Final Report Summary - CISGLA (Architecture and Asceticism: Cultural Interaction between Syria and Georgia in Late Antiquity)

The project had three distinct strands, each to be examined by a different member of the team and these differing aims and objectives were then brought together through the medium of the project website. The PI looked at the over-arching issues raised by the question of how Syria and Georgia interacted with each other from the evangelisation of Georgia in the fourth century CE until the region broke with the non-Chalcedonian Syrians and Armenians to join with Constantinople in the early seventh century. The Postdoctoral Associate explored the material culture of Holy Land pilgrimage, with particular reference to pilgrimage souvenirs and the PhD student explored the military architecture of the Romano-Byzantine eastern frontier to look at how permeable (or not) this barrier was in late antiquity, with a view to
understanding the conflicts between the Byzantine and Persian Empires in this period.

The PI has completed her monograph titled Architecture and Asceticism: Cultural Interaction between Syria and Georgia in Late Antiquity and is currently in the process of commissioning maps and agreeing illustrations for the volume with her editor at Brill. It has been agreed that it will be published under an open access licence and is on course to be published Spring/Summer 2018 according to capacity in Brill’s print schedule. In addition the following articles and book chapters by the PI are in press and will be published in 2018 with an acknowledgement of the support of the ERC as all draw to some extent on research undertaken for this project:

‘Religious Expression in Art and Architecture’, A Companion to Religion in Late Antiquity, Blackwell
‘Syria’, The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Archaeology, OUP
‘Cultural Imperialism at the Borders of Empire: The Case of the “Villa of the Amazons” in Edessa’, Journal of Semitic Studies, Special supplement on honour of John Healey on the occasion of his 70th birthday

This is in addition to the translation of an academic article from Georgian to English that the PI published during the project as an illustration of her growing facility with the language.

The Postdoctoral Associate has published two articles during the last five years – one was a summary of her PhD findings and the other was related to her work on this project. She has contributed a database of pilgrimage tokens in the British Museum to the project website and has gained permission from the museum to publish these artefacts for the first time through the site, which is a great achievement and an excellent resource for scholars in the field. She has currently written the introduction and three chapters of her monograph but has not completed the book due to issues after the birth of her first child in autumn 2016. She has struggled to return to work since her maternity leave and is currently receiving medical help for these issues. The PhD student has also been unwell over a period of many months, but is now writing his conclusion and is on course to submit the thesis in early 2018. We have agreed that once this process is complete, the thesis will be posted in its entirety on the project website as a resource for all researchers interested in the fortifications of the eastern Roman frontier between the Black Sea and the Syrian Desert. In the future the PhD student may use some of the data generated by his PhD research to write extended case studies on some of the sites he visited for his fieldwork.

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