



Available online at <http://aran.garmian.edu.krd>



Aran Journal for Language and Humanities

<https://doi.org/10.24271/ARN.025-01-01-SC- 23>

The Heritage Horizons Project: Empowering Economic and Touristic Advancements Through Historical and Cultural Landscape Enhancement in the Garmian Area (KRI, Iraq)

Luca Colliva

Department of Cultural Heritage, Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna, Italy & MiSAK

Article Info		Abstract:
Received	April 2025	This article presents "Heritage Horizons", an interdisciplinary collaboration project aimed at promoting sustainable development in the Garmian area, in the Iraqi Kurdistan region, through the protection and enhancement of its archaeological, historical and cultural landscape, by training the staff of local partner institutions and supporting the development of sustainable tourism. The project develops from the proactive cooperation between Italian and Kurdish academic and non-academic institutions, including the Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna, the University of Garmian, the Garmian Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage, the Garmian Directorate of Tourism, ISMEO - the International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies, and the International Institute of Kurdish Culture in Rome. Far from being a top-down intervention, Heritage Horizons was envisioned and designed through a participatory process involving all the partners and stakeholders. The engagement of Kurdish partners, in fact, has been central to identifying local priorities, determining project strategies, and guaranteeing contextual and cultural relevance. By integrating historical and archaeological research, educational outreach, and sustainable tourism planning, the initiative addresses critical threats to heritage while promote inclusive socio-economic regeneration. Anchored in the current debates in heritage studies and participatory conservation, this presentation outlines the project's methodology, aims, and outcomes, highlighting how collaboration between local and international academic and non-academic actors can contribute to the realisation of resilient and inclusive development models in post-conflict contexts and developing regions.
Accepted	May 2025	
Published:	August 2025	
Keywords		
Cultural Heritage; International Cooperation; Cultural Tourism; Sustainable Tourism; Public Archaeology		
Corresponding Author		
luca.colliva2@unibo.it luca.colliva@gmail.com		

Introduction

The Garmian area, located in the southern sector of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, stands as a remarkable repository of human history and culture. Bounded by the Sirwan and Lower Zab rivers, its landscape is strewn with numerous archaeological and historical remains that convey the rich tapestry of human history and culture from the Neolithic period to the present day. However, in recent decades, this rich heritage has been increasingly threatened by rapid urban sprawl, the growing use of mechanical devices in agriculture, and unfortunately, by illegal excavations and, albeit to a lesser extent, vandalism resulting from neglect and disinterest among parts of the local population. These transformations have frequently been driven by development pressures which, while aiming at the necessary modernisation of the economic fabric, have often overlooked the fragile fabric of the area's cultural heritage.

It is within this context that the project titled *Heritage Horizons: Empowering Economic and Touristic Advancements Through Historical and Cultural Landscape Enhancement in the Garmian Area (KRI, Iraq)* takes shape. Supported by the University of Bologna's "UNIBO - Global South 2024" initiative, the project adopts a holistic and collaborative approach to heritage protection and valorisation. Its scope is ambitious: to enhance the integrity of the historical and archaeological heritage while embedding these efforts within educational, participatory, and economically viable frameworks.

Heritage Horizons: Genesis of the Project and Strategic Framework for Collaboration

MiSAK - the Italian Historical and Archaeological Mission in Kurdistan initiated its activities in the Garmian area in 2021. From the very first campaign, the desire emerged within our research team to collaborate not only in the study of the area's incredible historical and archaeological heritage but also in its preservation and enhancement. This commitment extended beyond the MiSAK members and it was shared and actively supported by the founding institutions, ISMEO - the International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies - and the International Institute of Kurdish Culture in Rome, along with our key scientific partner, the Department of Cultural Heritage of the *Alma Mater Studiorum* - University of Bologna.

During MiSAK's 2023 fieldwork campaign, together with the Garmian Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage, an first meeting was convened with the representatives of the University of Garmian to explore potential areas for collaboration. The discussion proved constructive and fruitful, revealing a mutual interest in developing joint initiatives in the fields of cultural heritage protection, public archaeology and sustainable tourism. This convergence of shared priorities laid the foundation for a promising transnational partnership with both the archaeological mission and the Department of Cultural Heritage of the University of Bologna. Indeed, these engagements are in line with the growing and shared belief that internationalisation is a privileged vehicle for local empowerment and intercultural solidarity (Knight 2004; De Wit and Hunter 2015).

Following this first meeting, the University of Garmian proposed to its Italian counterpart to organise a training trip to Italy for some members of its staff and the staff of the Garmian Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage and the Garmian Directorate of Tourism. The purpose was to improve the participants' skills, enabling them to experience the best practices of heritage management and sustainable tourism currently applied in Italy.

Concurrently, the University of Bologna launched the third edition of the "UniBO Global South" programme, which provides an ideal framework to support and strengthen these emerging partnerships. The "UniBO Global South" programme aims to reinforce the University of Bologna's proactive role in international cooperation for development, fostering meaningful connections between academic research, educational innovation, social utility, and international engagement. Inspired by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the programme annually funds a select number of initiatives that demonstrate strategic alignment with both the University's institutional missions and the locally identified priorities of partner organisations. Emphasis is placed on inclusive methodologies, co-designed actions, and multidisciplinary approaches that promote equity, participation, and long-term impact.

The project proponents are convinced that aligning heritage-based initiatives with context-sensitive development frameworks allows heritage to function not merely as a cultural artefact but as a catalyst for socio-economic transformation. In this context, the proposal put forth by the University of Garmian was subsequently incorporated into a broader initiative focused on cultural heritage preservation, professional training, and the development of sustainable cultural tourism in the Garmian area. This initiative was formalised under the title: *Heritage Horizons: Empowering Economic and Touristic Advancements Through Historical and Cultural Landscape Enhancement in the Garmian Area (KRI, Iraq)*. The project reflects a shared vision of heritage as a catalyst for educational growth, intercultural dialogue, and community-based development, establishing a durable platform for academic cooperation and territorial resilience. Really inclusive heritage processes that recognise and empower community stakeholders are not only more ethically grounded but also significantly more effective; similarly, the importance of approaches that prioritize local agency for ensuring the long-term sustainability of cultural heritage initiatives is a well-established principle in heritage studies.¹

The *Heritage Horizons* project aims to promote sustainable economic and tourism development of the Garmian area in the Iraqi Kurdistan (KRI) through the preservation, valorisation and promotion of its remarkable cultural and historical heritage. This initiative is coordinated by the Department of Cultural Heritage of the *Alma Mater Studiorum* - University of Bologna together with the University of Garmian, the Garmian Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage, the Garmian Civilization Museum in Kalar, the Garmian Directorate of Tourism, ISMEO – the International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies – and the International Institute of Kurdish Culture in Rome alongside with several stakeholders, including MiSAK – the Italian Historical and Archaeological Mission in Kurdistan, Municipality of Riccione, “Luigi Ghirotti” Territorial Museum in Riccione, Maritime Museum in Cesenatico. The project aims to study and launch long-term strategies for the enhancement of cultural heritage and to foster the economic resilience of the area by promoting cultural tourism activities through them. Based on a multidisciplinary and participative approach, the project integrates several strands of activities aimed at training and awareness-raising of the population and local partners.

