

ISAW Newsletter 9

Fall 2013



INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD
New York University



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our academic lives are simultaneously intensely local and profusely global. It is hardly surprising that our research extends over a vast international space. This issue's reports take us from the Turkish-Syrian borderland through the Caucasus and across Iran—a land where we hope that the future will bring renewed scholarly activity in the wake of improved relations. Inevitably, this work takes our faculty to distant places, so that my morning email finds Sören Stark composing a course syllabus in Samarkand and Robert Hoyland planning his participation in an exam from Saudi Arabia.

But ISAW is as much, and essentially, local, with our seminars, lectures, conferences, and more informal conversations over coffee and lunch. The new crop of graduate students and visiting scholars, introduced in the pages that follow, renew and diversify the net of intellectual exchange that makes our community such an exciting place to work in.

The duality of our nature is perfectly captured in this fall's exhibition (see pages 8-9), in which ancient ideas of space and their later reverberations are beautifully explored. The exhibition is very local—you really must see these objects in person!—and yet globally accessible through its electronic incarnation (if that is not an oxymoron). Still more, the electronic resources now available for ancient geography, above all our own Pleiades (see page 7), are both encompassing and globally used. The exhibition reminds us, too, that ancient cyclical ideas of history may have something to be said for them, with procedural approaches to space and mapping, dear to the ancients, resurgent in our own time—however horrifying this may be to those of us who love two-dimensional mapping of a post-Renaissance kind.

As always, we welcome you to our exhibition and lectures, and we hope that you can be part of the ISAW community in various ways.

Roger S. Bagnall
Leon Levy Director

*Cover: A view out from an ancient hermit's cave cell,
Mor Mattai monastery. Photo by Robert Hoyland
Right: ISAW library stacks*

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COMMUNITY NEWS

The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation Gives Grant for the Leon Levy Lecture

Shelby White

ISAW is pleased to announce that the Peter Jay Sharp Foundation has made a generous grant to endow the annual Leon Levy Lecture at ISAW. This gift has been matched by the Leon Levy Foundation. Peter Sharp, a long time Manhattan resident, was a hotelier, who among other properties owned the Carlyle Hotel. He was also a major collector of old master paintings and drawings, with a magnificent private library designed

by legendary Italian decorator Mongiardino. He was an accomplished pianist, who frequently played with the Colorado String Quartet. He and Leon Levy were friends and long time business partners. When Norman Peck, president of The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation, heard about the annual lecture, he thought this would be a fitting way for the Foundation to honor Leon Levy.

Thank You to Our Generous Donors

ISAW thanks the foundations and individuals who have supported our programs and projects during the years 2007-2013.

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Christine Lilyquist

Incoming Graduate Students

David Danzig

After studying Physics and Mathematics as an undergraduate student (B.A., Yeshiva University), I turned to investigating ancient historical and cultural ideas. I spent time studying the Hebrew Bible (M.A., Yeshiva University), focusing on linguistic and historical/archaeological issues, and then Assyriology at Yale University (M.A.). My academic goal is to apply contemporary theoretical and methodological frameworks (historical critical, anthropological, archaeological, literary, cognitive scientific, etc.) to the integration of multiple modes of ancient evidence (literary, archaeological, environmental, art historical, etc.) in order to achieve new syntheses regarding historical-cultural problems of the Ancient World, concentrating on Ancient Mesopotamia and its neighboring environs.

Andrea Trameri

I received my B.A. in Classics and Oriental Studies in 2009 and my M.A. in Ancient Near Eastern Studies in 2012 at the University of Pavia, Italy. In my M.A. thesis I examined a critical edition of a Hittite ritual text of Hurro-Hittite tradition related to the religion of the Netherworld. My research interest is in Anatolian philology and Hittite studies, in particular related to the complex cultural and religious background of Anatolia within the network of Ancient Near Eastern and Mediter-

anean traditions. In addition to the philological studies, since 2011 I have worked in the archaeological field for the NYU and Pavia University excavations at Kınık Höyük in Turkey (Cappadocia). At ISAW I intend to further investigate the features of Hittite religion in the context of ancient Mediterranean cultural background and pursue my work and study in the archaeological field.

Shujing Wang

I received my B.A. degrees in archaeology and in philosophy from Peking University, China. I am interested in the archaeology and cultural communication between China and the world through the Silk Road in antiquity. In my undergraduate thesis and other projects, I tried to reconstruct the interaction and transmission of cultural factors through the Silk Road based on the analysis of archaeological materials with their context, especially focusing on the cultural exchanges in the east of Eurasia from 500 BC. to 200 AD. At ISAW, I intend to further my previous study and specifically research the process of cultural communication between ancient China and Central Asia. Through this I hope to reveal the patterns of cultural diffusion along the Silk Road and find the specific influencing factors that created the differences between them.

