

ISAW NEWSLETTER 7  
Fall 2012



INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD  
New York University

I  
S  
A  
W

# FROM THE DIRECTOR

Five years is a major milestone in the life of a young institution, and we duly celebrated at the end of the spring semester (see page 7). This fall we have two additional major steps in the development of ISAW, more substantive than chronological, to celebrate. One is the completion of the recruitment of our faculty, with the appointments of Robert Hoyland (who arrived at the beginning of September) and Daniel Potts (who will join us on January 1, see page 4). Between them they both stretch our chronological dimensions and solidify our position in the middle of the vast geographical domain we try to cover. The other milestone is the completion of the comprehensive examinations of our first cohort of doctoral students, who matriculated in the fall of 2009 and now begin work on their dissertation prospectuses.

The approach of the latter milestone prompted some thinking. Our faculty, students, and advisory committee spent a good deal of time during the last academic year taking stock of our doctoral program. How were things going? Should we be making changes? Although the third year of a degree program might seem in some respects a rather early moment for such reflections, it has to be remembered that when the structure of the program was invented it was largely my creation in collaboration with the advisory committee; hardly any of the faculty had yet been appointed, let alone had any chance to work with the program. So I thought it was time to talk about it. Somewhat to my surprise, most people didn't want significant changes; the students were particularly vocal in liking the program and the balance of freedom and direction it gives them. For the faculty, a major question was how to make sure that all ISAW students emerge with some sense of the broad intellectual terrain that the Institute represents, not just with their own selections from the menu, no matter how diverse that selection. The students thought that was a fine idea in principle, but they were wary of the potential for mission creep, with time-consuming new requirements.

What we have done is to create a biweekly colloquium, at which faculty and other members of the community, including some of our Senior Fellows, will present to the second-year students (with only light advance reading required) some aspect of their research area. It may, of course, turn out that the faculty learn the most from the opportunity to hear what their colleagues are up to (see page 8 for a faculty research report), but that side benefit will also be most acceptable.

Roger S. Bagnall  
Leon Levy Director



## INSIDE

### ISAW Community News

**New Faculty/Incoming Graduate Students** 4

**Research Scholars** 5

**Staff News/Alumni Updates** 6

**5th Anniversary Celebration** 7

### Research & Teaching

**Faculty/Scholar Research** 8

**Libraries** 10

**Digital Programs** 11

### Exhibitions

**Current Exhibition** 12

**Exhibition Lecture Series** 13

**Lectures and Conferences** 14

#### Photo Credits

*This page: ISAW's 5th anniversary celebration. See pg. 7.*

*Cover: Kneeling Winged Monster. Xiangtangshan: Northern Group, North Cave, below perimeter wall niches, 550-559 CE. Limestone Relief, 86.4 x 68.6 x 25.4 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust (35-276). Photo: Jamison Miller. Part of ISAW's Echoes of the Past exhibit. See pg. 12.*

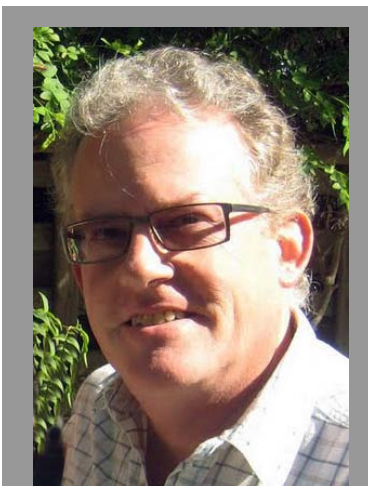
## New Faculty

### Daniel T. Potts Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology and History

The Institute for the Study of the Ancient World is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Daniel T. Potts as Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology and History, effective January 2013.

Dr. Potts comes to us from the University of Sydney, where he was Edwin Cuthbert Hall Chair of Middle Eastern Archaeology for over twenty years. Dr. Potts received his Ph.D. in anthropology from Harvard University in 1980 and then taught at the Freie Universität Berlin and the University of Copenhagen, where he completed his Habilitation in 1991.

Although his research interests are wide-ranging, the majority of his scholarly work has focused on the cultural developments in Iran, Mesopotamia and the Arabian Peninsula, as well as relations between these regions and their neighbors. Chronologically his span is far-reaching— from the Neolithic to late antiquity— but his main focus has been on



Dr. Potts

the transition from pre-history to the Bronze Age in Mesopotamia and Iran, especially the 3rd millennium BCE.

Dr. Potts has led and participated in numerous excavation projects in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates. He is the founding editor-in-chief of the journal *Arabian Archaeology & Epigraphy*, a corresponding member of

the German Archaeological Institute and a fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. He is the author of the books *In the Land of the Emirates: The Archaeology and History of the UAE* (2012), *Mesopotamia, Iran and Arabia from the Seleucids to the Sasanians* (2010), *Mesopotamian Civilization: The material foundations* (1997), and *The Archaeology of Elam* (1999), among others, and has authored and edited a vast number of other books, volumes, chapters, and articles. Most recently he was the editor of the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran* (2013).

Dr. Potts will begin offering seminars in the Spring 2013 semester. Please join us in welcoming him into the ISAW community.

