members of this series, without exception, are depicted as youthful males, that is without beards. This would suggest that we are dealing with a group in which age was a specific requirement. In addition, two distinctive hairstyles and two distinctive forms of dress characterize the group. These defining features are not only limited but may also be linked to Persian/Parthian royal and divine iconography – once again suggesting the intention to visually categorize a distinctive group and one of high social and political status. It is suggested here that, at Palmyra, such 'servants' represent, instead, religious attendants similar to the *camilli* found in Roman religion, therefore designating not slaves but individuals drawn from elite families.

Fred Albertson currently serves as professor of Art History in the Department of Art at The University of Memphis. He received his BA in History and Classical Civilization from the University of California, Irvine, and his MA and PhD in Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology from Bryn Mawr College. Professor Albertson's scholarly interests focus on the art of the Classical and Early Christian worlds, with emphasis on Roman sculpture, portraiture, and iconography. His books and articles have appeared in monograph series and journals published in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East, on diverse topics ranging from Cypriot sculpture, the iconography surrounding the legendary founding of Rome, the Colossus of Nero, the coinage of Maxentius, and the Raising of Lazarus in Early Christian catacomb painting. He served as the Margo Tytus Visiting Scholar in the Department of Classics at the University of Cincinnati in 2004 and as a Getty Scholar in 2013. Included among his professional honors is the Rome Prize/NEH Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Classical Studies and Archaeology at the American Academy in Rome in 1995–1996.

A Palmyran Child at Dura-Europos

Lisa Brody
Yale University, USA
lisa.brody@yale.edu

While excavating the private houses in block G1 at Dura-Europos in 1932, the team from Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters, led by field director Clark Hopkins, discovered two fragments of a free-standing statue of a child. A third fragment was found in block G6. The figure, preserved from shoulders to feet, stands frontally with arms in front of the body, dressed in a long chiton and mantle and holding a bird in the right hand and bunch of grapes in the left. Hopkins identified the child as a girl, noted the statue's Palmyrene characteristics, and dated it to the first half of the second century AD. These observations have been reiterated in subsequent publications of the statue.

This modest statue, now at the Yale University Art Gallery, represents an important piece in the study of the interaction between Palmyra and Dura-Europos. Many questions about it remain: Is the limestone Palmyrene? Where was the object carved? Why were the fragments so widely dispersed? What were the statue's original context and function? While all scholars since Hopkins have identified the figure as a girl, even this is now open to investigation. Calling on iconographic as well as scientific evidence, this paper will present a new analysis of this statue – one of the few free-standing sculptures from Dura-Europos and one of the strongest artistic links between Dura and Palmyra – in seeking to answer questions about the cities' cultural connections.

Lisa R. Brody is associate curator of Ancient Art at the Yale University Art Gallery. She has excavated in Portugal, Greece, and Turkey and has taught art history and classical archaeology for many years. Her publications include *Aphrodisias III: The Aphrodite of Aphrodisias* and numerous articles and reviews on Classical art and archaeology. While at Yale, she has co-curated with Gail Hoffman two exhibitions on Roman provincial art: *Dura-Europos: Crossroads of Antiquity* (McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College, spring 2011; NYU's Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, fall 2011) and *Roman in the Provinces: Art on the Periphery of Empire* (Yale University Art Gallery, fall 2014; McMullen Museum, spring 2015), editing and contributing to the publications that accompanied both exhibitions.

Edessa, Palmyra, and the Sculpture of Syro-Mesopotamia in the First Three Centuries AD

Michael Blömer
Aarhus University, Denmark
michael.bloemer@cas.au.dk

Edessa, modern Şanlıurfa in Turkey, was one of the most important centers of ancient Mesopotamia and the capital of the kingdom of Osrhoene. Moreover, it was a significant economic and artistic hub. In my talk, I will discuss the growing corpus of funerary sculpture and funerary mosaics from Edessa and its relation to the sculpture of Palmyra. In their groundbreaking works on Parthian art and iconography, Rostovtzeff, Seyrig, Schlumberger, and Girshman included both Edessean and Palmyrene statues and reliefs as prime examples. Recent studies, however, have shown that the idea of a distinct Parthian impact on the art of the Syrian Desert and Mesopotamia can no longer be upheld. The pendulum swung towards a notion of Palmyrene sculpture as an original creation that merges Roman and Graeco-Semitic traditions. Yet, a conclusion has not been reached and the precise nature of the relationship between the sculpture and iconography of Palmyra and Mesopotamia in the first three hundred years of the Common Era requires further exploration. A problem is the lack of in-depth studies in the sculpture of Mesopotamia, which makes comparisons difficult. By comparing the sculpture of Edessa and Palmyra, I will explore the great potential of further research in the sculptural production of Mesopotamia and its implications for our understanding of Palmyrene culture.