Visiting Research Scholars

Emily Hammer

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

Matteo Compareti

Ph.D., Università di Napoli "L'Orientale"
Research Interest: Art and Archaeology of pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia

Daniel Fleming

Professor of Hebrew & Judaic Studies, NYU
Research Interest: Ancient Near Eastern History

Francesca Rochberg

Professor of Near Eastern Studies, University of California, Berkeley
Research Interest: Assyriology and the History of Science

Adam Schwartz

Ph.D., University of Chicago
Research Interest: Ancient China

Anna Lanaro

Ph.D., Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz
Research Interest: Archaeology and History of the Mediterranean Region, 2nd millennium BCE

Thelma Thomas

Associate Professor of Fine Arts, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU
Research Interest: Late Antique and Byzantine Art

Ian Rutherford

Professor, Classics Department, University of Reading
Research Interest: Ancient Greek and Anatolian Religion

Liangren Zhang

Professor, School of Cultural Heritage, Northwest University, China
Research Interest: Chinese Archaeology

In Memory of Joan Goodnick Westenholz

(1943-2013), VRS 2010-11

D.T. Potts

In the autumn of 1980, just a few months after receiving my Ph.D., I was appointed Visiting Lecturer at the Institute of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology, as it then was, at the University of Copenhagen. On the other side of town was the Institute of Assyriology, where a quartet of distinguished scholars were based: Jørgen Læssøe, Mogens Trolle Larsen, Bendt Alster and Aage Westenholz. Unbeknownst to me Aage had an American wife, Joan Goodnick Westenholz, and what with my frequent visits to the Assyriology library, it did not take long before we met.



Joan's welcome and empathy were palpable. She truly warmed us in that cold Danish winter. In later years, I ran into her frequently at the Rencontre Assyriologique, the annual summer gathering of Assyriologists and Near Eastern archaeologists. When I saw Joan at Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Beer-Sheva, where I delivered the annual Irene Levi-Sala Lectures in 1998, she greeted me with her distinctive smile and twinkling eyes. Joan was a scholar of whom I can say without hesitation, that every work of hers that I ever consulted has elucidated the problem

I was researching better than almost anything else written on the topic. Her scholarship is a model of clarity, thoroughness, and sophistication and will influence generations of scholars to come. This is the mark of a truly great scholar. But above all, she was a warm and lovely person, deeply appreciated by all who knew her.

My wife Hildy and I lived in a furnished sub-let in deepest, darkest Vanløse, not one of Copenhagen's choicest suburbs. Aage and Joan invited us to their apartment for a meal and we were immediately embraced by a loving family with two bright, talkative Danish-American daughters.

Updates from ISAW Scholar Alumni

Richard Payne, VRS 2012-13, has been appointed Assistant Professor in Ancient Near Eastern History at the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago.

Mantha Zarmakoupi, VRS 2009-10, has been awarded a Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship. She will be based at the National Hellenic Research Foundation, Institute of Historical Research, Department of Greek and Roman Antiquity (KERA).

Jinyu Liu, VRS 2007-08, was appointed Chair of the Department of Classical Studies, DePauw University in July 2013.

Caroline Sauvage, VRS 2009-10, will be a Getty Scholar at the Getty Research Institute for 6 months (January-June 2014), on the annual theme "Connecting Seas: Cultural and Artistic Exchange".

Mathieu Ossendrijver, VRS 2010-11, will be appointed as Professor for the History of Ancient Science at the Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany.

Annalisa Marzano, VRS 2010-11, was promoted in April to a full professorship in Ancient History and on July 1st was appointed as the new Head of Department for Classics at the University of Reading. She has also been appointed as the next director of the Centre for Economic History at the University of Reading, from October 1st.

Jonathan Ben-Dov, VRS 2010-11, was elected a fellow of the Young Israeli Academy of Sciences and invited to be a member of the Institute of Advanced Study at the University of Durham, UK (Winter 2013). He was also nominated to the George and Florence Wise chair of Judaism in Antiquity at the University of Haifa.

Seth Sanders, VRS 2010-11, was awarded tenure at Trinity College and is now an Associate Professor.

Karen Sonik, VRS 2010-11, is now a Postdoctoral Research Associate in Egyptology and Ancient Western Asian Studies at Brown University.

Libraries

Professor Nina Garsoïan, Gevork M. Avedisian Professor Emerita of Armenian History and Civilization, Columbia University, has generously donated her collection of books and journals to the ISAW Library. Professor Garsoïan has made the study of Byzantine and Armenian history and civilization the focus of her life's work. She was instrumental in establishing the field of Medieval Armenian History in the United States and published many books, journal articles and encyclopedia entries on Armenian, Byzantine and Sasanian subjects. Garsoïan received Fulbright and Guggenheim Fellowships, as well as the Anania Narekac'i and Mesrop Mashtots Medals for academic distinction in 1988 and 1993.