## Incoming Graduate Students

### Maria Americo

Maria earned her B.A. in Latin from Hunter College of the City University of New York in 2012. Her research on the Antikythera Mechanism at the Summer Program at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens solidified her interest in ancient science, particularly astronomy and mechanics. As a student of Arabic, she developed an interest in the cultural and intellectual links between the Greco-Roman world and the medieval Islamic world, especially in the realms of science and philosophy. Her undergraduate theses focused, respectively, on the progression of the science of alchemy from the classical period to the medieval Islamic period and an analytical overview of literary descriptions of the astrolabe and similar astronomical devices from approximately 50 BCE to 1400 CE. At ISAW, Maria intends to

further her study not only of ancient science and mathematics, but also of medieval preservation of classical texts and of the effect of the classical heritage on medieval Islamic thought. She also hopes to gain training in Latin, Greek, and Arabic paleography.

### Sam Mirelman

After a career in the field of music and musicology, Sam studied Assyriology at the School of Oriental and African Studies (London) and Ludwig-Maximilians Universität (Munich). Sam is particularly interested in the area of music and musicians in the ancient Near East. At ISAW, Sam will expand his research focus to encompass not only musical thought and activity, but also all aspects of performance and ritual in the ancient Near East.

## Visiting Research Scholars, 2012-13

### Victor Alonso

Professor, Universidad de La Coruña  
Ph.D., Universidad Autónoma de Madrid  
Research Interest: Ancient Greek History

### Jan Bremmer

Professor Emeritus, University of Groningen  
Ph.D., Free University, Amsterdam  
Research Interest: Classical Religion, Social History

### Tosha Dupras

Associate Professor, Univ. of Central Florida  
Ph.D., McMaster University  
Research Interest: Anthropology, Bioarchaeology

### Dorota Dzierzbicka

Archaeologist, NYU Excavations at Amheida  
Ph.D., University of Warsaw  
Research Interest: Greco-Roman Egypt

### Michael Frchetti

Associate Professor, Washington Univ., St. Louis  
Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania  
Research Interest: Bronze Age Eurasian  
Archaeology and Anthropology

### Hallie Franks

Assistant Professor, Gallatin School of Individualized Study (NYU)  
Ph.D., Harvard University  
Research Interest: Classical Art History and Archaeology

### Emily Hammer

Ph.D., Harvard University  
Research Interest: Near Eastern Archaeology

### George Hatke

Ph.D., Princeton University  
Research Interest: Arabia and Horn of Africa

### Sarah Laursen

Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania  
Research Interest: Chinese Art History

### Richard Payne

Assistant Professor, Mount Holyoke College  
Research Fellow, Cambridge University  
Ph.D., Princeton University  
Research Interest: Iran in Late Antiquity

### Marja Vierros

Postdoctoral Researcher, Academy of Finland  
Ph.D., University of Helsinki  
Research Interest: Papyrology, Greek Language, and Linguistics

### Li Zhang

Ph.D., Peking University  
Research Interest: Eurasian Interactions in the Chinese Bronze Age

### Yan Zhang

Yan Zhang received her B.A. in archaeology from Peking University, China in 2009, and received her M.A. in archaeology from the same university in 2012. She is interested in archaeology and zooarchaeology in the ancient world. In her Master's thesis and other projects, she focuses mainly on the use of animals after Paleolithic and early Neolithic societies in China, when more complex societies appeared. At ISAW, she will further study the anthropology, archaeology and zooarchaeology of the complex societies of East Asia. Additionally, she hopes to spread knowledge of Chinese culture and Chinese archaeology to promote international and intercultural research and education.

Apart from music performance and ritual, Sam is also interested in related topics such as orality, textual transmission, and Sumerian literature.

### Jonathan Valk

Jonathan Valk holds a First Class B.A. in Oriental studies from the University of Oxford and an MA in Middle Eastern studies from the University of Chicago. At ISAW, Jonathan intends to investigate processes of identity formation in the Ancient Near East in general and the Neo-Assyrian Empire in particular. He is especially interested in the relationship between the self-definition of the Neo-Assyrian state and the self-perception of the people it ruled. By studying questions of social belonging and identity in the Ancient Near East, Jonathan hopes to bring about an improved understanding of identity in the ancient world.

## Staff News

In December 2011, **Abby Lepold** joined ISAW as the new Registrar for the Exhibitions Department. She holds a B.A. in anthropology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and an M.A. in anthropology and museum training from George Washington University. Before starting at ISAW, she most recently worked as a project manager at an international fine art transportation company and as a registrar at the Museum of the City of New York.

This past spring, **Alexander Noelle** also joined the Exhibitions Department as Managing Editor. Alexander is an alumnus of Vassar College,

where his studies concentrated on art history and Italian. Prior to this appointment, he was Director at a Chelsea gallery where he focused on building museum relations. He also served as Assistant Curator at the New Britain Museum of American Art, where he curated numerous historical and contemporary exhibitions as well as contributed to and edited the accompanying catalogues.

The ISAW Library is also pleased to announce the appointment of a new cataloger, **Junli Diao**. Further details about his research specialties and the skills of our entire staff of catalogers may be found on page 10.

## Updates from ISAW Scholar Alumni

**Jonathan Ben-Dov**, VRS 2010-11, is pleased to announce the opening of The Haifa Center for Research on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Newly formed, this center concentrates the research being performed on the scrolls in Haifa and other locations in Israel. It will host an annual conference and publish a journal in Hebrew entitled *Megillot*. The Center will also sponsor other occasional sessions and oversee various research projects in the field at the University of Haifa. The Center's website is: <http://megillot.haifa.ac.il/index.php/en/>

**Muriel Debié**, VRS 2009-10, started a new position as Professor of Eastern Christianity at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris in September.

**Damian Fernandez**, VRS 2009-10, will be a Solmsen Fellow at the Institute for the Research in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for 2012-13.

**Lidewijde de Jong**, VRS 2010-11, began a new position as University Lecturer in Roman Archaeology at the University of Groningen this past July.

**Jinyu Liu**, VRS 2007-08, received a Humanities Foundation Grant from Peking University in 2011-12 where she spent her sabbatical as a visiting professor at the Center for Western Classics and lectured widely. She will take another year of leave to be a visiting scholar at Columbia University for 2012-13 which is made possible by an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation New Directions Fellowship and a Faculty Fellowship (2011-14) from DePauw University. She was also selected to participate in the Mellon sponsored Wabash-DePauw program

at the East-West Center of the University of Hawaii at Manoa July 30-August 10, 2012.

**Xiaoli Ouyang**, VRS 2009-10, has received a faculty position in the history department at Fudan University, Shanghai, and her book manuscript *The Monetary Role of Silver and its Administration in Mesopotamia during the Ur III Period (c.2112-2004 BCE): A Case Study of the Umma Province* has been accepted for publication by the Biblioteca del Próximo Oriente Antiguo (BPOA) series in Madrid.

**Christine Proust**, VRS 2010, is now Director of Research, Laboratory SPHERE, at CNRS and University Paris Diderot.

**Giovanni Ruffini**, VRS 2007-08, has been promoted to Associate Professor at Fairfield University in Connecticut and has recently published *Medieval Nubia: A Social and Economic History* through Oxford University Press.

**Mantha Zarmakoupi**, VRS 2009-10, has been selected as a scholar at the Getty Research Institute at the Getty Villa for the fall 2012 semester and a fellow of the Center for Hellenic Studies of Harvard University for the spring 2013 semester. She has also received a Thyssen Grant with Reinhard Foertsch (University of Cologne) in order to make the virtual reality model of the Villa of Papyri that she created broadly available over a website interface. The website will provide interactive access to the model in Google Earth in real-time, provide information on the reconstruction of the Villa, as well as presenting high-quality images, QuickTime panoramas, and videos of the model.

Left: Prof. Alexander Jones, Shelby White, and Prof. Glen Bowersock (Advisory Board) enjoy dinner.

Below: NYU President John Sexton addresses the ISAW community and guests.



## ISAW 5th Anniversary Celebration

**Roger Bagnall**

**Leon Levy Director and Professor of Ancient History**

On May 22, the ISAW community celebrated the completion of the fifth year of the Institute's life. A festive crowd of about eighty gathered for a lively and wide-ranging lecture by Senior Fellow Holly Pittman, drinks in the garden (the threatened rain held off), and a dinner in the Oak Library. President John Sexton and Provost David McLaughlin were present along with other university leaders to celebrate with us the accomplishments of the past five years and the many people who have made those possible.

In my remarks at various points in the evening I did not try to enumerate all of these people, but I could hardly avoid the most important contributions. In introducing Holly, I recalled the decisive importance that the search committee for director had in making me see the exciting potential of ISAW, and the role that she and other members of the committee have had in our life as they turned first into a faculty search committee and later into an advisory committee. The intellectual and moral energy that they have brought to our common enterprise has been of decisive value.

Shelby White was part of that search committee as well, but her role as ISAW's founder is of course much vaster and more profound. As I remarked, it takes no perspicacity or originality to observe that the gifts of the Leon Levy Foundation creating and sustaining ISAW are of a generosity unique in the study of antiquity in this country or any other, and perhaps in humanistic studies generally. But

no less distinctive have been Shelby's generosity with time, energy, and thought. To know that your every idea and initiative will be examined by a smart, knowledgeable, and utterly committed colleague is a kind of peer review beyond price. Shelby's insistence on quality in every aspect of ISAW's life has been vital to its essence.

I noted also that we have a number of members of the ISAW staff who have been with us from the start, our first Five-Year Club: Mike Kojasevic, who has been serving our magnificent building even before it was ISAW; Dawn Gross, Sara Roemer, and Jessica Shapiro, who were putting our library in place from the start; Jennifer Chi, with whom Shelby and I were traveling in quest of our first exhibition even before I moved into my temporary office. Tiffany Wall joined us shortly after, during the first semester; without her, our finances would surely not have remained on an even keel and our spending under budget. Thanks to all of them for exceptional service through our startup phase.

We are still a young institution, but already we have a great deal to cherish, and we recognize that we are extraordinarily privileged to be part of this enterprise. It will be our responsibility to be good stewards of the gifts that Shelby's vision and generosity, the inspired leadership of our university officers, and the commitment of our founding generation have given us.



# RESEARCH & TEACHING

## The Inscriptions of the Antikythera Mechanism

Alexander Jones

Professor of the History of the Exact Sciences in Antiquity

About 60 BCE, a Greco-Roman commercial vessel sank off the small island of Antikythera, between Crete and the Greek mainland. Its cargo, which appears to have been taken on board in Asia Minor and the Aegean islands, included bronze and marble statuary, fine glassware, wine or other commodities, and—most unusually—an object about the size and shape of a shoe box, with a wooden casing and front and back faces of bronze plate. The plates were covered with dials resembling modern clock faces and with texts inscribed in tiny Greek letters. Hidden inside the casing, a complex arrangement of perhaps about fifty bronze gears connected the pointers of the dials to a knob or crank on the side.

This machine, the remains of which are in the National Archeological Museum in Athens, was a planetarium and calendar computer. Turning the knob clockwise represented moving forward in time, and the dials of the back face expressed this in terms of various calendars and time-cycles while pointers on a large dial on the front showed the movements of the Sun, the Moon, and almost certainly the five planets known in antiquity through the zodiac, as well as the Moon's phases. Devices like this are occasionally mentioned by ancient Greek and Latin authors, but they were probably very rare. Their design embodied the most advanced mechanical technology of the time as well as astronomical knowledge derived from the Greek and Babylonian traditions.

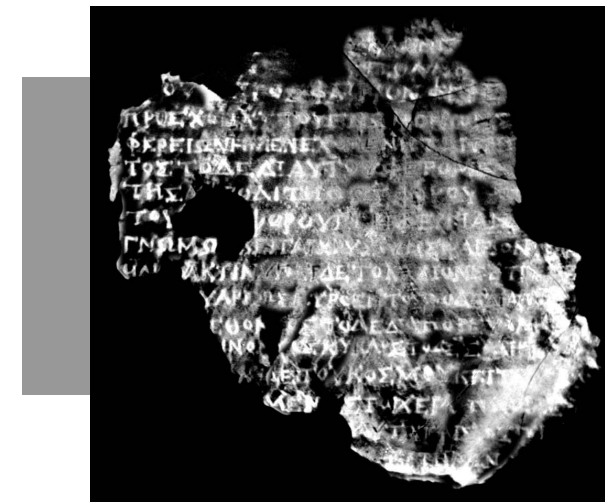
When ancient bronze objects were no longer wanted or functional, their material was usu-

ally recycled. Shipwreck saved the “Antikythera Mechanism” from this fate, but the action of the sea over two millennia was not kind to its delicate components: by the time it was salvaged by sponge divers in 1901, the wood had almost entirely vanished, and most of the bronze was transmuted into brittle corrosion products. When the first studies began, it consisted of four fragments accounting for a third or less of the original device. Separation of fused components by conservators, accidental breakage, and a couple of discoveries in the Museum's store have raised the fragment count. Until recently, only the three largest pieces were in the public galleries; the Museum's current temporary exhibition on the Antikythera wreck culminates with a striking display of all 82 known fragments.

That we are able to describe the original appearance and workings of the Mechanism with a high degree of confidence is due to many scholars, notably Derek de Solla Price (working from the 1950s to the 1970s) and Michael T. Wright (since the late 1980s). Progressively powerful techniques of X-ray imaging have been crucial since many components and physical details are embedded inside the larger fragments or concealed behind fused plates or accretion layers. The most recent and extensive data gathering, carried out in 2005 by an international team called the Antikythera Mechanism Research Project (AMRP) in collaboration with the Museum, subjected the fragments to microfocus X-ray computed tomography (CT) and reflectance transformation imaging (RTI or PTM). The team's reconstruction of

the parts of the gearwork relating to the Sun, Moon, and calendars corrected and augmented previous reconstructions by Price and Wright, and is now accepted as secure in all essentials.

Since 2007, I have been collaborating with members of the AMRP on transcribing and interpreting the inscribed texts of the Mechanism. These inscriptions, which range from single words on the dial scales to long prose texts on the cover plates, were meant to help the ancient viewer to understand what the information displayed on the dials meant in terms of astronomy, cosmology, and social institutions; for the modern historian they are the key to making sense of the Mechanism as a production of Hellenistic civilization. Thanks to the CT data, large parts of the inscriptions have become visible for the first time, and even the texts on exposed surfaces are seen with much greater clarity. Where we previously could make out just isolated words and numerals, we now have intelligible (if sometimes incomplete)



sentences and paragraphs. Even with the contribution of modern imaging technology, the work is challenging, demanding a blend of epigraphy, astronomy, and the philology of ancient scientific literature. The new editions will be published over the next couple of years under the supervisory editorship of Mike Edmunds (Cardiff).

## Africans in Arabia Felix: An Understudied Area of Antiquity

George Hatke

Visiting Assistant Professor

Located at the crossroads of the Near East, Africa, the Indian Ocean, and indirectly the Mediterranean, the Arabian Peninsula has long been a trans-continental axis through which trade, peoples, and ideas have passed. My main field of research is the history of pre-Islamic South Arabia, a region encompassing modern-day Yemen and neighboring areas of Oman and Saudi Arabia. At the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World my field of research also includes Ethiopia, with which South Arabia was in close contact throughout antiquity, and which has maintained ties with the Arabian Peninsula down to the present. As a graduate student in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton, I wrote my dissertation on relations between the Ethiopian kingdom of Aksum and the South Arabian kingdom of Himyar during the sixth century CE. Since coming to ISAW as a visiting assistant professor, I have been in the process of turning my dissertation into a broader-themed book, *Africans in Arabia Felix: Ethiopian Relations with South Arabia during Late Antiquity*, which examines relations between Ethiopia and South Arabia from the third century CE down to the rise of Islam.

All too often, the geopolitical tensions between the superpowers of Rome and Sāsānid Iran are regarded as the driving force behind the politics of the Red Sea region during Late Antiquity. My

argument is that warfare between the Aksum and Himyar in the sixth century is a product of localized geopolitical tensions specific to the Red Sea region which date back as far as the third century CE. To be sure, the fact that both Aksum and the Roman Empire were Christian polities enabled a certain connectedness on religious grounds, though what gave warfare with Himyar special resonance for sixth-century Aksumites was not its place in the geopolitical interests of their Roman coreligionists, but rather the irredentist belief that Himyar was Aksum's by right and that, once reconquered by Aksum, it could be sacralized through Christianization. Only after the Aksumites had established, for the first time since the third century, a sphere of influence in South Arabia through the leadership of their dynamic ruler Kālēb (c. 510-540) did the Romans attempt to draw the Ethiopians and South Arabians into the war with the Sāsānids—an attempt which ultimately ended in failure.

The Arabian Peninsula and Ethiopia remain two of the most understudied regions of the ancient world and are excluded in most general histories of antiquity. Yet this is precisely why both regions are so fascinating and provide such still largely unexploited opportunities for study. Given all the scholarly attention which Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have received, it bears remember-

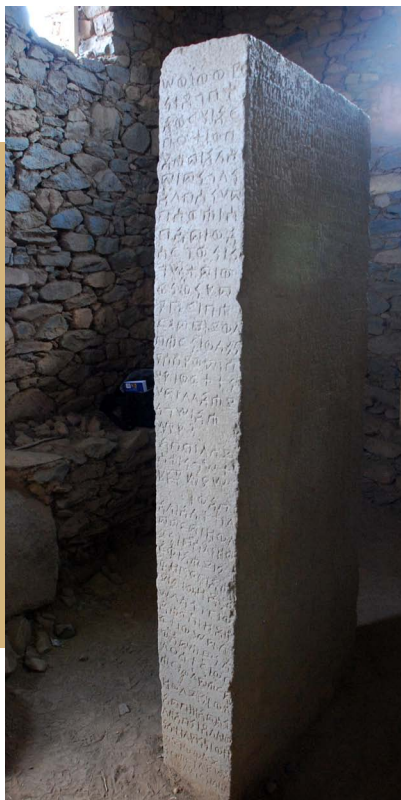


*Left: 1905 photograph of Fragment 19 of the Antikythera Mechanism, the best preserved specimen of the inscriptions available before CT imaging. The text refers to 19-year and 76-year calendar cycles, recently determined to be that of Corinth.*

*Next page: A composite CT image of part of the “Back Cover Inscription” on Fragment B. The text describes a system of pointers on the front dial representing the motions of various planets, conclusive evidence that the front face of the Mechanism was a planetarium. ©2005 Antikythera Mechanism Research Project.*

ing that all three religions have played a role on both sides of the Red Sea. That Islam originated in Arabia goes without saying, though the effort to properly contextualize the rise of Islam within the history of late antique Arabia is only beginning. Ethiopia, on the other hand, is one of the world's oldest Christian countries and preserves in Ge'ez (Classical Ethiopic) early Judeo-Christian material which in some cases no longer survives in the original languages. In addition, many local Semitic languages, including some still little known and others in danger of extinction, are spoken in both the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa.

In my own research I draw on primary sources in Ge'ez, Sabaic, Syriac, and Arabic, together with archaeological reports. I have taught Arabic and Ge'ez at Princeton and ancient Near Eastern history at New York University. A shorter study on Aksumite relations with Nubia during Late Antiquity, *Aksum and Nubia: Warfare, Commerce, and Political Fictions in Ancient Northeast Africa*, will be published soon by ISAW under NYU Press.



Ge'ez inscription at Aksum.

Photo: Prof. Finbarr Barry Flood (NYU)

## Libraries

**Charles E. Jones**  
ISAW Head Librarian

The ISAW Library is fortunate to have a skilled and energetic team of librarians focused on cataloging collections and available to assist the ISAW community with their research needs.

**Junli Diao** is the newest member of the ISAW Library team, arriving this September. He graduated with a B.A. from Henan University in China in 1998, and completed his studies in Canada at Queen's University (M.Ed., 2004) and McGill University (M.L.I.S., 2006). Junli has almost five years experience in cataloging and metadata services. His first position was as librarian at a campus of The College of the North Atlantic, Newfoundland and Labrador; he later worked as a contract Metadata Cataloger at Education Library of University of Toronto, a Chinese Manuscripts and Rare Books Cataloging Librarian for National Endowment of Humanities Project of Cataloging, Preserving, and Digitizing Chinese Rare Books and Manuscripts, The New York Public Library, and a part-time Chinese Rare Books Consultant for Library and Archives, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. He comes to ISAW from his most recent appointment as Cataloging and Metadata Services Librarian at the Green Library, Florida International University. Junli will focus much of his

attention on cataloging Chinese language materials and assisting in the development of the East Asian component of ISAW's collections.

**Jessica Shapiro** is a native of Hopewell, New Jersey. She graduated from Rutgers College with a B.A. in English. After five years editing in corporate publishing she changed course to pursue her M.S.L.I.S. at Long Island University, with a focus on rare books and special collections. During her time at LIU she attended Rare Book School at the University of Virginia.

Jessica has worked as an adjunct librarian both in reference at Brooklyn College and in cataloging at NYU, and as a cataloger for a private collector. She has been a full-time cataloger at ISAW for nearly five years, beginning her work here even before shelves were installed in the library. More recently, she has become involved in the development of the Ancient World Digital Library and has created metadata for both digitized and born-digital resources for that project. In addition to helping catalog ISAW's growing collection of books and serials, Jessica also trains the library's student employees, assists with circulation and course reserves, and hunts down wayward books.

**Sara Roemer** hails from northern California and earned a B.A. in design from UCLA. After graduation, she lived and worked in Berkeley for a number of years before heading to New York City to pursue an M.S.L.I.S. at Pratt Institute. Her coursework at Pratt, which included a practicum at The Cloisters Library and Archives of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, focused on cataloging and art- and museum-library studies.

Before Sara began at ISAW in 2007, she worked at The Metropolitan Museum's Thomas J. Watson Library as a cataloguer of the library's vast collec-

tion of French auction catalogues, and at NYU's Bobst Library as an adjunct cataloguer. At the ISAW Library, Sara's work is comprised primarily of cataloguing, collection management projects, and the creation of authority records, which more specifically includes contributing new records to BobCat as well as updating and expanding existing records' bibliographic access points in an effort to exploit the search capabilities of the online-catalogue environment and meet the needs of ISAW's and NYU's vast community of users and researchers.

## Digital Programs

**Tom Elliott**

Associate Director for Digital Programs

The digital programs team hosted the "Linked Ancient World Data Institute" (LAWDI) at ISAW from May 31 to June 2, 2012. Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, LAWDI brought together an international group of invited scholars who create digital resources for the study of the ancient world. The institute's main theme was how to make each resource most useful to others in the field and to the general public. Participants learned to apply a technical methodology known as "Linked Open Data" (LOD), which was developed by Tim Berners Lee and other members of the World-Wide Web Consortium.

The three days of presentations and friendly discussion led to several agreements to cooperate further. In particular, ISAW's Pleiades project—an online gazetteer of ancient geography—emerged as a focal point for linking together the contents of other websites that deal with antiquity. With help from the UK-based Pelagios Project, participants learned how to use the LOD approach to create data for sharing standardized geographic information so that other projects can create cross-site links automatically. As a result, over 20 different web-based projects are now collaborating with us in this way. Discussions at LAWDI were instrumental in adding the British Museum, Brown University's *Inscriptions of Israel/Palestine*, the UK *Portable Antiquities Scheme*, and the University of Pennsylvania's *Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus* to this collaborative network. You can now find links to Pelagios partner sites on many of the individual geographic resource pages in Pleiades (<http://pleiades.stoa.org>) and you can browse all the link data at <http://pelagios.dme.ait.ac.at/api/datasets>.

LAWDI participants also learned how to use free software developed by ISAW: the Ancient World Linked Data JavaScript (Awld.js) library. This code is easily installed on an existing website and adds pop-up summaries and maps for links to stable, external web resources about the ancient world. Currently, the software handles 16 types of resources including art objects, coins, texts, translations, archaeological datasets, persons, places, bibliographic works, and animal species. The software is best seen in action and you can learn more about it at <http://isawnyu.github.com/awld-js/>.

Another LAWDI session will take place in late Spring 2013, with the announcement to be widely circulated.



Pelagios "hackathon" at LAWDI

Photo: Dan Pett  
(Via Creative Commons license)

# EXHIBITIONS

## Echoes of the Past: The Buddhist Cave Temples of Xiangtangshan

Peter D. De Staebler, Assistant Curator  
September 11, 2012 - January 6, 2013

Carved into the side of a mountain, the Buddhist cave temples at Xiangtangshan are the crowning cultural achievement of the short-lived Northern Qi dynasty, which ruled over most of northeastern China from 550 to 577 CE. The name Xiangtangshan translates as “Mountain of Echoing Halls,” and refers to two groups of rock-cut shrines in Hebei province. The emperors and courtiers who commissioned the temples were non-Chinese, of mixed ethnicities from north of the Great Wall, and practiced Buddhism, a religion favored by this elite. In their entirety, these cave temples housed an awe-inspiring world below ground and reflect a long tradition, begun in India, of situating holy places within the earth itself.

The Northern Qi dynasty ruled northeastern China during a politically turbulent but culturally rich era of civil war and political instability known as the Southern and Northern Dynasties period (420–589 CE). During the preceding centuries China had seen a number of invasions by northern tribes; the Northern Qi dynasty was founded by Gao Huan, and a series of his sons and grandsons ruled until conquered by the Northern Zhou.

The Xiangtangshan caves are located not far from the Northern Qi capital at Ye along the road to Jincheng, the seat of the Gao family, a route much traveled by members of the court. Three of the Northern Qi emperors patronized the caves, and Emperor Wenxuan (r. 550–559 CE) is especially remembered for his lavish

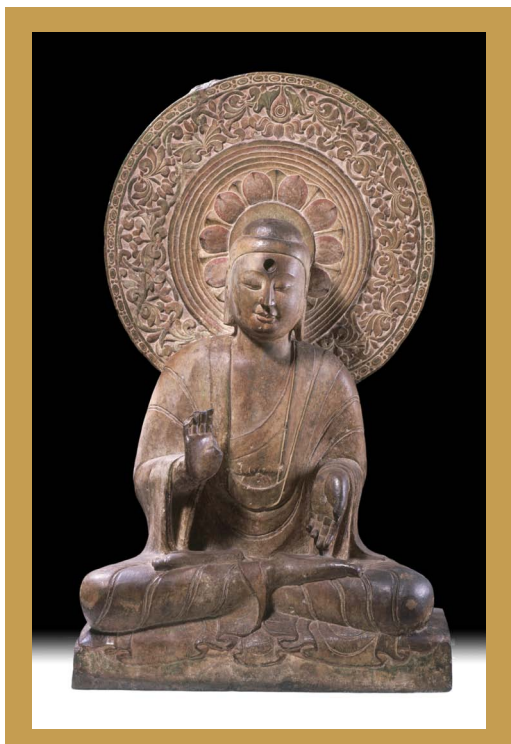
temple building. In 555, Wenxuan intervened in the competition between Buddhism and Daoism, citing limited government resources as the reason for providing state patronage to only one religion. He organized a debate at which the superiority of each religion was argued; Buddhism prevailed, and an era of temple and pagoda building that glorified the empire and inspired Buddhist converts began.

### The Sculptures

The sculptures from Xiangtangshan are extraordinarily accomplished. Their refinement and careful attention to detail is seen in facial expressions, hand gestures, and adornment. These statues are among the finest embodiments of the essence of Chinese Buddhist sculpture as we now know it, and are seminal to our understanding of the history of Chinese Buddhist style and iconography. They span a wide range in composition and scale, and their subjects include monks, pratyekabuddhas,

bodhisattvas, and Buddhas.

