

Beste lezer,

ik hoop dat u deze nieuwsbrief in goede gezondheid leest. Ook het afgelopen kwartaal werd voor een groot deel getekend door de Corona-crisis. Een aantal geplande activiteiten, zoals de NINO/EOL voorjaarslezing, de Sancisi-Weerdenburg lezing, en de opening van de Scholtententoonstelling het RMO moesten helaas worden afgelast. Wij hopen de schade volgend jaar in te kunnen halen!

Tweede NINO Postdoc Fellow

Gelukkig kon een aantal zaken wel doorgang vinden, zoals de werving van de nieuwe NINO postdoctoral fellow. Deze vacature mocht dit jaar op veel belangstelling rekenen; in totaal zijn er maar liefst 58 sollicitaties binnengekomen. De benoemingscommissie bestond dit jaar uit Ben Haring (Egyptologie), Rogier van der Heijden (studentlid Universiteit Utrecht), Jonathan Valk (Assyriologie), Joanita Vroom (Archeologie), Willemijn Waal (voorzitter) en Carolien van Zoest (secretaris). Met veel genoegen kan ik berichten dat egyptologe Julia Hamilton per 1 september zal beginnen als de tweede NINO postdoctoral fellow. Julia is in februari van dit jaar gepromoveerd aan de universiteit van Cambridge op een proefschrift getiteld 'Beloved of the Ka: Personal names in the complex of Mereruka Meri, Saqqara'. De komende twee jaar zal zij bij het NINO onderzoek gaan doen naar graffiti die zijn aangetroffen op niet-koninklijke graven van het Oude Rijk in Saqqara. In de nieuwsbrief van september zal zij zich nader voorstellen. Bij deze wil ik alle commissieleden graag heel hartelijk danken voor hun tijd en inzet.

Collecties

Ander positief nieuws betreft de voortgang van het digitaliseringsproject van de Scholtencollectie. Op dit moment worden de foto's van Frank Scholten gedigitaliseerd door Picturae in Alkmaar en de werkzaamheden verlopen volgens schema. Daarnaast is momenteel een kleine tentoonstelling van het werk van Frank Scholten te bewonderen in het RMO: acht foto's en een korte documentaire (www.rmo.nl/tentoonstellingen/tijdelijke-

[tentoonstellingen/archeologie-en-toerisme-in-het-heilige-land](#); reserveren van museumbezoek is verplicht).

Ook op het gebied van onze Böhl-collectie zien we vooruitgang tegemoet: Carmen Gütschow zal de hele maand juli werken aan de restauratie van kleitabletten in onze collectie. De restauratie-afdeling van het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden stelt weer een werkplek beschikbaar; iets dat we onder de huidige omstandigheden extra waarderen.

Subsidies

In maart en juni is de Academische Commissie bijeengekomen en heeft enkele subsidies toegekend, o.a. een Incoming Mobility Grant voor Roberto Gozzoli (voorjaar 2021). Het symposium "Personal and Family Religion in the Ancient Near East" georganiseerd door Jan Gerrit Dercksen & William Nation moest helaas geannuleerd worden.

Van 1 juni tot 1 oktober is de inzending voor de NINO-Scriptieprijs weer geopend – meer informatie hierover leest u verderop in deze nieuwsbrief.

Ik wens u een goede zomer toe!

WW

NINO-bibliotheek blijft gesloten tot 1 september

Tot onze spijt blijft de NINO-bibliotheek gesloten voor studenten en bezoekers tot (minstens) 1 september 2020.

Wij krijgen hier veel vragen over. Het NINO is afhankelijk van meerdere factoren. Twee belangrijke zijn UBL-beleid en de restricties op de universitaire gebouwen. De verschillende onderdelen van de Universitaire Bibliotheken Leiden zijn voortdurend in overleg over wat er op welke locatie mogelijk is. Daarnaast is het NINO gevestigd in een gebouw dat meer omvat dan alleen onze bibliotheek.

Meer informatie op onze website: www.nino-leiden.nl/message/update-nino-library-still-closed-due-to-corona-virus.



Even voorstellen

Nolke Tasma

Beste allen, mijn naam is Nolke Tasma en sinds april ben ik werkzaam bij het NINO als student-assistent voor het tijdschrift *Bibliotheca Orientalis*. Verder ben ik bachelorstudent Oude Nabije Oostenstudies aan de Universiteit Leiden. Binnen deze studie specialiseer ik mij in Hebreeuws en Aramees. Ook heb ik vakken Arabisch gevolgd.