Michael Blömer is an archaeologist whose research revolves around Asia Minor and the Near East in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. He has worked on urbanism, sculpture, religious iconography, and the religious life of the Hellenistic and Roman Near East. Blömer is also an experienced field archaeologist and co-director of the excavations at Doliche, southeast Turkey. He received his D.Phil. from Münster University in 2009. Since then he has worked as a research fellow at the Centre of Excellence “Religion and Politics” at Münster University and took up a position as assistant professor at the Centre for Urban Network Evolutions at Aarhus University in 2015.

Gods in the Streets of Tadmor: Relative (In)Visibility of Palmyran Deities Outside Their Cult Centers

Ted Kaizer
Durham University, UK
ted.kaizer@durham.ac.uk

This paper asks to what degree gods and goddesses were present in Palmyrene society outside the temples and sanctuaries. With some notable exceptions (such as a wall painting of a reclining Dionysus), deities remained absent from the funerary sphere, and there is not much evidence either for the place of divinities in domestic contexts. The paper therefore investigates the various sources (epigraphic, archaeological, visual) to explore in what way inhabitants of the divine world could be made more visible 'in the streets', and in other public civic places, not only during processions and festivals, but also through display of imagery that has in some cases been overlooked or downplayed, and through mentions in public inscriptions. However, in contrast to the Roman Empire at large, where 'gods were all around and depicted everywhere', the available sources do not allow for a similar situation to be sketched at the oasis of Tadmor-Palmyra. The question will be asked whether this is simply a function of the evidence, or whether it is the result of a different religious mentality.

Ted Kaizer is professor in Roman Culture and History at Durham University. His main research interest is the social and religious history of the Near East in the Late Hellenistic and Roman periods. He is the author of *The Religious Life of Palmyra* (Stuttgart, 2002) and has written articles on various aspects of religion and history of the classical Levant. He has edited a number of volumes, including *The Variety of Local Religious Life in the Near East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (Leiden, 2008); *Religion, Society and Culture at Dura-Europos* [Yale Classical Studies 38] (Cambridge, 2016); and, with M. Facella, *Kingdoms and Principalities in the Roman Near East* (Stuttgart, 2010). He has held a Major Research Fellowship of the Leverhulme Trust (2014–2017).

Language as Power: Aramaic at Palmyra

Catherine Bonesho
University of California, Los Angeles, USA
bonesho@humnet.ucla.edu

The ancient city of Palmyra lies not only at the intersections of empires but also at the intersections of languages. The primary language of the city of Palmyra, known as Palmyrene Aramaic, can also be found in neighboring cities such as Dura Europos, as well as throughout the reaches of the Roman Empire. In addition to being used by itself on funerary or dedicatory inscriptions, among others, Palmyrene Aramaic is displayed on bilingual (sometimes trilingual) inscriptions alongside Greek and/or Latin inscriptions. Fergus Millar notes a unique characteristic of the inscriptions of Palmyra: "in Palmyra alone, of all the cities in the [Roman] Empire, one could see a series of public inscriptions in both Greek and a Semitic language, in parallel, which lasted for almost three centuries" (Millar 2006: 290).

In this study, I analyze the material presentation of Palmyrene Aramaic and Greek and Latin inscriptions found at Palmyra and Dura Europos to decipher how Palmyrene Aramaic is presented vis-à-vis other languages to determine why Palmyra uniquely displays both Palmyrene Aramaic and Greek. The use of Palmyrene Aramaic at Palmyra and abroad, I argue, should not merely be understood as just another means of presenting information but also as a conscious decision by Palmyrenes to maintain and distinguish their Palmyrene or eastern identity in contrast to the Greeks and Romans of the West.