One of the key aspects of the project is the development of educational programmes and museum initiatives that mobilise local communities in heritage conservation. By raising awareness and fostering a sense of ownership among residents, the project seeks to ensure the sustainability of conservation and enhancement efforts. Another key component is training and capacity building, with the aim of developing professional skills in heritage management and sustainable tourism. Workshops and training sessions provide local professionals with the necessary skills to effectively contribute to the growth of a key sector for the socio-economic development of the region. Indeed, the project identifies sustainable cultural tourism as a strong driver of economic growth. By creating and promoting cultural tourism itineraries that integrate local businesses, museums and archaeological sites, the project aims to improve the economic landscape of the area while ensuring the preservation and enhancement of the local cultural heritage.

The project started in October 2024 and will end in May 2025 with an international conference in Kalar (KRI, Iraq).

A Rich and Complex Historical and Scientific Background

The Garmian area, as most of the Kurdish region, presents a unique historical and archaeological landscape. This region, encompassing part of the western Zagros foothills and the northern portion of the Upper Diyala (Sirwan) river floodplain, serves as a critical geographical and cultural nexus. As Carlo Giovanni Cereti has recently defined it is "a 'dwelling area', a sort of physical but porous hinge between the natural, ethnocultural and economic ecosystems of the Mesopotamian Plain and the Iranian Plateau," (Cereti, Maresca, Terribili 2023). This liminal position, though often considered peripheral to major power centres, makes the region a privileged context for studying trans-cultural interaction dynamics and to better understand their diachronic

On the complexity of this approach, see also: Waterton and Smith 2010. ¹

change in a territory that is profoundly anthropised and closely interconnected with neighbouring regions through long-distance communication routes. (Potts 2020; Terribili 2021; Cereti, Maresca, Terribili 2023).

The importance of this region since pre- and protohistoric times is well known; as is its centrality during the Assyrian period. From the middle of the first millennium BCE until the Islamic conquest, the region fell under the control or influence of large Iranian imperial structures: the Achaemenid (539-330 BCE), Arsacid (247 BCE-224 CE), and Sasanian (224-650 CE) empires, with a brief interruption following Alexander's conquests and subsequent Seleucid rule. This diachronic development shaped the local society and territory, connecting it with urbanized areas and major power centres in Mesopotamia and the Iranian Plateau. These cross-cultural interactions, fuelled by the cultural diversity that characterized the social landscape of these imperial entities, significantly contributed to the elaboration and development of cultural identities throughout Central and West Asia. These cultures formed through a constant and reciprocal influence between Iranian and Mesopotamian substrata, enriched by Greek-Hellenistic, Roman, and, following the seventh-century Arab conquest, Islamic contributions. Even after the Islamic conquest, the region continued to experience the influence, encounter, and clash between the Iranian plateau and the Levant, maintaining its role as a great political-cultural and economic pole.

But modern history has also left significant testimonies that, although deeply steeped in the pain of the long-persecuted Kurdish people, deserve to be preserved and valued in order to hold the memory of the dramatic events that caused them

Despite its historical significance, the Garmian area faces considerable challenges. The complex political situation of recent decades has made field research extremely difficult, resulting in a poorly investigated territory from a historical-archaeological perspective. The proximity to the Iranian border and Saddam Hussein's repressive actions against the Kurdish population created an unstable zone for nearly forty years, hindering historical and archaeological activities. Even after the fall of Saddam's regime, the area remained disputed between the Autonomous Region of Iraqi Kurdistan (KRI) and the territory currently administered by the federal government, limiting access for foreign missions and placing the area in an administrative limbo that reduced the capacity of authorities to control the territory and enhance its cultural heritage. Only in recent years, with the defeat of ISIS, the agreed annexation of these districts to the Governorate of Sulaimaniyah, and the establishment of the Garmian Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage connected with the KRG General Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage, have allowed both local authorities and international missions to resume archaeological activities.

Similarly, particularly significant for the development and enhancement of the area's cultural heritage and landscape were the instituting of the University of Garmian, established on 2010,² and the opening of the Garmian Directorate of Tourism.

However, critical issues persist, including limited historical-archaeological knowledge, increasing urbanization and agricultural exploitation damaging poorly monitored archaeological sites, increasing clandestine excavations, occasional vandalism, and the former militarization of strategic positions (often coinciding with archaeological *tepes*) with the connected presence of areas still at risk of mines (Laugier *et al.* 2022).

Three foreign archaeological missions are currently working in the area: MAIKI, the Italian Archaeological Mission in Iraqi Kurdistan of the Sapienza University of Rome, engaged in the study of the Sasanian monument of Paikuli (Cereti, Terribili 2022 and references therein); the Glasgow Archaeological mission, involved in the creation of the archaeological map of the area, through the *Sirwan Regional Project* (SRP), and the excavation of the sites of Khani Masi, recently concluded, and Shakhi kura (Casana, Glatz 2017; Glatz *et al.* 2019 and references therein); and MiSAK, the Italian Historical Archaeological Mission in Kurdistan of ISMEO and the International Institute of Kurdish Culture in Rome, currently focusing on the study of the Sarqala and Gawra Tepe multi-period sites (Colliva *et al.* 2022; Colliva 2023a; 2023b; Colliva, Mancini, Sameen 2023; Colliva 2024).

Council of Ministers's decree no. 1670 on 08/07/2010. See also <https://garmian.edu.krd/en/about/president-speech>.²

The archaeological excavations conducted by the University of Glasgow focus mainly on the Bronze and Iron Ages and clearly testify to the importance of the area also in the periods prior to the Achaemenid conquest. In addition, the data gathered during the *Sirwan Regional Project* and the associated archaeological map (Casana, Glatz 2017), combined with surveys conducted by the Garmian Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage and information collected and published in the *Atlas of the Archaeological Sites in Iraq* (Directorate General of Antiquities 1975), provide an invaluable dataset. Considering the number, status, and settlement continuity of several identified sites, this dataset testifies to the enduring historical and archaeological importance of the area and enhances the increasingly urgent diachronic study of the archaeological landscape of the area.

This importance is also confirmed by studies of the Sasanian-period monument at Paikuli, commissioned by the Sasanian ruler Narseh on the occasion of his meeting with local dignitaries, who recognised him as the legitimate ruler, on his way to the capital Ctesiphon after his victory over his rival Bahram III (Weber 2016). The monument and the bilingual Parthian and Middle Persian inscription, now housed in the museum in Sulaimaniyah (KRI, Iraq), once again confirm the role of this area as a hinge between the various regions of the empire and the communication routes that passed through it (Cereti, Terribili, Tilia 2015; Cereti, Terribili 2022; Colliva, Terribili 2017 and references therein).

Of similar importance are the two sites studied by MiSAK, the Italian Historical Archaeological Mission in Kurdistan, led by the author: the site of Sarqala, featuring its rich Parthian period tomb discovered in 2013 and the multi-period settlement of Qalla Kon Tell (Colliva *et al.* 2022; Colliva 2023a), and the urban site of Gawra Tepe, featuring an imposing Sasanian palace and substantial occupation during the Islamic period (Casana, Glatz 2017: 12-14; Colliva, Mancini, Sameen 2023).

The significance of the area during the Sasanian period is further confirmed by both the existence of a canal system, more than 40 km long, on the western side of the Diyala River, exemplifying the large investments in irrigation that characterized the Parthian-Sasanian period (Casana, Glatz 2017: 15-16), and the Sasanian palace of Hawsh-kuri (Abian, Mafi 2022 and references therein), to mention just two other significant archaeological complexes.

Also noteworthy are the testimonies relating to the Islamic period. Although often difficult to document due to partial coverage by modern settlements (Casana, Glatz 2017: 16-19), these testimonies nonetheless constitute a wealth of significant data. The possibility of studying the evolution of the historical-archaeological landscape, even following the Arab conquest, is extremely valuable.

Of great historical relevance, moreover, is the possibility of documenting a dramatic but fundamental moment in the constitution of the socio-cultural Kurdish identity. The Garmian area, in fact, was deeply wounded during the al-Anfal operation. Conducted by Saddam Hussein in the 1980s to put down Kurdish population revolts, Operation Anfal involved the systematic destruction of rural villages and the forced displacement of the population to more easily controlled cities. Documenting the remains of the destroyed villages and their reconstruction after the collapse of the regime - often in places close to, but not coinciding with, the former settlements - is a valuable opportunity to preserve the memory of this tragic but still relevant event.

It is important to point out that under Saddam Hussein's regime, the Kurdish population, along with its language, history, traditions and culture, was repressed for a long time. It was only after the collapse of the regime and the creation of the Autonomous Region of Iraqi Kurdistan that a necessary effort to rebuild and consolidate this long-neglected cultural identity was initiated. However, this effort, if not adequately supported and channelled, remains susceptible to the risks of dangerous nationalist tendencies and fanciful pseudo-historical reconstructions.

Despite all these challenges, in recent years, the tourism sector in the region has experienced considerable growth, becoming a key economic driver and playing a vital role in cultural exchange and economic development and also the Garmian area has witnessed a significant rise in tourism over the past years. This trend is closely linked to the KRG's commitment to nurturing this sector and improving infrastructure across the territory, with the potential to position the region as an international destination in the coming years.

The ninth cabinet of the KRG, formed in August 2024, has placed significant emphasis on the tourism sector, setting ambitious goals to diversify Kurdistan's economy and revenue. According to official data from the Regional Government, in 2022, the tourism sector in Iraqi Kurdistan grew by 35%, with 6,168,000 tourists visiting the region, compared to 4,189,000 in 2021.³ In 2023, more than seven million tourists visited the Kurdistan Region, marking a notable surge in both arrivals and revenue, as reported by the region's tourism board.⁴

The Garmian area has also witnessed a significant rise in tourism over the past decade, further highlighting its growing appeal as a travel destination. According to data provided by the Garmian Directorate of Tourism, the region welcomed 141,177 tourists in 2011, a number that more than doubled by 2021, reaching 410,829 visitors. This upward trend continued in 2022, with 460,623 tourists, and peaked in 2023 at an impressive 528,203 visitors.

The Heritage Horizons project arises from this thorough analysis, undertaken in collaboration with local partners and stakeholders, and is designed to provide a response to these needs and opportunities. These collaborative discussions underscored the imperative to implement measures aimed at safeguarding and valorising local cultural heritage, and fostering cultural tourism within a broader framework of territorial planning for the region.

Strategic Vision, Thematic Priorities and Implementation Plan of the Heritage Horizons Project

The Heritage Horizons project aims to create and test a replicable model that integrates archaeological and historical research and study and enhancement of the cultural landscape with socio-economic development strategies. The project is based on the belief that cultural heritage, if properly studied and interpreted and responsibly managed, can become a powerful catalyst for social cohesion, educational advancement and sustainable economic diversification (Smith 2006; Harrison 2013). The initiative, therefore, adopts an interdisciplinary and participatory approach that interweaves research, conservation, training, higher education development, and cultural tourism implementation.

The project therefore aims to promote cultural and economic development in the Garmian area by strengthening the protection and enhancement of its historical and archaeological landscape through training activities, awareness-raising campaigns, and direct community engagement. In fact, the initiative aims at actively involving local populations in the management and valorisation processes of the local cultural heritage. At the same time, the project supports the professionalisation of the sector by favouring the creation of specialised training opportunities.

The project seeks to promote capacity building in the fields of conservation and sustainable tourism, with the aim of training new professional figures capable of managing and promoting cultural heritage in an effective, ethical and locally rooted manner. This will promote local economic development by revitalising the cultural tourism sector as a possible strategic driver of inclusive growth. By encouraging heritage-based entrepreneurship and promoting local cultural assets, the project should create employment and self-employment opportunities. At the same time, through the strengthening of a shared sense of responsibility, participation and cultural belonging among community members, it is intended to highlight the role of local cultural heritage as a living and valuable socio-economic resource.

Heritage Horizons aims to align itself with the international agendas set by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - the core elements of which are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁵ The partners have identified Sustainable Development Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth - as the main reference point in the creation and implementation phases. Particular emphasis was placed on

See <https://gov.krd/dmi-en/activities/news-and-press-releases/2023/january/tourism-sector-has-increased-by-35-percent/>.³

Thanks to the Garmian Tourism Directorate for sharing this data with the writer.⁴

<https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>⁵

Goal 8.9, which calls for the promotion of sustainable tourism that fosters employment, supports local entrepreneurship and enhances cultural and natural assets.

The project also aims to contribute significantly to SDG 4 - Quality Education - by supporting Garmian University in expanding its educational programmes in the areas of cultural heritage and tourism. This contribution improves both the inclusiveness and quality of higher education in the region. Furthermore, the project aligns with SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities, encouraging community-centred approaches to sustainable tourism and heritage management. Finally, through the promotion of sustainable tourism models and the responsible use of natural and cultural resources, the project supports the achievement of SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production.

By protecting and promoting the historical, archaeological and natural landscape of the Garmian area, the project aims to create a virtuous circle in which the preservation of heritage - supported by the local communities and shared by them - generates tangible economic and social benefits, thus fostering sustainable and inclusive growth in the region.

Project Activities and Implementation

The implementation of the *Heritage Horizons* project is articulated through a coherent set of activities jointly defined during the planning phase by the various partners, with the aim of achieving the agreed objectives. These activities are designed to strengthen the capacities of local institutional staff, raise public awareness, and promote long-term, community-led approaches to the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage. A distinctive and innovative feature of the project lies in its interdisciplinary and integrated methodology, which seeks to generate synergies not only among the participating institutions, but also between these bodies and local communities. In doing so, the project aims to foster shared engagement, particularly among younger generations, who are encouraged to take on an active role not only in the safeguarding of cultural heritage, but also more broadly in the socio-cultural and economic revitalisation of the region.

For this reason, the project places particular emphasis on awareness-raising and training programmes targeting both institutional personnel and local residents, with the overarching objective of fostering a broader understanding of the value and meaning of cultural heritage. The capacity-building activities addressed to public officials and academic staff from the Kurdish partner institutions are specifically designed to introduce examples of effective collaboration between universities, local authorities, and civil society organisations—models of inter-institutional cooperation that are still largely absent from the current local context. Such synergies are regarded as essential in addressing key challenges identified during the preliminary analysis phase, including the chronic underfunding of heritage protection and the urgent need for inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development frameworks.

The project also embraces a distinctly multidisciplinary approach, a hallmark of the Department of Cultural Heritage of the *Alma Mater Studiorum* – University of Bologna, which is intended to serve as a transferable model for the University of Garmian. This approach is critical to the development of tailored training courses in the fields covered by the project and constitutes a significant innovation within a regional context where such integrated methodologies have yet to be systematically adopted.

The project also stands out for the development and implementation of cutting-edge strategies for the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage, particularly through the systematic and integrated use of digital and multimedia tools. Concrete examples of this include the design and creation of a dedicated website and a digital inventory system for the Garmian Civilisation Museum in Kalar, which until now lacked any form of digital cataloguing or online presence.

What follows is a brief overview of the main activities already carried out or currently underway within the framework of the *Heritage Horizons* project:

Workshop on Management, Conservation, and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage

This workshop was held on 17 November 2024 at the University of Garmian in Kalar. The event focused on critical issues relating to the management, conservation, and enhancement of local cultural heritage, placing particular emphasis on the most pressing challenges currently facing the sector, as well as the urgent actions required to address them effectively. To facilitate open and constructive dialogue, participation in the workshop was limited to staff members from the University of Garmian, the Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage of Garmian, the Garmian Directorate of Tourism, the Italian Historical and Archaeological Mission in Kurdistan (MiSAK), and the *Alma Mater Studiorum* – University of Bologna. This restricted format was intended to provide a dedicated forum for in-depth discussion among institutional partners directly involved in heritage governance and site management within the region.

The discussions explored the current state of cultural heritage management, highlighting shared challenges and examining a variety of solutions implemented in Italy, North America, and Iraq. Alongside representatives of the project's partner institutions, the workshop featured contributions from international experts, including specialists from Italy, the University of California, Irvine, and the World Monuments Fund. The event was attended by approximately 90 participants drawn from the staff of the partner institutions.

International Symposium: Strategic Alliances for the Improvement of Cultural Assets and Cultural Tourism

On 9 December 2024, the University of Garmian hosted an international symposium entitled Strategic Alliances for the Improvement of Cultural Assets and Cultural Tourism: Examples and Best Practices. Organised within the framework of the Heritage Horizons project, the event was co-promoted by the *Alma Mater Studiorum* – University of Bologna, the Italian Historical and Archaeological Mission in Kurdistan (MiSAK), the Garmian Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage, the Garmian Civilisation Museum, and the Garmian Directorate of Tourism.

Unlike the preceding workshop, which was conceived as a closed institutional dialogue, this symposium was open to the public and specifically targeted students, early-career researchers, and local stakeholders. Its primary objective was to broaden understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with the protection, enhancement, and sustainable promotion of cultural heritage and tourism, through the sharing of international experiences and examples of best practice.

The symposium featured a diverse array of contributions from experts and practitioners based in Iraq and Italy, addressing a wide spectrum of themes including digital innovation in heritage preservation, community-oriented museum practices, archaeological site management, sustainable tourism strategies, and urban regeneration. Alongside case studies focused on the context of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq—particularly the Garmian area and the Citadel of Erbil, the only UNESCO World Heritage site in the KRI—special emphasis was placed on Italian experiences. Raimondo Secci and Daniele Frisoni (Department of Cultural Heritage, *Alma Mater Studiorum* – University of Bologna) presented recent developments in the valorisation of the Phoenician and Punic settlement of Sarcapos in Sardinia; Andrea Tirincanti (Museo del Territorio “Luigi Ghirotti”, Riccione) introduced a museum model grounded in community engagement; and Michela Tiboni (University of Brescia) outlined an urban regeneration strategy based on integrated cultural planning in the city of Brescia.

With a programme combining institutional perspectives, technical expertise, and academic research, the symposium successfully promoted interdisciplinary dialogue, strengthened inter-institutional collaboration, and provided students with access to comparative international approaches to heritage management and cultural tourism.

Practical Workshops: Digital Cataloguing and Basic Conservation

As part of the project's broader effort to strengthen professional competencies in the field of heritage conservation, a workshop was organised in December 2024 focusing on the theoretical and practical aspects

of cataloguing, conservation and restoration techniques. The initiative was developed in collaboration with the Italian Historical and Archaeological Mission in Kurdistan (MiSAK) and benefited from the expertise and active participation of professional conservator Alice Musarò.

The workshop combined formal instruction with hands-on training, introducing participants to the principles and practices of cleaning, stabilising, consolidating and cataloguing archaeological artefacts and architectural structures. It was specifically designed for archaeologists and technical staff from the Garmian Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage, with the objective of enhancing local capacity in the treatment and preventive care of fragile materials. Through this initiative, participants were introduced to international standards of conservation practice and engaged in field-based applications tailored to the specific needs of the regional archaeological context.

Website and Digital Inventory for the Garmian Civilization Museum

One of the project's digital initiatives is the development and implementation of a dedicated website and digital inventory for the Garmian Civilisation Museum in Kalar. This activity, undertaken in collaboration with the P.A.S.T. Laboratory of the Department of Cultural Heritage of the *Alma Mater Studiorum* – University of Bologna, MiSAK - the Italian Historical and Archaeological Mission in Kurdistan, ISMEO, and International Institute of Kurdish Culture, aims to address the current lack of digital infrastructure and public accessibility to the museum's collections.

The objective is twofold: first, to create a publicly accessible online platform that enhances the visibility, educational function, and outreach capacity of the museum; and second, to develop a structured digital inventory system to support internal documentation, collection management, and conservation planning. The initiative aligns with international best practices in museum digitisation and heritage accessibility, and responds to the broader goal of promoting transparency, research access, and community engagement.

The system architecture will be developed with modularity and scalability in mind, to allow future integration of additional functions such as virtual exhibitions, educational resources, and multilingual content.

Development of Multimedia Awareness Materials

As part of the project's broader strategy to foster cultural awareness and promote active community engagement, this activity is dedicated to the development and dissemination of multimedia materials aimed at raising public consciousness around the protection, conservation, and sustainable enhancement of cultural and archaeological heritage in the Garmian region.

The materials—envisioned in multiple formats including short educational videos, illustrated infographics, and digital narratives—are designed to reach a wide and diverse audience, with a particular focus on younger generations and non-specialist publics. Their content will be informed by the priorities, insights, and feedback collected during preceding workshops and training sessions, ensuring that the messaging is locally rooted and contextually appropriate. All phases of development and implementation are being carried out collaboratively by the project's institutional partners, bringing together technical expertise, field knowledge, and pedagogical approaches. In addition to promoting awareness, these outputs are intended to encourage active participation in cultural heritage preservation and to foster a shared sense of responsibility and ownership towards the region's tangible and intangible assets.

Some of the multimedia materials were conceived and developed within the framework of the educational workshop *Protection, Awareness and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage: Archaeological Missions and Social Media*, conducted as part of the Master's Degree in *Archaeological, Artistic and Landscape Heritage: History, Protection and Enhancement* at the *Alma Mater Studiorum* – University of Bologna.

Among the key components of this awareness campaign is a photographic exhibition dedicated to the historical and archaeological heritage of the Garmian region, as well as to the activities conducted by the Italian Historical and Archaeological Mission in Kurdistan (MiSAK). Organised by MiSAK and the “Luigi

Ghirotti" Museum of the Territory in Riccione, the exhibition was developed under the patronage of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Municipality of Riccione, ISMEO, the Kurdish Cultural Institute, the Garmian Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage, and the Garmian Civilisation Museum in Kalar. Entitled *Traces and Paths: The New Discoveries of the Italian Historical and Archaeological Mission in Kurdistan (Tracce e percorsi. Le nuove scoperte della Missione Storico Archeologica Italiana in Kurdistan)*, the exhibition was inaugurated on 20 December 2024 and remained on display until 6 April 2025 at the "Luigi Ghirotti" Museum of the Territory. The exhibition is currently being translated into Kurdish and will be adapted for presentation in Kalar in autumn 2025, allowing for broader local engagement with its contents.

Another noteworthy output of the awareness programme is the board game *Discover Garmian*, created by MiSAK member Giulia Giubergia in collaboration with the P.A.S.T. Laboratory (Public Archaeology and Social Transmission). Developed as an educational tool for primary school pupils in the Garmian region, the game is specifically designed for children aged between 8 and 12. It introduces players to the region's most significant archaeological sites through a map-based board game format. Players progress through the game by correctly answering questions from thematic categories including Archaeology, Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage, History, Daily Life in the Past, and Archaeological Sites in Iraqi Kurdistan. The goal is to complete the route having correctly engaged with all the site-specific questions represented on the board.

The game will soon be distributed to local schools through the Garmian Civilisation Museum in Kalar, where it will complement educational visits to the museum and contribute to enhancing pupils' understanding of their region's rich archaeological heritage in an accessible and engaging format.

Design of Cultural Tourism Itineraries

As part of the project's integrated approach to sustainable heritage-led development, this activity focuses on the design, promotion, and implementation of cultural tourism itineraries that connect the Garmian Civilisation Museum in Kalar with a selection of the region's most significant archaeological sites. The objective is to enhance the visibility and accessibility of Garmian's cultural heritage while supporting the development of sustainable tourism infrastructure rooted in local identity.

The initiative is led by the Garmian Directorate of Tourism in collaboration with the Department of Cultural Heritage of the University of Bologna (DBC), the Italian Historical and Archaeological Mission in Kurdistan (MiSAK), the University of Garmian, the Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage of Garmian, and the Garmian Civilisation Museum. The itineraries are being developed with attention to interpretative coherence, logistical feasibility, and educational potential, ensuring that they serve both local communities and incoming visitors. By fostering cultural tourism that is respectful, inclusive, and economically viable, this activity contributes to the broader goals of regional development and heritage valorisation.

Capacity Building Activities in Italy

As part of the project's strategy to foster transnational institutional partnerships and enhance technical competencies in cultural heritage management, a ten-day programme of capacity-building activities was held in Italy from 16 to 25 March 2025. The initiative involved six representatives from partner institutions in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, including the University of Garmian, the Garmian Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage, the Garmian Directorate of Tourism, and the Garmian Civilisation Museum.