The artistic excellence of individual sculptures from Xiangtangshan has long been recognized. Their original context in the caves was lost, however, when the objects were removed and sold on the international art market in the early twentieth century, and their importance as a group was overlooked for generations. Research conducted by the Xiangtangshan Caves Project, an international collaboration based at the University of Chicago, has now brilliantly reassembled many of the missing pieces. By combining cutting-edge 3-D imaging technology with traditional scholarly research, the project has successfully identified and catalogued



nearly one hundred sculptures from the Xiangtangshan complex that are now in Japan, Taiwan, Europe, Canada, and the United States.

### The Digital Cave

The ISAW installation of *Echoes of the Past* unites sculptures from Xiangtangshan with a full-scale, digital, 3-D reconstruction of the interior of the impressive South Cave, the latest of the three cave temples of the northern group and one that contains inscriptions dated to 568–572 CE. The Digital Cave is an enveloping media installation that layers high-resolution color photographs and 3-D laser scans of original sculptures removed from the site onto digitized scans of the inner walls and ceiling of a single cave temple in its current state of preservation. This immersive installation allows viewers to experience the site and see sculptures that have been removed from the cave restored within their original setting.

Many sources were used to construct the Digital Cave, including black-and-white photographs from the 1920s, new color photography, and new 3-D laser scans of both the cave temple interior and its dispersed sculptures. The surface of each 3-D model was overlaid with 2-D color photographs in a process called texture-mapping, which allows models of the cave interior as it exists today to be united with untextured 3-D models of sculpture long since removed from the site. The new technologies employed in the Digital Cave made it possible to pinpoint the original locations of sculpture fragments now dispersed in private and museum collections around the world and provide an extraordinary means to view them again in their original locations. *Echoes of the Past* offers an exceptional opportunity to view the dispersed sculptures assembled together—in galleries both real and virtual.

*Echoes of the Past: The Buddhist Cave Temples of Xiangtangshan* is organized by the Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Major funding is provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Leon Levy Foundation, the Smart Family Foundation, and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.



## Echoes of the Past Lecture Series

### September 27

*Revisiting the Great North Cave at Xiangtangshan, Cultural and Religious Interactions*  
Katherine R. Tsiang, University of Chicago

### October 25

*Chinese Buddhist Sculpture in the West: Charles Lang Freer and the Xiangtangshan Cave Chapels*  
Keith Wilson, The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the Freer Gallery of Art

### November 15

*Xiangtangshan: Northern Qi Architecture and Decoration*  
Nancy S. Steinhardt, University of Pennsylvania

All lectures begin at 6 p.m. in the Lecture Hall. Additional details may be found on our website: [isaw.nyu.edu/exhibitions/echoes](http://isaw.nyu.edu/exhibitions/echoes)

### Photo Credits

Above: Head of a Bodhisattva Attendant of Maitreya, Xiangtangshan: Northern Group of Caves, North Cave, south face altar of central pillar, 550-559 CE. Limestone high relief with traces of pigment, 33 1/16 x 14 x 16 15/16 in. (84 x 35.5 x 43 cm). University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Purchased from C. T. Loo, with funds from James B. Ford, 1918 (C353).

Opposite: Seated Buddha Xiangtangshan: Northern Group, attributed to North Cave, perimeter wall niches, 550-559 CE. Limestone freestanding sculpture with traces of pigment and lacquer, 95 x 75 x 33.2 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, Presented Through the National Art Collections Fund by a Body of Donors (A4 -1924). Photo: © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

# LECTURES & CONFERENCES

## The Reception of Antiquity: China and Europe

September 28 time

Antiquity has its prolonged life through memories and imaginations that were shaped by textual and visual remains. Antiquarianism, which became an intellectual trend in China during the 11th century and in Europe during the 14th century, has captured much scholarly attention. Not limited to antiquarianism, this conference will explore more broadly the reception of antiquity in Chinese and European contexts. It will investigate questions such as what is antiquity? How did collections shape the notions of antiquity, or vice versa? How did the fascination with antiquity trigger new

modes of cultural production? What is the role of antiquity in the modern era? This conference, organized by Associate Professor Lillian Tseng, is intended to break down chronological, geographical, and disciplinary boundaries, bringing together a group of exciting scholars who otherwise may not exchange ideas on the same platform.

This event is free and open to the public. Seating is limited; RSVP is required to [isaw@nyu.edu](mailto:isaw@nyu.edu). For more information, visit [files.nyu.edu/lyt4/public/antiquity\\_index.htm](http://files.nyu.edu/lyt4/public/antiquity_index.htm).

## The Sixth Annual Leon Levy Lecture

### Gods, Humans, and Rulers: Religion and Empire in Early China

Michael Puett

Professor of Chinese History, Harvard University

November 1, 6 p.m.

In early China, religion and empire were intimately inter-related. This talk will attempt to shed light on some of the complexities of religious practice in early China and to explore how the development of empire both relied upon and challenged those practices. Dr. Puett will also draw comparisons with developments in the rest of Eurasia during the imperial period.

**About the Speaker:** Michael Puett is the Walter C. Klein Professor of Chinese History in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations and chair of the Committee on the Study of Religion at Harvard University. He is the author of

*The Ambivalence of Creation: Debates Concerning Innovation and Artifice in Early China* and *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China*, as well as the co-author, with Adam Seligman, Robert Weller, and Bennett Simon, of *Ritual and its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity*.

This event is free and open to the public. Seating is limited; RSVP required to [isaw@nyu.edu](mailto:isaw@nyu.edu) or 212-992-7800. Please note admission to the lecture hall will not be permitted once the lecture begins.