Catherine E. Bonesho is an assistant professor in Early Judaism in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at UCLA. Her research focuses on locating the languages, literature, and culture of Judaism in the Second Temple and Rabbinic periods in their imperial contexts. She is currently working on her first monograph on the polemic of foreign holidays in rabbinic literature. Bonesho's research also concentrates on the Roman Near East and Semitic languages, especially Aramaic, and their use in imperial contexts. She has co-authored translation and paleographic articles on Palmyrene Aramaic inscriptions as one of the founding members of the Wisconsin Palmyrene Aramaic Inscription Project. Bonesho was a 2017–2018 Rome Prize Fellow in Ancient Studies at the American Academy in Rome (FAAR '18). She earned her PhD in Classical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies (2018) and her MA in Hebrew and Semitic Studies (2014) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Zenobia and the East

Nathanael Andrade
University of Binghamton, NY, USA
nandrade@binghamton.edu

Zenobia of Palmyra is depicted in the ancient and late antique source material as a fundamentally eastern figure. But the imperial titles that she adopted for herself and her son, with the obvious exception of 'king of kings', were overwhelmingly embedded in Roman paradigms. A wealth of recent scholarship has accordingly situated her within the context of the Roman Empire. But what was Zenobia's relationship with the peoples of the East, including the Persians? This presentation aims to explore whether new light can be shed on Zenobia's reign (268–272) by situating it within the political, religious, and socio-economic contexts of Iran and the hinterland Asia. It also analyzes the historiographical material, and Roman imperial propaganda, that likened Zenobia and her Palmyrenes to Persians, Parthians, or Arabs and that claimed that she was collaborating with the Persian court. Key areas of focus will be the imperial and religious transformations of contemporary Persia, relationships between eastern Roman dynasts and the Persian court, and the contacts that Zenobia's Palmyra maintained with the hinterland of Asia.

Nathanael Andrade received his PhD in Greek and Roman history from the University of Michigan and is currently an associate professor in the history department at Binghamton University (SUNY). He has published extensively on the Roman and later Roman Near East, the social connections between the Roman Empire and various societies of Asia, and on the city of Palmyra. His books include *Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (CUP, 2013); *The Journey of Christianity to India in Late Antiquity: Networks and the Movement of Culture* (CUP, 2018); and *Zenobia: Shooting Star of Palmyra* (OUP, 2018).

The Fate of Palmyra and the East after Zenobia

Emanuele E. Intagliata
Aarhus University, Denmark
e.e.intagliata@cas.au.dk

The fall of Zenobia and the ensuing destructions caused by the Aurelianic army to the city reported by written sources marked the end of Palmyra's commercial prosperity and the beginning of a new phase for this settlement. After AD 272/273, the economic vitality of Palmyra dramatically decreased, and its cultural and commercial links with the East became weaker. The Palmyrene urban elite, which had been one of the main agents of Palmyra's success as a caravan center in the Roman period, seems to disappear from the archaeological and inscriptional records. This did not necessarily translate into a demise of the settlement, for Palmyra survived throughout Late Antiquity as a crucial military base along the eastern Roman frontier and as a religious and economic engine for the region. It is only from the early 7th century AD, when former political and administrative boundaries collapsed after the Persian and Islamic conquests, that Palmyra's links with the East revitalized. This paper aims to shed some light on the fate of Palmyra after the events of AD 272/273 through a survey of the archaeological data, inscriptions, and written sources, focusing specifically on the settlement's shifting connections with the East in Late Antiquity and Early Islamic period.

Emanuele E. Intagliata is assistant professor in the Archaeology of Urban Networks and Exchange at the Centre for Urban Network Evolutions (UrbNet), Aarhus University. His research interests revolve around borderlands and the transformation of cities in the late antique, early Islamic, and early Byzantine Near East and Caucasus. In the past ten years, he has re-examined the evolution of post-Roman Palmyra based on a thorough analysis of published evidence, ancient written sources, and unpublished data from a number of archives in Europe. Recently, he has authored *Palmyra after Zenobia (AD 273–750): An Archaeological and Historical Reappraisal* (Oxbow, 2018).

Organizers

The conference is co-organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Palmyra Portrait Project (Aarhus University), and is co-funded by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Carlsberg Foundation.

Kenneth Lapatin
J. Paul Getty Museum, USA

Phone: +1 310 440 7279
klapatin@getty.edu

Rubina Raja
Aarhus University, Denmark

Phone: +45 2718 8390
rubina.raja@cas.au.dk

Notes

Palmyra and the East: April 18 and 19, 2019
Venue: Getty Villa, Los Angeles, CA, USA
Organizers: Kenneth Lapatin (J. Paul Getty Museum, USA) and Rubina Raja (Aarhus University, Denmark)

Front cover: The so-called Triumphal Arch in Palmyra with a view of the city's main street (Copyright: Rubina Raja).

Back cover: The Beauty of Palmyra (Image by Tahnee Cracchiola, JPGM, courtesy of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen).