FROM THE DIRECTOR

January 14, 2013

ISAW reached an exciting milestone today: the first gathering with our entire faculty present. The newest member of our faculty, Daniel Potts, arrived earlier this month, and we seized the one day when all of the faculty had returned from break but before my departure for the field season at Amheida to have a full-day faculty retreat. Central to the agenda was a topic that we have been discussing ever since early fall: Now that ISAW’s early growth spurt is behind it, all of our programs are well developed, and the full faculty is in place, how can we begin to deepen our role in New York University as a whole? An external review committee, on the occasion of the completion of our fifth year, devoted some productive time to talking about this both inside ISAW and with faculty and administrators downtown, and our advisory committee took up the subject at its December meeting (postponed from earlier in the fall because of Hurricane Sandy). Over the coming months we look forward to developing a variety of initiatives in this area.

This issue of the Newsletter highlights the archaeological fieldwork of three of our faculty, spread across the Asian landmass from southeastern Turkey to China. Lorenzo d’Alfonso’s excavations in Cappadocia, still at an early stage of what is likely to be a major long-term project, follow and build on the results of an extensive regional survey that he is preparing for publication; Sören Stark’s project in Uzbekistan is using limited and targeted excavation to clarify the results of a large regional survey; and Rod Campbell’s work at Anyang has taken material from an excavation conducted largely under salvage conditions and subjected it to a fascinating and sophisticated analysis.

Our Visiting Research Scholars by now form an impressive body of alumni alongside this year’s cohort, and the products of their research are featured in a list of recent publications, Hallie Franks’ account of her current work, and in a short piece on ISAW’s own digital publications, in both book and article form.

When I first met with ISAW’s search committee more than six years ago, I asked how early our idea of “ancient” would go: as far as the Neolithic, I wondered? I was assured that nothing before the third millennium BCE was in prospect. Our program of exhibitions has already demolished that notional boundary with our successful show on “The Lost World of Old Europe,” and now “Temple and Tomb: Prehistoric Malta” will take us back even a bit further, into another corner of Europe rarely in view. I hope that you will take advantage of this remarkable opportunity for broadened horizons, as well as joining us at lectures throughout the term.

Roger S. Bagnall
Leon Levy Director
Recent Publications
A selection of 2012-2013 academic year publications by members of the ISAW community.

Faculty

Roger Bagnall


Lorenzo d’Alfonso


Roderick Campbell

Beate Pongratz-Leisten


Daniel Potts


L. Szilagyi

Lillian Tseng

Visiting Research Scholars

Jan Bremmer


Emily Hammer

George Hatke

Scholar Alumni

Jonathan Ben-Dov (2010-11)

Jacco Dieleman (2010-11)

Sabine Huebner (2007-08)

Lidewijde de Jong (2010-11)

David Klotz (2009-10)


Jinyu Liu (2007-08)

Anne Porter (2007-08)


Mantha Zarmakoupi (2009-10)


The Tiesanlu Bone Workshop
Roderick Campbell
Assistant Professor of East Asian Archaeology and History

In 2002 and 2006 a total of nearly 6,000 square meters of a Shang dynasty bone working area was uncovered at Tiesanlu, Anyang, China (last capital of the Shang dynasty). These excavations recovered nearly 50 metric tons of animal bone – the remains of bone working on a prodigious scale. In 2009, I led a collaborative pilot project funded by a Luce/ACLS East Asian Archaeology post-doctoral grant with researchers from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Institute of Archaeology. The results of that study were published in *Antiquity* 85 and suggested not only the surprising scale of bone-working at Anyang but linkages with royal ritual on one hand, and wide, non-elite distribution on the other.

During the 2011-12 winter break and the 2012 summer vacation, another study was conducted on the Tiesanlu materials, funded by a Wenner Gren International Collaborative Grant – this time to study the organization of production. Building on the results of the pilot project, my colleagues and I suspected that the Tiesanlu bone working area was in fact a large integrated workshop perhaps borrowing organizational principles from other industries such as bronze working. To test this hypothesis we set about systematically sampling the bone working waste recovered from the excavations, looking for evidence of specialization and separation of activity in terms animals used, bones processed, artifacts produced or even production stage. In addition, in order to better understand the production process, we purchased several sets of cattle limb bones from a local butcher and conducted experiments aimed at replicating cleaning, degreasing, sawing, shaping, grinding, drilling and polishing techniques. Though the results have not been fully analyzed, we made several interesting discoveries including the reconstruction of a complex drill based on a stone drill weight recovered from the Iliitic assemblage and recognized as such only in the process of drill experimentation. Moreover, the realization that soaking the bones before working, whether as part of the cleaning process or merely as softening, was an inescapable part of the process, has led to new lines of ceramic investigation at the site – the prediction that there should be areas of site where the bone was initially prepared that have not only large quantities of whole bone or initial reduction waste but also large basins.

Though it is premature to speak of findings when the data has yet to be systematically analyzed, our goal of producing a series of site maps for each period showing the distribution of different types of bone working remains will be met, and the initial results appear to confirm our hypothesis. Thus, one midden analyzed in the winter season yielded ten times a higher proportion of final stage waste than was found in any of our pilot project contexts, suggesting it contained the remains of debris produced from a divided production process. Moreover, the products of the process appear to be overwhelmingly only two styles of decorative pins (out of a dozen or so pin types that appear at the site, among a variety of artifacts being produced at Tiesanlu). Other areas seem to be concentrated on the production of tools such as shovels, awls and arrowheads.

In short, if a systematic analysis of the data bear out the initial impressions, we will be able to show that the gigantic bone debris field of Tiesanlu is, in fact, the remains of a large, coordinated and integrated bone workshop that produced vast quantities of daily use artifacts for wide distribution.

Kınik Höyük, A New Excavation in Southern Cappadocia, Turkey

Lorenzo d’Alfonso
Assistant Professor of West Asian Archaeology and History

Archaeological excavations at Kınık Höyük started during the summer of 2011, and the second campaign took place in the summer of 2012. The excavations have been planned as a ten year project of extensive excavation of the western half of the mound that dominates the site, with a geophysical survey and some test trenches of the terrace around the mound, as well a project to stabilize the most monumental architectural remains, in view of transforming the site into an open-air museum. Operations so far have been focused on the top of the citadel, where the geomagnetic survey signaled the presence of a relevant stone building, and on different areas of the slopes, where monumental stone walls were revealed.

On the top of the mound, the two earliest periods of inhabitation of the site have been exposed. They correspond to the Middle Ages - possibly a Seljuk occupation, and the Hellenistic age. During the former, no traces of public structures have been found so far, while many elements support a rural context, with small and poor houses that reused previous Hellenistic architectural remains on stone, flanked by discoveries for hearth and hearth area, and some pithoi possibly used for water supply, productive areas (much glass slag was collected), shallow trash pits.

The Hellenistic presence on the citadel of Kınık is more articulated. The architecture excavated thus far seems also domestic in nature, even though a one meter thick stone wall running along the southern edge of the site likely belongs to a fortification. The architecture in the northern section is less monumental than the southern wall, but defines two rectangular large rooms with well-structured clay soils. Both rooms belong to the same building, which will be further excavated at a later date.

Extensive excavations on the slopes of Kınık Höyük uncovered the monumental remains of the citadel stone walls; the topsoil covering it contained four levels dating to the Late Iron Age. This discovery was particularly interesting because this period, covering almost four centuries after the end of the Neo-Hittite states, is poorly known and under-investigated in most of Anatolia. Among the many valuable discoveries this area yielded thus far were a rich collection of fine painted potsherds. The motif and style of their decoration strongly suggest a relation with the painted pottery found in the Hittite capital of Hattusa. The site as a whole promises to continue yielding valuable information on this kingdom and even earlier times as the excavation progresses.

Orientalizing production of eastern Greek pottery dating to the late 7th century BCE. This in turn hints at a wide circulation of goods and ideas in this period for Western and Central Anatolia, in contrast to the wars and crises believed to have followed the Cimmerian invasion, suggesting a need to revise our understanding of this period.

The citadel stone walls of Kınık Höyük are more than four meters wide. They are constructed with a core of clay mortar and unshaped stones, rarely exceeding a diameter of about 30-35cm. On the outer face, we opened a two meters wide test trench. Even though we have not yet reached the base of the foundations, this trench revealed that at least in this area the walls are preserved for a depth of more than five meters.

Two building phases have been identified, the lower one using timber and bigger stones, in some cases roughly shaped into blocks. The upper part of the structure shows a slightly tapered profile: here smaller logs were set in the masonry, organized in six irregular horizontal rows. These wooden elements projected beyond the wall surface for several centimeters; their poor wooden remains were still preserved in the log holes on a thick layer of mud plastering. The impression coating is tempered with organic inclusions and is distributed over the whole of the later phase of the wall face. In comparison to similar wall plastering in fortifications at other Anatolian sites, Kınık Höyük is noteworthy for its exceptional conservation. Phase I of the monumental walls date to the Middle Iron Age, when the city was one of the main centers of the forgotten kingdom of Tuyuna. The site as a whole promises to continue yielding valuable information on this kingdom and even earlier times as the excavation progresses.
Investigating the "Long Wall" of Bukhara: Excavations at the Fortress Ganch-tepa in 2012

Sören Stark
Assistant Professor of Central Asian Art and Archaeology

Our investigations of the territorial fortification system of the oasis of Bukhara, Uzbekistan, during the 2012 field-season concentrated on excavating and documenting the small-sized fortress site of Ganch-tepa (meaning "Stucco-hill"), situated in the eastern extremity of the oasis. The site is part of a relatively well-preserved section of the former oasis fortification system, consisting of a 13 km continuous stretch of the oasis wall, running south of the Zerafshan river and incorporating a total of four fortresses of varying sizes. At Ganch-tepa the oasis wall is not directly adjoining the fort but running the short distance of c. 10m around its eastern and southern façade.

The potential of the site with regard to questions of dating and historical contextualization of the oasis wall system around Bukhara became apparent when we recorded the site during our preparatory survey in July 2011, observing its exceptionally good state of preservation, as well as architectural features clearly dating back to circa the 4th-6th centuries CE.

Excavations during July and August 2012 yielded the following preliminary results: The fortress features a roughly rectangular but not entirely symmetrical shape. The southern façade as well as the southern part of the eastern façade were preserved up to the lower part of the third story of the building – an exceptionally good state of preservation considering that all walls were constructed with unbaked mud bricks or blocks of rammed earth (pakhsa).

Two major building phases can be observed. The first phase is characterized by rectangular towers slightly protruding from the curtain wall – both pierced by a multitude of arrowslits, arranged in checkerboard pattern over the whole of the façade (at least the 2nd and the third story). The thickness of curtain and tower walls amounts to only 1.4m in the 2nd story. All these elements are characteristic of the military architecture in Sogdia dating to the 5th century CE. The earliest ceramic assemblage from the site, also belonging to the 5th century CE, confirms such a date.

In a substantial part of the southern façade (where the main gate was likely situated) the curtain and tower walls had completely collapsed and were repaired without much care. Currently it is unclear when and why — siege, earthquake? — this happened. At any rate, in a second major building phase all arrowslits were carefully closed and both tower and the curtain walls substantially reinforced. A diagnostic sherd from the filling of one of the arrowslits points to a date of this phase in the 6th or early 9th century CE. This date is roughly confirmed by an arrowhead which remained stuck in the outer side of the reinforced wall and dates to the same period. The fortress seems to have been abandoned by the 10th century CE.

These preliminary observations give us interesting clues regarding the function and date of the fortress within the system of territorial defense of the oasis of Bukhara. First, the 5th century date of the first phase confirms the results of last year’s excavations of two cross-sections of the oasis wall near Kyzyl-tepa, 25 km south-west of Ganch-tepa. The relatively ‘light’ architecture, featuring a multitude of arrowslits, enabled the deployment of archers on at least two stories. This seems to point to a defensive function against a lightly or altogether unarmed enemy without siege machinery. This impression is also confirmed by the oasis wall running in front of the fortress: it measured a width of only 1.5-1.7m at the bottom and was rather carelessly raised with a mixture of rammed earth, gravel and irregular clay heaps, obviously serving only as an obstacle to impede direct approach to the fortress. Such a defense tactic must have been quite efficient against lightly-armed cavalry – the arm par excellence of nomadic raiders. Thus, the wall would have primarily prevented a small band of mounted raiders from quickly passing the fortress, slipping into the oasis, and escaping back into the steppes.