Mijn propedeuse heb ik vorig collegejaar cum laude afgerond en ik ben nu mijn tweede studiejaar aan het afronden. Ik heb een brede interesse in de studie en talen van het Oude Nabije Oosten en ik hoop mij daar in de toekomst verder in te ontwikkelen. Ik kijk er erg naar uit om te beginnen met mijn werk in het NINO en ik hoop dat al het werk snel weer op normale wijze kan doorgaan.

Lara van der Hammen

werkt als student-assistent voor het NINO aan de Frank Scholten-fotocollectie. Binnen dit project houdt zij zich bezig met het archiefmateriaal, variërend van foto's en landkaarten tot ansichtkaarten en (kranten)knipsels. Na de BA Midden Oosten Studies, met afstudeerrichting Modern Midden Oosten, is zij direct doorgestroomd naar de MA Modern Middle Eastern Studies. Waar de focus in de BA met name op modern Iran lag, ligt de focus van de MA op Brits Mandaat Palestina.



Ze heeft brede interesses, variërend van politieke geschiedenis van het Midden Oosten, tot hedendaagse mensenrechtenschendingen. Haar MA scriptie richt zich op een andere NINO collectie, die van Seyyida Salme en Rudolph Said-Ruete. De focus van dit onderzoek richt zich op het leven en de archivale collectie van Said-Ruete.

Er wordt onderzocht en in kaart gebracht welke informatie bekend is over Rudolph, en waar de indrukwekkende collectie van hem uit bestaat. Daarnaast wordt er op dit moment ook gewerkt aan een PhD-voorstel, hopende dat er met een langer en diepgaander onderzoek meer inzicht kan worden gegeven in het ingewikkelde en zeer interessante leven van Rudolph Said-Ruete, zijn leven maar bovenal zijn netwerk en de politieke arena van Brits Mandaat Palestina.

Nieuws van het NINO-onderzoekscentrum

Report of Research Visit: Faten Kamal

The NINO Mobility Grant I was granted, together with a generous grant of Mehen Study Centre of Ancient Egypt, allowed me to study for three months at Leiden University (18th of September-15th of December 2019). The intention was to attend the course in Abnormal Hieratic, as well as to visit the National Museum of Antiquities (RMO) to study the collection of papyri for my PhD project.

Level I & III of Abnormal Hieratic consisted of the study and discussion of several texts, including P. Vienna D 12002, P. Brooklyn 37.1799 E, P. Cairo 30657, P. Louvre E 7851, P. Louvre E 7848, Unpublished P. E 7860, P. Louvre 3228 G, P. Louvre 5 E 3228 etiq C Carton C, and P. BM 10798. These texts taught me how to be proficient with the abnormal hieratic scripts. In addition to the course, I attended the workshop "How to Handle an Abnormal Hieratic Archive from Turin" by Robert Kade (Würzburg) 7-9 October 2019, which was held in the Papyrological Institute. It was an intensive course dealing with the difficulties of reading Abnormal Hieratic texts. The workshop focused on P. Turin 2118-2121. Furthermore, it was great pleasure to attend "The Island of the Divine Crocodile – Recent Research on Textual and Other Archaeological Remains from Soknopaiou Nesos" congress (10-12 October 2019) in the Papyrological Institute, where I met several skilled scholars.



Unfortunately, it was not possible to finish the Demotic I course, but it was still profitable in that I learned basics of how to deal with demotic texts and how to use demotic dictionaries. The studied texts were P. Ryland 5, P. BM EA 10507, P. BM EA 10600, and P. Tsenhor.

On 29th October I had the opportunity to study the collection of papyri (AH 155 (=I 431), T 25 C, AMS 55, F 1942/ 5.15) in the RMO. These papyri are essential for my PhD project as palaeographical comparisons; two of them are Late Hieratic and others are Abnormal Hieratic texts. It was very interesting and I greatly benefited from the discussion that I evolved from the work.



Hieratic community in Mainz



Studying the collection of papyri

The stay in Leiden enabled me also to attend the “Ägyptologische Binsen – Weisheiten IV” congress in Mainz (8-12 December 2019). Not only the content of the presentations was incredible valuable for my own work, I greatly benefited from meeting scholars from all over the world, including Prof. Ursula Verhoeven, Prof. Fredrik Hagen as well as Dr. Hana Navratilova and Dr. Andreas Dorn. In addition, I had the opportunity to discuss my MA project with prof. Hans-W. Fischer-Elfert.