The programme was structured around a series of visits, workshops, and institutional meetings aimed at exposing participants to best practices and models of cooperation between universities, museums, and civil society organisations in the Italian context. The activities were coordinated by the Department of Cultural Heritage of the *Alma Mater Studiorum* – University of Bologna, in close collaboration with MiSAK, ISMEO, the Istituto Internazionale di Cultura Kurda, and "Luigi Ghirotti" Museum of the Territory in Riccione.

The programme opened on 16 March at the “Luigi Ghirotti” Museum of the Territory with the event *Paths and New Horizons for the Cultural Heritage of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Percorsi e nuovi orizzonti per il patrimonio culturale del Kurdistan Iracheno)*. On this occasion, a partnership agreement between the Garmian Civilisation Museum in Kalar and the Riccione museum was officially signed, and the *Heritage Horizons* project was presented to the public alongside the catalogue of the exhibition *Traces and Paths: The New Discoveries of the Italian Historical and Archaeological Mission in Kurdistan (Tracce e percorsi. Le nuove scoperte della Missione Storico Archeologica Italiana in Kurdistan)*.

On 17 March, the Department of Cultural Heritage of the University of Bologna hosted a public lecture entitled *Antiquities and Heritage in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region: A Brief Overview of Current Challenges and Future Opportunities*, delivered by Kaifi Mustafa Ali, Director General of Antiquities and Heritage of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The lecture was part of the *Heritage Horizons* programme and provided an important opportunity for the academic community to engage with the institutional perspectives and challenges faced by local authorities in the KRI.

On 18 March, the Museum of the Territory in Riccione welcomed local stakeholders from the tourism sector for a roundtable with members of the Kurdish delegation. The event, conceived as an exchange of good practices, aimed at initiating future collaborative projects on archaeological and historical heritage linking the two regions. Local stakeholders presented the development of Riccione’s tourism industry from its origins to the present, highlighting targeted strategies for diverse visitor groups.

On 20 March, the delegation visited the Maritime Museum of Cesenatico, where they were welcomed by Professor Stefano Medas and the museum’s director, Davide Gnola.

Additional activities included meetings with the staff of the Department of Cultural Heritage of the *Alma Mater Studiorum* – University of Bologna and guided visits to key research facilities within the Cultural Heritage Department, such as the P.A.S.T. Laboratory, the Conservation Science Laboratory, the aDNA Lab, and the BONES Lab. The group also visited the “Severo Savioli” State Professional Institute for Food and Wine Hospitality in Riccione and the Riccione Hotel, Catering School of IAL Emilia Romagna, and the historic centres of Rimini and Bologna. These exchanges provided valuable opportunities to observe interdisciplinary approaches to heritage research, vocational training, museum engagement, and tourism development in practice.

The capacity-building programme concluded on 25 March, reinforcing the project’s objective of supporting long-term institutional development and promoting sustainable, locally anchored models of heritage preservation and cultural tourism.

The International Scientific Conference – ISC-RHCG-2025: Revitalising Historical and Cultural Gems for Dynamic and Sustainable Tourism Growth

Scheduled for 27–28 May 2025 in Kalar, the International Scientific Conference entitled *Revitalising Historical and Cultural Gems for Dynamic and Sustainable Tourism Growth (ISC-RHCG-2025)* will close the *Heritage Horizon* project. Held in a blended format, combining in-person participation with online access. The conference is organised under the patronage of Professor Dr Arass Fareeq Zainal, President of the University of Garmian, and co-financed by both local and Italian partners of the project.

Jointly promoted by the University of Garmian, the Department of Cultural Heritage of the *Alma Mater Studiorum* – University of Bologna, the Garmian Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage, the Garmian Civilisation Museum of Kalar, the Garmian Directorate of Tourism, and the Italian Historical and Archaeological Mission in Kurdistan (MiSAK), the event aims to foster dialogue on the role of historical and cultural assets in promoting sustainable and dynamic tourism development in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and beyond.

The conference will bring together researchers, practitioners, and institutional representatives to explore interdisciplinary approaches to heritage-led tourism, with particular attention to policy-making, community engagement, digital innovation, and integrated territorial strategies. It represents a further step in

strengthening academic and institutional cooperation between Iraq and Italy, and in consolidating the role of cultural heritage as a driver of inclusive, knowledge-based development in the region.

Keynote speakers will include Associate Professor Dr Alireza Askari Chaverdi from Shiraz University (Iran), Professor Dr Narmin Ali Amin from Salahaddin University – Erbil, and Assistant Professor Dr Rozhen Kamal Mohammed from the Kurdistan Institution for Strategic Studies and Scientific Research (KISSR).

The conference will address a broad spectrum of interrelated themes. These include strategies for balancing the safeguarding of historical and archaeological sites with the demands of an expanding tourism sector, with the aim of minimising environmental and cultural impacts while maximising educational and economic benefits. Policy frameworks, urban planning, and stakeholder collaboration will be discussed as key instruments for implementing sustainable tourism practices. Particular attention will be paid to the impact of digital technologies—such as virtual and augmented reality and digital storytelling—on both the preservation of cultural heritage and the evolution of tourism models. The conference will further examine the role of heritage in shaping collective cultural and national identities, as well as its potential to foster cross-cultural understanding. This will include discussions on preserving genocide memory and safeguarding the heritage of minority communities. Contributions will also investigate the effects of environmental degradation, armed conflict, and other anthropogenic threats to cultural sites and artefacts. The role of local communities in promoting resilience and proposing innovative, technology-driven solutions for documentation, monitoring, and preservation will form another important area of focus. Legal frameworks—both national and international—governing heritage protection will also be analysed in relation to their effectiveness and adaptability. Finally, the importance of intangible cultural heritage, such as festivals, exhibitions, and historical re-enactments, will be explored in terms of their ability to raise public awareness, revitalise heritage sites, and contribute to local economic development. All accepted papers will be published in a special issue of the Aran Journal of the University of Garmian.