The closing of the arrowslits and the substantial reinforcement of the outer walls in the second phase points to a different defense concept: defense activities were limited to the top of the curtain walls, in order to more effectively control the glacis of the oasis wall in front of the fortress. At the same time the reinforced walls could much better withstand attempts to take the fortress with the help of siege machines which were in common use in the region by the 8th century. In all likelihood the second building phase of the fortress is associated with the large-scale fortification of the oasis of Bukhara, ordered in 782-83 CE by the Muslim governor of Khorasan, as we know from the testimony of the Tarikh-i Bukhara, written in the 10th century CE.
Exploring Art and Space in Ancient Greece
Hallie Franks
ISAW Visiting Research Scholar
Assistant Professor, Gallatin School of Individualized Study, NYU

Tomb II at Vergina is a royal tomb, built to commemorate a member of the Macedonian royal family in the period of prosperity surrounding Alexander the Great’s reign. The painted hunting scene that adorns the tomb’s façade is a striking and rare example of Macedonian court art. This painting, dedicated to the recognition of the deceased, elucidates the cultural influences through which the kingdom and its rulers declared their legitimacy. My first book, Hunters, Heroes, Kings: The Frieze of Tomb II at Vergina, published in Fall 2012 with the American School of Classical Studies Press, refines the place of this painting in our understanding of Macedonian art. Navigating myth, history, and visual tradition, I present a new interpretation of the famous “Hunting Frieze” at Vergina.

Continuing my interest in ancient Macedonia, I excavate with the American Research Center in Sofia (ARCS) and The National Institute of Archaeology with Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (NIAM-BAS) at Heraclea Sintica, a site in the Roman province of Macedonia, located in modern southwestern Bulgaria. I am co-director of the ARCS Field School there, with Dr. Emil Nankov, and we are happy to be returning for our second season in June 2013.

My current research at ISAW, as the first Affiliated Faculty Visiting Research Scholar, takes me in a new direction. I am investigating the ways that the experience of certain architectural spaces of Classical and Hellenistic Greece creates metaphors for other kinds of movement, specifically travel. Underlying my approach is theoretical work in sociology that has explored the human experience of space as a dialectical relationship between the ways in which space is perceived, conceived, and physically experienced. This project considers Greek architectural spaces as they were lived, using those theoretical structures to consider the material nature of the space itself, the imagery associated with it (in, for example, mosaic or painted decoration), the activities that occurred within it, and the ways in which these elements come together to become meaningful for the visitor.

In the fall of 2012, I gave a public lecture at ISAW, Traveling, in Theory: Movement as Metaphor in the Ancient Greek Symposium, which explored the way space and imagery work in the Classical andron, a room best known as the location of the symposium, the Greek drinking party. These rooms often had pebble mosaic floors with figural decoration, the iconography of which is sometimes difficult to connect to the symposiastic context. In this paper, I interpreted the imagery through the popular cultural likening of the symposium as a journey at sea. This analogy plays out in the “lived” experience of the symposium, during which the wine cup makes its way around the andron’s perimeter, stopping at each symposiast like a ship stops at harbors on a voyage. In some andrones, I argue, the mosaic floors participate in this metaphor, presenting the kinds of exotic images that might be glimpsed or imagined as a ship moved along foreign shores. Thus, the imagery and architectural space of the room take on meaning through the way the space is “lived”—that is, through prescribed, standardized movements and their cultural associations.

Since the andron is one of the few ancient spaces for which we have a good idea of how movement unfolded, I hope to expand this work to look at other domestic mosaics from the late Classical and Hellenistic periods.

ISAW Library News
Charles E. Jones
ISAW Head Librarian

The ISAW Library is pleased to acknowledge the extraordinarily generous donation of his library by David N. Keightley, Professor Emeritus, Department of History, University of California, Berkeley. Professor Keightley is an American sinologist and historian whose career has focused on the origins of Chinese civilization in the Neolithic and early Bronze Ages. His particular interest is in the formation of political and religious culture: ancestor worship, divination, and the development of bureaucracy, viewed in cross-cultural perspective. Among his awards is a 1986 MacArthur Fellowship. This donation of nearly a thousand volumes, mostly in Chinese, represents a lifetime of careful selection and creates an enormously important core area in the collections of the ISAW Library.

Digital Articles and Books from ISAW
Tom Elliott
Associate Director for Digital Programs
Sebastian Heath
Research Assistant Professor of Ancient Studies

From the start, ISAW’s Digital Programs have focused on producing open-licensed scholarship in support of ISAW’s mission to connect innovative people and ideas in the study of the ancient world. We continue to collaborate with others on a range of digital publications in both novel and familiar forms, which can be found on the “Online Resources” page of the ISAW website.

