

Antonio Invernizzi

(Turin, 1 January 1941 - 2 December 2021)

On the second day of December 2021, as our fieldwork in Barikot was drawing to a close, we learned from Italy of the sudden death of Antonio Invernizzi.

Although a generation separates Invernizzi and us, I and my colleagues in Barikot were deeply grieved by the loss of one of the leading archaeologists working between Iraq and Turkmenistan, the River Euphrates and the Caspian Sea, a specialist on those complex phases related to Parthian history (the Arsacids, 2nd century BCE - 3rd century CE).

President of the Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino until 2010, Antonio Invernizzi was Professor Emeritus at the University of Turin and a member of that city's Academy of Sciences.

The Centro Scavi was founded in Turin in 1963, on the initiative of the great archaeologist Giorgio Gullini, as an autonomous development of the previous Centro Studi e Scavi Archeologici in Asia of IsMEO and Turin. Until 1963 Giorgio Gullini was in fact part of IsMEO, under which he directed the excavations in Swat at Udegram. Although the destinies of the two institutes followed separate paths, the relationship between them remained scientifically solid, the friendship between Giorgio Gullini and Domenico Faccena (the two directors of the then separated centres of Turin and IsMEO) remained intact, and the same can be said of the esteem between their disciples, first of all Antonio Invernizzi (who was also a member of IsMEO/IsIAO), and then Carlo Lippolis, Pierfrancesco Callieri, Vito Messina and Anna Filigenzi. Although we worked—and are still working—on opposite sides of Alexander's oecumene, we were and still are united by a common understanding of things. One of the main points of contact is the conviction that the interpretation of artistic phenomena should only be attempted on the basis of solid and reliable archaeological foundations. Hence the importance we all attach to excavations and large-scale fieldwork, especially in settlements and urban centres: our long-lasting project at Barikot, and his/their work at Seleucia and Nysa. Our shared field of interest was and is associated with the spread of Hellenism in the East, of its transformation beyond geographical limits and cultural frontiers (i.e. beyond the commonplace), between East and West, India and the Mediterranean. In that regard, it is always worth rereading his extremely well edited volume on the *Land of the Gryphons* (1995), but also his brief masterpiece “Réflexions sur les rencontres interculturelles dans l’orient hellénisé” published in 2014.

Antonio Invernizzi began his career as a classical archaeologist. In 1964 he started participating in one of the most important archaeological enterprises of the Centro Scavi, the dig at Seleucia on the Tigris, Iraq. Seleucia was the ancient capital of the Seleucids, the most powerful of Alexander the Great's political successors in the East.

In 1968 Invernizzi became field director in Seleucia while teaching Archaeology and History of Greek and Roman Art at the University of Cagliari, then from 1970 he became full Professor of Oriental Archaeology in Turin, where he remained the rest of his life. Always very interested in the Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian phases—he