In order to ensure the efficacy and accountability of the *Heritage Horizons* project, a robust framework for impact assessment has been developed. This framework is based on a mixed-methods approach that privileges the use of quantitative indicators while also acknowledging the relevance of qualitative measures where appropriate. The evaluation strategy centres on the systematic monitoring of outcomes related to awareness-raising, professional training, and the development of sustainable cultural tourism networks. Key target groups include local communities, academic staff and students, cultural heritage professionals, and representatives from public institutions and civil society. Rather than limiting itself to anecdotal or purely descriptive results, the project adopts a set of concrete, measurable indicators that are applied across all major activities—ranging from educational workshops and public events to capacity-building initiatives and digital infrastructure development. The collection and analysis of these indicators serve not only to assess progress in real time, but also to inform adaptive strategies and enhance the replicability of the project model in other contexts. Particular attention is paid to the level of participation, the diversity of institutional engagement, and the degree to which newly introduced practices—such as digital cataloguing or integrated itinerary planning—are appropriated and sustained by local actors. In doing so, the project aspires to generate long-term, evidence-based impact grounded in local agency and shared responsibility.

Conclusion and Perspectives

This project demonstrates that national and international academic institutions, when acting in synergy with local non-academic institutions rather than in isolation, can play an invaluable role in achieving socio-economic and social transformation. Although this path is certainly not without its obstacles and difficulties, the positive results of this project provide convincing proof of the validity of this belief.

Safeguarding Garmian's archaeological heritage means not only preserving the past but also shaping the future. The *Heritage Horizons* project has considered cultural heritage as a living resource, capable of promoting knowledge, identity, and opportunities in an area often overlooked by international initiatives. By

combining rigorous research with concrete actions at the local level, we are confident that we have achieved a long-lasting impact that will extend well beyond the implementation period.

The strength of this initiative lies in its holistic and participatory framework: archaeologists work alongside conservators, educators, museum professionals, and community members, blurring the boundaries between scientific practice and civic engagement. Through this collaboration, heritage becomes a shared responsibility and opportunity.

Inevitably, challenges have arisen, from logistical complexities to institutional constraints and the unavoidable difficulties in initiating new and complex collaborations. However, these are not obstacles to be avoided, but rather integral parts of the process. Each difficulty represents an opportunity for better mutual understanding, adaptation, closer listening, and deeper dialogue between diverse competencies.

The Heritage Horizons project yields an action model that may inform similar endeavours not only in other regions of Iraqi Kurdistan, but also in comparable contexts globally. It serves as a reminder that context-sensitive development encompasses not only infrastructure and macroeconomics, but also memory, creativity, and inclusivity. Furthermore, history and archaeology, far from being relegated to the past, can and must actively contribute to a more equitable and resilient future. The initiative's outcomes will be evaluated not solely on the basis of preserved remains and catalogued artefacts, but also on the fostered relationships, the questions raised, and the enhanced capacities achieved. It is our aspiration that this project has made a valuable contribution, however modest, to a broader movement dedicated to democratising cultural heritage, ensuring that the past remains a vibrant and significant dimension of the present.

Acknowledgements

Heritage Horizons was conceived and realised as a profoundly collaborative endeavour. Its success—both in its design and implementation—was made possible only through the steadfast commitment and shared vision of a broad and diverse network of institutional and individual partners. In his capacity as project coordinator on behalf of the Department of Cultural Heritage of the *Alma Mater Studiorum* – University of Bologna, the author presents here an initiative that could not have taken shape without the active and enthusiastic involvement of numerous contributors across Italy and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. For this reason, he wishes to express his deepest gratitude to all those individuals and institutions whose support, dedication, and cooperation made the *Heritage Horizons* project not only possible, but also meaningful and impactful.

The project was jointly developed by the Department of Cultural Heritage of the *Alma Mater Studiorum* – University of Bologna, the University of Garmian, the Garmian Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage, the Garmian Civilisation Museum, the Garmian Directorate of Tourism, ISMEO – the International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies – and the International Institute of Kurdish Culture in Rome with the support and collaboration of the Municipality of Riccione, the “Luigi Ghirelli” Museum of the Territory in Riccione, the Maritime Museum of Cesenatico, the University of Brescia, and MiSAK – the Italian Historical and Archaeological Mission in Kurdistan.

The author would like to extend special thanks to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, as well as to the Italian Embassy in Baghdad and the Consulate General in Erbil, for their ongoing and invaluable support.

A profound appreciation goes to all Kurdish partners, without whom this project would never have been conceived, let alone realised. The author is particularly grateful to the University of Garmian, not only for its institutional partnership and generous hospitality, but also for hosting and co-organising the project's key events, including the workshop, the international symposium, and the scientific international conference. In particular, he wishes to thank Professor Dr Arass Fareeq Zainal, President of the University; Assistant Professor Dr Mohammed Ibrahim Khalil, Vice President for Scientific Affairs and Higher Education; Assistant Professor Dr Ahmed Mohammed Tofiq, Director of International Academic Relations and Media; and Assistant Professor Dr Ahmed Omer-Bali, former Director of International Academic Relations and Media and

project coordinator for the University of Garmian. Special appreciation is also extended to Ms Drivan Jalal and Mr Mabast A. Amin for their valuable contributions to the academic and organisational dimensions of the project.

The author also extends his thanks to the Garmian Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage and the Garmian Civilisation Museum, particularly to Director Salih Mohammed Sameen and Director Sarwat H. Majeed, as well as to archaeologists Mohammed A. Karim and Nawzad Abdullatif Abdul-Karim. Grateful recognition is also due to the Director General of Antiquities and Heritage for the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Mr Kaifi Mustafa Ali, and to Mr Mohammed (Ako) Lashkri, Director of Affairs of Antiquities and Heritage at the KRG General Directorate, for their constant support and active participation in the project's activities in Italy.

To the Garmian Directorate of Tourism and its Director, Mr Salar F. Mohammed, the author expresses his sincere thanks for their continuous engagement and collaboration throughout all phases of the initiative.

Warm appreciation is also extended to ISMEO and its President, Professor Adriano V. Rossi, as well as to Dr Marco Baldi, Budget Treasurer and Coordinator of Archaeological Missions and Projects. Equally, thanks go to the International Institute of Kurdish Culture in Rome and its President, Mr Soran Y. Ahmad, for their longstanding support and partnership.