ISAW Papers, edited by Sebastian Heath, is the institute’s online journal. Five articles are now available, authored by ISAW faculty, scholars, and others, that treat topics as diverse as Greek and Babylonian astronomy, Ptolemaic numismatics, the Roman economy, Syriac philology, and the “Antikythera Mechanism.” More are in process, including a 2009–10 Visiting Research Scholar Mantha Zarmakoupi’s forthcoming field report on urbanization on late Hellenistic Delos.

Articles in ISAW Papers take advantage of ISAW’s institutional context and other digital initiatives. The journal is published online and digitally archivable in partnership with NYU Libraries, whose focus is the long-term availability and preservation of scholarly resources. This partnership lets ISAW concentrate on the creation of high-quality works that enrich and exploit other publications like our online gazetteer, Pleiades. Relevance, permanence, and accessibility are further enhanced because we publish ISAW Papers under a Creative Commons Attribution license, which protects copyright while permitting readers, as well as other institutions, to download, store and redistribute the series at no cost. Articles can be found simply by Googling “ISAW Papers” or by going directly to the address http://isaw.nyu.edu/publications/isaw-papers.

ISAW’s digital books program is also directed by Heath and is informed by the same principles that drive ISAW Papers. Our first volume, Amheida I: Ostraka from Timlithis I by Roger Bagnall and Giovanni Ruffini, appeared in early 2012. Like ISAW Papers, the full-text of the volume is available online via the NYU Libraries. A printed volume is available from NYU Press and there are versions for Kindle and other e-readers. A second volume, Aksum and Nubia: Warfare, Commerce, and Political Fictions in Ancient Northeast Africa by current ISAW Visiting Assistant Professor George Hatke, will appear in early 2013.
EXHIBITIONS

Temple and Tomb: Prehistoric Malta
Peter D. De Staebler, Assistant Curator
Jennifer Chi, Exhibitions Director and Chief Curator
Sharon Sultana, Senior Curator, National Museum of Archaeology, Malta
March 21 - June 30, 2013

The ancient inhabitants of the Maltese archipelago created one of the artistically richest early Prehistoric cultures. They produced an outstanding range of aesthetically refined and intricate representations of the human figure in clay and stone, which illuminate both a distinctive local identity as well as connections to the larger Mediterranean and European worlds. The early Maltese also constructed extraordinary megalithic temples now understood to be the oldest freestanding stone structures in the world.

The first human settlers arrived on the islands c. 5100 BCE, and the great temples and the objects in the exhibition date to c.3600-2500 BCE. Since the architecture and sculptures are unique to Malta, however, their true age has only been known since the advent of radiocarbon dating. Through the earlier 20th century, the culture was thought to be much younger, but it is now known to be older than the Pyramids or Stonehenge.

The Exhibition

Temple and Tomb marks the first time that these objects have come to the United States, and the exhibition tells the story of this under-represented and re-imagined ancient culture. The exhibition opens with a selection of watercolors and archival photographs from the 1820’s through the mid-20th century that document the discovery of Maltese prehistory. Uncovered from the mid-19th through the late 20th century, the sites and objects in the exhibition were discovered both above ground in massive, elaborately decorated temples and underground in rock-cut funerary complexes. The objects at the core of the exhibition are representations of the human figure that derive from both cult and funerary contexts. The variety and beauty of the figures is rich, with an intention of differentiation unknown in contemporary cultures. Particularly intriguing is the sexual ambiguity in this material. Some are distinctly female, such as the voluptuous clay figurine from the temple at Ħaġar Qim nick-named the “Venus of Malta.” Others appear to be more male, such as the plank-like stone statues of the Xagħra Circle funerary complex.

These two examples are distinguished from the large number of corpulent figurines that are ambiguously sexed and whose proportions are luxuriously enormous, with huge hips, thighs, and buttocks, but smaller legs and arms, and incongruously delicate feet and hands. They are represented standing or sitting, nude or clothed, sometimes shown wearing pleated skirts. The faces of some figures are astonishingly varied and individualized, and it has been suggested that they may have been intended to represent specific individuals. Equally remarkable are figures created to have delachable and perhaps interchangeable heads.

The architectural spaces were heavily embellished, with stone friezes and altars decorated with relief carved representations of domesticated animals or fish, and carved or painted spirals. The spiral was the most common motif utilized in these spaces, and it was also used on the pottery of the period. The many spirals from Malta illustrate an especially early manifestation of a preference for this motif, and it appears here in tremendous variation, with some examples isolated and strictly geometric while others are more florid and abstractly vegetal.