## South Caucasus Colloquium

December 15

Organized by ISAW Research Associate Karen Rubinson, this colloquium will bring together local scholars with widely varied interests in the ancient South Caucasus to consider on-going and

one-time activities that will further the study and knowledge of the region through the synergy of the group. This initial meeting is by invitation only.

# ISAW PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES FALL 2012

*Recent Fieldwork at Gordion, Royal City of Midas*  
C. Brian Rose, University of Pennsylvania  
(AIA Lecture, 6:30 p.m.)

September 13

*The Urban Landscape of the Early Christians: New Magnetometry and Georadar Surveys in the Harbor District of Roman Imperial Ephesos*  
Christine Thomas, UC Santa Barbara  
(co-sponsor: The American Turkish Society)

September 19

*New Questions about Old Gold: In Search of the First Chinese Goldsmiths*

Sarah Laursen, Visiting Assistant Professor

October 2

*Scythians in Tbilisi:*

*Recent Excavations at Treligorebi*

Mikheil Abramishvili, Ilia State University  
and Georgia National Museum

October 4

*Cities in Steppes - Turks, Uyghurs and Mongols in the Orkhon Valley*

Jan Bemmann, University of Bonn

October 9

*Archaeology and City Planning in the Phrygian City at Kerkenes Dağ, Turkey*

Scott Branting, Oriental Inst. Univ. of Chicago

October 11

*Traveling, in Theory: Movement as Metaphor in the Ancient Greek Symposium*

Hallie Franks, Visiting Research Scholar

October 23

*Exploring a Ninth Century Sinai Palimpsest*  
Father Justin, St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai

October 29

*Grooming and Adornment in Ancient China and Neighboring Cultures*

Sheri Lullo, Union College

October 30

*Did the Ancient Mysteries Influence Early Christianity?*

Jan Bremmer, Visiting Research Scholar

November 6

*Recent Fieldwork in the Upper Zerafshan Valley*  
Pavel B. Lurye, State Hermitage Museum,

St. Petersburg

November 7

*Landscape and Urban Planning in the Second Millennium BC Qatna*

Daniele Morandi Bonacossi, Italian Excavation Team at Qatna

November 20

*Signs of Inflation*

Gilles Bransbourg, ISAW Research Associate/  
American Numismatic Society

November 27

*Nemea and the Pan-Hellenic Sanctuary of Zeus*  
Kim Shelton, UC Berkeley

(AIA Lecture, 6:30 p.m.)

November 29

*Supplying Wine for the Army in Early Roman Egypt*  
Dorota Dzierzbicka, Visiting Research Scholar

December 4

All lectures are held in the 2nd floor lecture hall, and begin at 6 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

Admission to lectures closes 10 minutes after scheduled start time.

For additional information and conference schedules, visit our website:

[isaw.nyu.edu/events](http://isaw.nyu.edu/events)

Save the Date

January 22  
VRS lecture

January 24  
ARCE Lecture

February 5  
Marja Vierros,  
Visiting Scholar

February 19  
Michael Frachetti,  
Visiting Scholar



# INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

New York University

15 E. 84th St., New York, NY 10028  
Tel. 212-992-7800, Fax 212-992-7809  
isaw.nyu.edu

## ISAW.NYU.EDU

ISAW's website provides information on our public lectures and exhibits, our academic courses, our digital and library resources and projects, and our people. Visit our news blog for updates on ISAW projects or subscribe to our mailing list and receive news and event reminders delivered directly to your email.

## ABOUT ISAW

The creation of the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (ISAW) at New York University had its roots in the passion of Shelby White and Leon Levy for the art and history of the ancient world, which led them to envision an institute that would encourage the study of the economic, religious, political, and cultural connections among ancient civilizations across geographic, chronological, and disciplinary boundaries.

The Institute, established in 2006, is an independent center for scholarly research and graduate education.

The screenshot shows the ISAW website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Jobs', 'News', and 'Log In' links, along with a search bar and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The main header reads 'INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD - NEW YORK UNIVERSITY'. A vertical sidebar on the left contains a menu with 'I', 'S', 'A', 'W' and 'ABOUT ISAW', 'ACADEMIC PROGRAMS', 'EVENTS', 'EXHIBITIONS', 'LIBRARY', 'RESEARCH', 'PUBLICATIONS', 'ONLINE RESOURCES', and 'PEOPLE'. The main content area features a large image of a building facade. To the right of the image is a news article titled 'Edge of Empires: Pagans, Jews, and Christians at Roman Dura-Europos' with a date of 'September 23, 2011 - January 8, 2012'. Below this is an 'Upcoming Events' section listing three events: '18 October 2011: Visiting Research Scholar Lecture - Leaves of Gold: Head Ornaments from Xianbei Tombs in Northeast China', '25 October 2011: New Date! - Polytheism, Monotheism, and the Grey Antas in between: Antioch in the Fourth Century', and 'Raffaella Cribiore (NYU): In the fourth century CE pagans and Christians belonged to two groups that were not fixed and immutable but were in continuous evolution. The invaluable evidence from the scopist Libanius in Antioch allows us a glimpse at how some people ...'. At the bottom right, there is a 'now on exhibit' section featuring a 'Portrait of Heliodoros, an Actuaris, Clay, with a Layer of Painted Plaster From the House of the Scribes, Dura-Europos, 200-256 CE' at the Yale University Art Gallery. The footer contains links for 'NYU Home', 'Privacy Policy', 'Site Map', and 'RSS Feed'.