The author is especially grateful to the Department of Cultural Heritage of the *Alma Mater Studiorum* – University of Bologna, to its Director and Head of the Public Archaeology and Social Transmission Laboratory, Professor Dr Anna Chiara Fariselli, and to Professor Dr Mariangela Vandini, Delegate for International Relations and Director of the Conservation Science Laboratory. Particular thanks also go to research fellows Dr Serenella Mancini and Dr Melania Marano, Dr Chiara Matteucci, technician of the Conservation Science Laboratory, and collaborators Giulia Giubergia and Anastasia Vicari, for their scientific and logistical contributions.

The author wishes to acknowledge the support of the Municipality of Riccione, in particular the Mayor, Ms Daniela Angelini; Deputy Mayor and Councillor for Culture, Ms Sandra Villa; and Councillor Ms Adele Marina Zoffoli. A special thanks also to Mr Andrea Tirincanti, Coordinator of the “Luigi Ghirotti” Museum of the Territory, for his strong, generous and fundamental cooperation.

He is also thankful to the Maritime Museum of Cesenatico, its Director Mr Davide Gnola, and Professor Dr Stefano Medas, for their hospitality and shared expertise, as well as to the University of Brescia, in particular Professor Dr Michela Tiboni and Dr Martina Carra, for their active participation.

Last but not least, warm thanks are due to the entire MiSAK team, including archaeologists Domenico Andreucci, Veronica Castignani, Ileana De Giuseppe, and Mattia Sesenna; restorer Alice Musarò; and students of the *Alma Mater Studiorum* – University of Bologna: Xin Huang, Federico Izzi, and Maria Padovan, for their commitment and enthusiasm throughout the project.

References

- Abian, D. & Mafi, F. (2022). The study of the Sasanian settlements of Northern Iraq (Iraqi Kurdistan), based on archaeological discoveries. *Parseh Journal of Archaeological Studies*, 6(21), 115-142. <http://journal.richt.ir/mbp/article-1-660-en.html>
- Casana, J. & Glatz, C. (2017). The Land Behind the Land Behind Baghdad: Archaeological Landscapes of the Upper Diyala (Sirwan) River Valley, *Iraq*: 1-23.
- Cereti, C. G., Maresca, G. & Terribili, G. (2023). DISA Sapienza per il Patrimonio Culturale e il Paesaggio Storico degli Zagros, *Scienze dell'Antichità, "Egitto e Vicino Oriente Antichi: tra passato e futuro"*, Atti del terzo convegno, 29.3 (2023): 35-46.
- Cereti, C. G., & Terribili, G. (2022). Epigraphic findings at Paikuli (2018-2019). A preliminary study. *Vicino Oriente*, 26, 53–75.
- Cereti, C. G., Terribili, G., & Tilia, A. (2015). Paikuli in its geographical context. In A. Krasnowolska & R. Rusek-Kowalska (Eds.), *Studies on the Iranian World I: Before Islam*, 267–278). Cracow.
- Colliva, L. (2023a). Il Progetto Sarqala della MiSAK, Missione Storico Archeologica Italiana nel Kurdistan, tra Salvaguardia, Valorizzazione e Ricerca, *Scienze dell'Antichità, "Egitto e Vicino Oriente Antichi: tra passato e futuro"*, Atti del terzo convegno, 29.3 (2023): 51-62.
- Colliva, L. (2023b). La MiSAK, Missione Storico Archeologica Italiana nel Kurdistan, e il "Progetto Sarqala", in *Tesori dell'Iraq. Le Missioni Archeologiche Italiane nella Terra tra i due Fiumi*. Roma: 220-225.
- Colliva, L. (2024). The Sarqala Project and MiSAK, the Italian Historical Archaeological Expedition in Kurdistan", in *Treasures of Iraq. Italian Archaeological Expeditions in the Land Between the Rivers*. Roma: 220-225.
- Colliva, L., Sameen, S. M., Andreucci, D. & Castignani, V. (2022). Study and Enhancement of the Archaeological Site of Sarqala (KRG, Iraq) and its Parthian tomb, *East and West*, Vol. n.s. 3 (62), No. 2: 43-66.
- Colliva, L., Mancini S. & Sameen, S. M. (2023). Gawr Tepe, A New MiSAK Project in Iraqi Kurdistan, *East and West*, Vol. n.s. 4 (63), No. 2: 25-45.
- Colliva, L., & Terribili, G. (2017). A forgotten Sasanian sculpture. The fifth bust of Narseh from the monument of Paikuli. *Vicino Oriente*, 21, 167–195.
- De Wit, H., & Hunter, F. (2015). *Internationalisation of higher education*. Brussels.
- Directorate General of Antiquities. (1975). *Atlas of the archaeological sites in Iraq*. Baghdad.
- Glatz, C., Casana, J., Bendrey, R., Beysal, E., Calderbank, D., Chelazzi, F., Del Bravo, F., Erskine, N., Hald, M. M., Jensen, E., & Perruchini, E. (2019). Babylonian encounters in the Upper Diyala River Valley: Contextualizing the results of regional survey and the 2016–2017 excavations at Khani Masi. *American Journal of Archaeology*, 123(3), 439-471. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3764/aja.123.3.0439>
- Harrison, R. (2013). *Heritage: Critical approaches*. New York.
- Knight, J. (2004). Internationalization remodeled: Definition, approaches, and rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 8(1), 5–31.
- Laugier, E. J., Abdullatif, N., & Glatz, C. (2022). Embedding the remote sensing monitoring of archaeological site damage at the local level: Results from the "Archaeological practice and heritage protection in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq" project. *PLOS ONE*, 17(6). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0269796>
- Potts, D. T. (2020). On cultural boundaries and languages in Western Iran: The case of the Zagros Gates. In K. A. Niknami & A. Hozhabri (eds.), *Archaeology of Iran in Historical Period*, 55–64). Tehran.
- Smith, L. (2006). *Uses of heritage*. London.
- Terribili, G. (2021). Identità e territorio. Rappresentazione delle élite politiche post-achemenidi negli Zagros nord-occidentali. In P. Buzi, D. Montanari, & L. Nigro (eds.), *Onorare gli Dèi, Rappresentare il Potere Regale, Ammirare il Monumento. Canoni, Contesti, Funzioni e Fruizioni della Statuaria Divina e Regale nell'Egitto, nel Vicino e Medio Oriente e nell'Asia Centrale*, 147-156). Roma.
- Waterton, E., & Smith, L. J. (2010). The recognition and misrecognition of community heritage. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 16(1–2), 4–15.
- Weber, U. (2016). NARSEH. *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Retrieved from <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/narseh-sasanian-king>