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This civilization came to an end in c. 2500 BCE, shortly after its peak, and the islands appear to have been abandoned for a period of centuries. Reasons for the end of the civilization are unclear, but may include aspects of foreign invasion or civil war and the concomitant over exploitation and eventual exhaustion of natural resources, including deforestation. The Bronze Age population that resettled the islands are a completely distinct people; their cultural traditions are entirely different, though they chose to bury their dead in the massive ruins of the great temples.

All lectures begin at 6 p.m. in the Lecture Hall. Additional details may be found on our website: isaw.nyu.edu/exhibitions/echoes
LEC T U R E S & C O N F E R E N C E S

Early Medieval Chinese Art and Archaeology

March 29

This workshop, organized by Professor Lillian Tseng, invites scholars to examine newly excavated sites and tombs in early medieval China, focusing on issues surrounding urban archaeology and funerary practices. Participants include leading scholars from China and colleagues and graduate students in the Tri-State Area. Participation in this workshop is by invitation only.

The Fourth Annual M.I. Rostovtzeff Lectures

The Sovereign Assemblage: Sense, Sensibility, and Sentiment in the Bronze Age Caucasus

Adam T. Smith, Professor of Anthropology, Cornell University

April 8, 15, 22, and 29. 6 p.m.

The modern understanding of political association has centered resolutely on the citizen, whose interactions with others establish and reproduce the possibilities and limits of sovereignty. However, rarely do we interact with one another directly as citizens. Rather, a vast assemblage of things, from ballots and bullets to crows and regalia to licenses and permits incessantly intrudes upon our political relations. What role has this assemblage played in the formation of our political practices? What principles fundamental to sovereignty does an archaeology of this assemblage reveal?

Taking the Caucasus as their geographic focus, these lectures describe the emergence of a complex series of material assemblages that originated in the Bronze Age and continue to shape our politics today. They will detail the transformation of communities in the Caucasus from Early Bronze Age villages committed to an ideology of egalitarianism to Late Bronze Age complex polities predicated on radical inequality, organized violence, and a centralized apparatus of rule. These formidable social transformations were made possible by the operation of three assemblages, or machines, that reordered human communities. Each was vital to the operation of the next, forging the polity over time in the articulation of things and persons along three linked dimensions: sense, sensibility, and sentiment. It is by attending to these points of articulation that we can unravel the enduring sovereignty of the assemblage.

The Sovereignty of Assemblages (April 8)
The Civilization Machine in the Early Bronze Age (April 15)
The War Machine in the Middle Bronze Age (April 22)
The Political Machine in the Late Bronze Age (April 29)

The lectures are free and open to the public. Seating is limited; RSVP is required to isaw@nyu.edu.

Ancient and Modern Perspectives on Historiography in Mesopotamia

April 12

This workshop builds upon Professor Beate Pongratz-Leisten’s current seminar, “The History of Assyria in Ancient and Modern Historiography,” by expanding the scope in time and space and examining Sumerian and Babylonian texts as well as Assyrian. The goal is to acquire a correct understanding of the ancients’ intentionality in referencing mythical, legendary, and historical figures and events, which are included in these texts. The notion of the past as either paradigmatic model or reconstructed event history will be at the center of our discussion, as will be the setting and function of the texts. We will further scrutinize the applicability of modern taxonomies such as chronicles, annals, etc. to ancient textual production and investigate how ancient historiographic writing interfaces with what modern scholarship tends to subsume under fiction and literature.

This event is free and open to the public. RSVP is required to isaw@nyu.edu.

The Archaeology of Sasanian Politics

April 26

Archaeological excavations, surveys, and analyses have revitalized the study of Sasanian history in recent years. The International Merv Project, the investigation of the “Great Wall of Gorgan,” and the survey of the Mughan Steppe, among other projects, reveal a remarkably robust state in the fifth and sixth centuries, far more capable of marshaling men and material in its service than most historians have been willing to admit. It is the goal of this workshop, organized by Visiting Research Scholar Richard Payne and Doctoral Candidate Mehroush Soroush, to convene archaeologists and historians to debate how recent archaeology can provide new perspectives on the dynamics of Sasanian imperialism. Seating is limited; registration required to 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.