I am indebted to several people for their help and support. Dr. André Veldmeijer (AUC) has helped me with various tasks, Dr. Melanie Pitkin (Fitzwilliam Museum) assisted me in the application procedure and the journey to Leiden, Dr. Ibrahim Saweros (Sohag University) and Ms Abir Turner (tour guide, Egypt) are acknowledged for their kind help and valuable advice. I also would like to thank Jan & Bep Koek (Mehen Study Centre for Ancient Egypt), Lonneke Delpout, Carolien van Zoest, Dr. Carina van den Hoven, Anita Keizers, Carola Bronkhorst, and Steffie van Gompel for their kind help during my stay in Leiden. I am indebted to Dr. Rob Demarée and Dr. Svenja Gülde for their help in making it possible to attend the congress in Mainz. I am grateful to Dr. Lara Weiss, Dr. Daniel Soliman and Petra Hogenboom for their help and support to study the papyri in the RMO. Mrs. Hoogenboom also helped while studying the papyri. I thank Dr. Soliman also for his introduction on the database of the Museum with quick tour (with the help of Elena Hertel, she helped with a lot of references and how to start reading demotic). I am grateful to Dr. Miriam Müller for inviting me to give a talk.

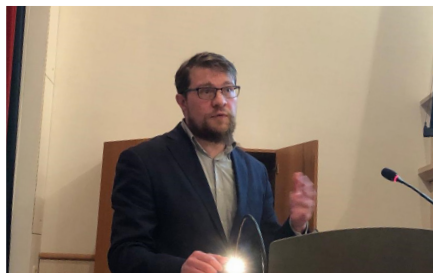
Research stay at NINO: Reinhard Pirngruber

I spent five highly productive days at NINO, courtesy of the Incoming Mobility Grant. My central aim was to obtain first-hand insight into the structure behind the PROSOBAB database established by Prof. Waerzeggers' ERC-funded research project Persia and Babylonia,



to contribute to the database and to provide feedback both as a contributor and user. To this aim, I provided the project with prosopographic data from hitherto unpublished texts from the archive of a small-scale merchant from the city of Sippar active during the early Achaemenid period by the name of Iššar-tarībi.

The second aim was to draw on the Leiden team's expertise with Social Network Analysis as means to analysing historical archival data and to discuss a paper in progress dedicated to the Murašu archive from Late Achaemenid Nippur. In particular, the potential of such an approach in assessing the informal status of persons that were not principals in a transaction recorded (such as witnesses, or officials present at the drafting of document) within the social circle of the archive holders was discussed. Also the question of how the data accumulated in PROSOBAB can be best employed for such research strategies was tackled.



My stay was rounded off by a public lecture in Amsterdam at the UvA, accepting a generous invitation by Prof. R van der Spek. There, I presented a research paper in progress comparing the imperial economies of Classical Athens on the one hand, and Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Babylon on the other. One central conclusion was that contrary to received wisdom pitting economic and civic liberty in the Mediterranean area against 'Oriental despotism', free trade played a much underappreciated feature of life in sixth century BCE Babylonia. The underlying research was based amongst others on a contextualization within the prevailing institutional framework of the business activities of Iššar-tarībi mentioned above. In that sense, this talks also showed the potential of PROSOBAB and the data it contains for a larger audience.

Secret Gallery: A Transhistorical Approach to Writing

David Maroto

Secret Gallery quietly opened its doors in Rotterdam in April 2019 and closed them on 22 September of the same year. During its six months of life, it was intended to be an experimental tool at the service of an artistic investigation on memory, death, the origin of writing, and the desire for posterity.



Royal Game of Ur, 45 × 25 × 10 cm, unbaked clay (2019).

As an artist, I am interested in a transhistorical approach to writing: what is it in the origin of this seemingly naturalised medium that can tell us something about our lives in current time? The origin of writing as we understand it today is fundamentally intertwined with a funerary function and the desire for one's name to be remembered after one's death. As we know from the discoveries made at the Royal Cemetery of Ur, after centuries of commitment to accounting and administrative records, writing started to feature personal names inscribed in durable materials. From this viewpoint, I consider writing akin to art making in that both are expressions of a desire to outlive one's temporal limits, to perpetuate one's memory in the future, to resist oblivion by leaving a mark that will remain and can be read long after



the author is gone. All these are elements of what I call 'desire for posterity'. I believe that, even if not verbalised in these same terms, the vast majority of artists share this desire: they create things that they hope will remain after they are gone. But one cannot guarantee a place in future memory for themselves. In order to be realised, such a desire must consider the institutional context where art finds its place. Hence my interest in developing new institutional strategies to show art under innovative conditions.

Secret Gallery represented an opportunity to create the ideal environment in which to show my work, avoiding some of the conventions that usually frame the artistic experience according to institutional inertias that turn it into a quick and superficial consumption of art. For example, there was no timetable, the space was open 24/7; it was not obvious from the outside that it was an art space; the visits were always accompanied by the artist and restricted to a maximum of four viewers at the same time; and, most importantly, one of the premises of the project was that nothing was written in or around Secret Gallery: both the communication and the mediation of the project were carried out by oral transmission. Thus, the promotion was done by word of mouth and, consequently, everyone who visited it had heard of its existence from someone else.

In Secret Gallery, a new body of work was exhibited: mural paintings, sculptures, and speech-based performance. Once in the gallery, conversation was the means to identify which part of the installation would become the focus of the visit. Each artwork was the springboard of a 'talk poem' that I told. The talk poem is a form developed by American author David Antin, a sort of spoken essay that blends narrative elements, delivered in an improvised fashion. The orally transmitted text was not about the work but was part of the work. Thus, the artwork was the artefact (be it an image or an object) and its contextualisation. There was no pressure or limit of time – the idea was to decelerate the artistic experience. The stories told and the conversation exchanged created a unique experience on an intimate, one-to-one basis, different for



Inanna, 220 cm high, mural painting (2019).

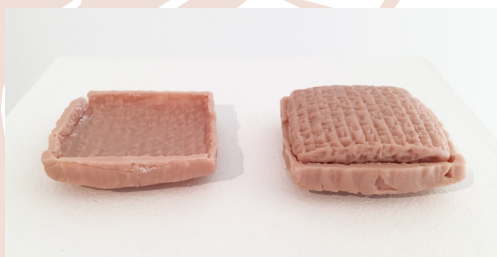
each visitor. Each artwork triggered the oral delivery of a piece of historical, philosophical, anthropological, literary, or artistic knowledge, or narrative, moving from one piece to another, connecting the dots with reflections that touched upon the motivations behind Secret Gallery – e.g. the Epic of Gilgamesh; Enheduanna, the first known author to humanity; the origin and history of writing; the invention of silent reading and punctuation; the desire for posterity; the preservation of future memory, etc.

An important convention that usually frames any artistic experience consists in resorting to a written text as a mediating device. This could be a curatorial statement, a critical review, the introductory wall text, the information in the captions next to the artwork, and so on. If writing is a medium that allows individuals to share information without being face to face, the refusal to write entailed the need to meet my audience in the flesh. It could happen that the visitor would know more about the subject I was speaking about than myself, as for example Professor Caroline Waerzeggers, former Director of the Netherlands Institute of the Near East in Leiden (NINO), when speaking about the origin of writing and cuneiform script; or some Iranian visitors, when speaking about Ancient Persia and Zoroastrianism. Thus, it was not about a one-directional speech-based performance, but about a situation in which both artist and visitor would speak, listen, and learn from each other (Socrates believed that knowledge can only be produced when there is discussion, questions and answers, and interrogation).



Probably, the piece that stirred audiences the most was a reproduction of a cuneiform clay tablet and its envelop. LB 1209 is a cuneiform tablet written in Old Assyrian, a letter by a young merchant to his mother in 1900–1840 BC, which was found unopen, therefore unread, at its destination in Kanesh (current Kültepe, Turkey). By reading the contents of the letter from a 3-D exact reproduction of the original cuneiform tablet, which included its case, I performed a moment of transhistorical continuity, where the audience became the recipients of the message after thousands of years of silence. I believe that there is something in the contact with these ancient objects that we can relate to our contemporary living experience. In fact, it was the mundane nature of the subjects discussed in the letter (unfulfilled promises, family disappointments, money issues) that which I was most interested in recovering from oblivion, reconnecting it with our daily existence in a simple and immediate way. The fact that I, and the visitors, who listened to the contents of the letter were the unsuspected recipients of the message intended to a mother who never read it – this fact happened against all odds: instead of returning to the dust of the desert it came from, the tablet managed to survive its way to us, contemporary listeners who cannot fully understand the reality this artefact originates from and yet are able to relate to it at a very fundamental level.

The production of this piece was possible thanks to the generous collaboration of the NINO, which is home to a fascinating collection of about 3,000 cuneiform clay tablets. I asked them to identify a tablet that I could use for my project. Not only they provided the tablet, they also enabled a cooperation with Delft University of Technology (TU Delft).



Tablet, 3-D scan and print of a 3,900-year-old cuneiform tablet (2019). Courtesy of the Netherlands Institute for the Near East and Delft University of Technology.

