

when I started my residency, the ‘battle’ occurred next door at Rome Sapienza’s Department of Architecture and spilled over to the front steps of the BSR. The BSR’s archive collection holds photographs of this day, captured by residents on the roof of the building, which provide important documentation of student, police and media activity.

Then as now, Venice and its festivals attracted media from around the world, with syndicated news services ready to distribute images of celebrities posing in the photogenic city, or transmit the columns written by journalists assessing the art, film and gossip. In 1968, these were replaced by images and stories of bloodied protesters, charging police with batons, and festival boycotts or sit-ins by the artists and film-makers that the Biennale sought to celebrate. The media created and distributed powerful images and words about the Venice *sessantotto* to national and international audiences. Images of Giuseppe Ungaretti greeting student protesters in Piazza San Marco, famous artists covering their work in the Italian pavilion or Pier Paolo Pasolini and Gillo Pontecorvo marching with raised fists outside the Lido’s cinema reveal a different kind of 1968 protest to those occurring in Rome, Turin and Milan. My archival work investigated the role of celebrities in magazine and newspaper coverage of the 1968 protests at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma and television coverage at the RAI’s Biblioteca centrale Paolo Giuntella and the Teulada Studio Biblioteca di Comunicazioni di massa.

The Rome-based national film-maker association (Associazione Nazionale Autori Cinematografici — ANAC) led the demonstrations at the Venice Film Festival. ANAC had supported other protests earlier in the year, issuing press releases against the violence towards students in Rome, and applauding the film-maker protests in Cannes and Pesaro. The ANAC archives show that the group planned their Venice film festival protest months in advance, and strategically used the media as part of their protest. Unlike many student-led or spontaneous protests, the ANAC film-makers were lobbying the Christian Democrat Party, the Socialist Party and the Italian Communist Party for legislative changes to the selection and judging procedures of the Venice Film Festival. Access to the ANAC archive during the COVID-19 Omicron wave of early 2022 was very limited, so I returned in July to continue my work on this important collection. After two years away from Italy, it was an extraordinary three months.

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Wine culture in the Iranian Plateau: undoing the classical narrative of Dionysus in the East

Our understanding of viticulture in the Iranian Plateau, which extends from the Zagros Mountains to the Indo-Gangetic Plain, is mired in hellenocentric perspectives originally put forward by classical archaeologists before the twentieth century. Classical and Silk Road scholarship alike have been subject to an unsubstantiated view derived from a

single line in Strabo: ‘The vine did not grow there [in Susa] until the Macedonians planted it, both there and at Babylon’ (15.3.11). Consequently, the presence of vines and the vinicultural technology that came along with it were assumed to be a Greek introduction. By extension, any evidence of wine culture became an indicator of local participation in ‘hellenism’. Strabo’s comment became a generalization for the whole east and established an imbalanced power dynamic in scholarship between the colonizing Greeks and the colonized natives. Of course, this perspective reflects eighteenth- to early twenty-first-century interpretive biases more than it does an ancient reality. Within such praxis, the presence of Roman objects or iconography is theorized as simply picking up where the Greek material left off.

The project I undertook while at the BSR was in the form of a chapter of my larger dissertation project on wine culture in the Iranian Plateau between the second century BC and the third century AD. The goal of the chapter was to remove the yoke of colonial scholarship regarding the Hellenistic East from the study of Rome’s unique relationship to the Plateau. Consequently, an adverse impact is produced: unpacking the complicated interregional relationship between Rome and Parthia in terms of geopolitics and the role of trade between the two in shaping wine culture has remained under-studied. While in Rome I was able to access objects and archives collected by Italian excavations in the Plateau and Roman *comparanda*. Particularly important are the Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East (IsMEO) library, as well as the Museo Nazionale d’Arte Orientale ‘Giuseppe Tucci’, which hold the excavation material from Afghanistan and Pakistan (Gandhara), and the Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino that contains the materials from the excavations of Nisa in Turkmenistan (Parthia).

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Crafting knowledge, telling stones: the art of pietre dure tables in early modern Italy, 1550s–1660s

My doctoral thesis examines the ways in which the crafting of hardstone inlaid tables in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries acted as an interface between material techniques of diverse artistic media, between disparate epistemic cultures, between aesthetic experience of material surfaces ranging from painting, textile, gem facets to the architectonic, and between far-flung geographies and dissimilar social strata of artisanal labour.

My research during the residency at the BSR focused on the technical procedure and material operations of hardstone inlay — in particular, the aesthetics and artisanal logic of ornamental drawings and the technical precedent of hardstone inlay in ancient Roman art, *opus sectile*. The latter topic is a particularly fitting one to examine at the BSR, given its rich library holding and its intellectual community centred on the disciplines of classics and archaeology.