The original tablet is made of unbaked clay, and thus too fragile an object. TU Delft employed a Micro-CT scanner to make 1,440 X-ray pictures of the tablet. With the information collected, they were able to produce an exact 3-D print that NINO donated to Secret Gallery. My deep gratitude goes to both institutions, particularly to Professor Caroline Waerzeggers and Professor Dominique Ngan-Tillard.

Another example of participative piece was the hand-made, unbaked clay version of the Royal Game of Ur. This is the second oldest board game known to humanity, very popular in Mesopotamia between 3,000 BC and the first century AC. It is a game for two players whose rules are fairly simple, and which remains perfectly contemporary, sophisticated, and fun. When playing it, Secret Gallery's visitors experienced exactly what people experienced 5,000 years ago. The moments of excitement and strategic tension place the modern player in the mindset of those who felt the same millennia ago when playing the same game, creating a performative connection with the distant past of humanity.

As I strive to experiment with the idea of an institutional setting that does not rely on writing, engaging the viewer by oral means implies a commitment with the contemporary audience as the only valid interlocutors. This idea may sound counterintuitive against the notion of the artist's desire for posterity explained above (which entails an imagined future audience), but it is precisely in exploring this apparent contradiction where Secret Gallery is situated: between inscription and action, between writing and speaking, viewing and thinking, between art making and history.

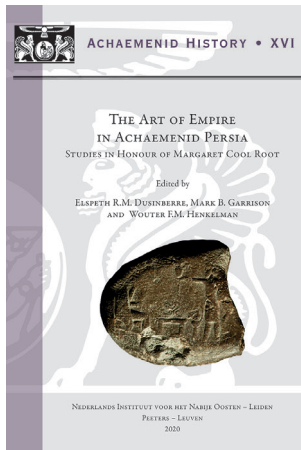
*David Maroto is a Spanish visual artist based in the Netherlands and a PhD from the Edinburgh College of Art. David has an extensive international artistic practice, also as a curator and editor of various publications. Recently, he has published an adaptation of his PhD thesis in a two-volume book called *The Artist's Novel: The Novel as a Medium in the Visual Arts* (Mousse Publishing). His project Secret Gallery was possible thanks to the generous support of the Centrum Beeldende Kunst Rotterdam and Mondriaan Fonds.*

Credits for all photos: David Maroto.



Publicaties

Half juni verscheen het 16^e volume in onze serie *Achaemenid History*:



**The Art of Empire in
Achaemenid Persia.
Studies in Honour of
Margaret Cool Root**

XXI, 640 pp. cloth;
ISBN 978-90-429-3921-9
€ 94,00 (excl. BTW; te
koop bij Peeters, Leuven)

Lees meer op www.nino-leiden.nl/publication/the-art-of-empire-in-achaemenid-persia

Binnenkort worden meer nieuwe NINO-publicaties verwacht, o.a. in de PIHANS-serie.

NINO-Scriptieprijs

Het academische jaar 2019/2020 eindigt anders dan anders, maar het schrijven van een scriptie blijft het slotstuk van je BA- of MA-studie. Studenten die dit studiejaar een scriptie hebben geschreven over het oude Nabije Oosten of Egypte, kunnen deze weer insturen voor de NINO-Scriptieprijs – mits de scriptie beoordeeld is met een 8.0 of hoger.



De deadline is 1 oktober 2020. Onze jury zal de beste BA-scriptie bekronen met een prijs van €400 en de beste MA-scriptie met €600. De prijzen worden uitgereikt op de NINO-dag, eind januari 2021.

Kijk voor alle details op de NINO-website:
www.nino-leiden.nl/funding/nino-thesis-prizes



Bookkeeping Without Writing: Early administrative technologies in context

Onderdeel van de activiteiten van de NINO postdoc fellow is de organisatie van een wetenschappelijk symposium. Onder de titel “Bookkeeping Without Writing” organiseert onze fellow Lucy Bennison-Chapman op 6 en 7 november een bijeenkomst van internationale wetenschappers over administratie in het late Neolithicum en de vroege historische tijd. Denk hierbij o.a. aan zegelfdrukken, “tokens”, kerfstokken en geknoopt touw (*kipu*).

Het zal in november nog niet voor alle internationale gasten mogelijk of wenselijk zijn om naar Leiden te reizen, dus een gedeelte van dit eerste jaarlijkse NINO-Postdoc Symposium zal via videoconferencing plaatsvinden. We zoeken naar gelijksoortige mogelijkheden om de lezingen voor een geïnteresseerd publiek toegankelijk te maken.