Garsoïan's academic focus evolved from the study of Classical Archaeology and Byzantine History to Armenian History and Civilization and then on to the cultural interactions of Armenia with the Sasanian Empire of Iran. One of her major scholarly contributions was to emphasize in various studies the significance of Persian and Anatolian influences on the development of Armenian history. The Garsoïan Library, comprising nearly one thousand volumes, reflects this far-reaching range of study and makes available to scholars and researchers materials that are not widely held at institutions in the United States.

Digital Programs

Tom Elliott

Associate Director for Digital Programs and Senior Research Scholar

This summer, ISAW's digital programs team continued to advance our goal of using digital techniques to better connect the ISAW community and audience to the prerequisites and results of research efforts on the ancient world.

In collaboration with Drew University in New Jersey, we conducted the second of two "Linked Ancient World Data Institutes" funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. As in May 2012, this event assembled an international group of invited scholars who create digital resources for the study of the ancient world. They participated in three days of intense collaboration and learning, focusing on the use of the world wide web for scholarly communication and data exchange. A volume of papers by participants in both years' sessions is in preparation, under the editorship of Prof. Sebastian Heath.

In October, ISAW welcomed the leadership of the Pelagios project (Southampton, Open University, and Austrian Institute of Technology) to New York for two days of meetings on the future of digital gazetteer services for ancient studies. The Pelagios team, now funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, has long collaborated with ISAW's Pleiades digital gazetteer project (<http://pleiades.stoa.org>), promoting its

use as a standard reference framework for ancient geography online. We were joined for this meeting by representatives of the China Historical Geographic Information System (Harvard), the Great Britain Historical GIS (Portsmouth), the Collaborative for Historical Information and Analysis (Pittsburgh), the Topotime Model and Layout for Historical Placetime (Stanford), and Wikidata Finland/Wikimaps. The participants adopted a subset of the data format originally developed for Pleiades to use as an "inter-connection format" that will make it possible begin building a seamless network of digital gazetteers, spanning Eurasia and North Africa.

We also recently released an upgrade to the Ancient World Linked Data Javascript, a free and open-source software library that enhances the display of links to ancient world resources on any web page (<http://isawnyu.github.io/awld-js/>). The update improves the pop-up display of content from Pleiades and adds new pop-ups for entries in the GeoNames geographical database. It is now possible to achieve a uniform presentation of ancient and modern geographic references on a single web page. See, for example, the "Checklist of Objects on Display" from the website of ISAW's current exhibition: <http://isaw.nyu.edu/exhibitions/space/checklist.html>.

EXHIBITIONS

Measuring and Mapping Space: Geographic Knowledge in Greco-Roman Antiquity

Roberta Casagrande-Kim, Guest Curator

Tom Elliott, Associate Director for Digital Programs

October 4, 2013 – January 5, 2014

How ancient societies understood and visualized the world, from their immediate surroundings to the edges of their empires and beyond, provides a unique perspective on their political and cultural values and philosophy, as well as

mote specific political agendas. In all these instances, the resulting representations of places presented the viewer with a distorted and schematized version of geographic and topographic elements, transforming those regions both on a



demonstrating their mathematical and scientific expertise. *Measuring and Mapping Space* explores these concepts in Greek and Roman societies by investigating how they perceived and represented geographic knowledge of the both known and unknown areas of their world. This exhibition continues ISAW's innovative approach to the ancient world with a selection of objects that help viewers understand how Greek and Roman conceptions of the world were reflected in and defined by how it was presented in globes, maps, and other tools of navigation and representation. A digital component of the exhibition—accessible both in the gallery space itself and on the world wide web—extends the show's reach to embrace continuing scholarly engagement with geographical aspects of Antiquity.

Our modern knowledge of ancient cartography relies almost exclusively on written sources. Despite the paucity of ancient artifacts, it is clear that Greeks and Romans applied topographical studies to the mapping of land and sea routes, to the implementation of an accurate system of recording public and private lands, and to pro-

conceptual and on a physical level. In *Measuring and Mapping Space*, the public is introduced to ancient cartography and geographic knowledge through manuscripts, incunabula, and early printed books written in the 15th and 16th centuries, a moment of revival of ancient knowledge that coincided with intense contemporary interest in exploration beyond Europe. The vast amount of information on geographic places, cartographic techniques and ethnographic accounts available in the rediscovered Greco-Roman texts influenced Renaissance cosmographers and cartographers who turned primarily to these sources as the main reference tools for their work.

In the exhibition, artifacts and manuscripts illustrate the ways in which space was conceptualized, not only through topography and cartography, but also according to non-geographical elements such as strategy and tactics. Indeed, official propaganda during the Roman imperial period consistently boosted the emperors' agendas by performing acts of 'imaginative geography', out-and-out manipulations of known geographic facts that contributed to the creation

of ever shifting social, ethnic, political, and cultural boundaries.

In addition to measuring, drawing and manipulating their known world, Greeks and Romans developed a flourishing literature of geographic mirabilia, in part inspired by the perceived secluded nature of their *oikoumene*. These texts, which had a wide impact on the shared geographic knowledge of individuals of all social categories, paired the knowledge of actual territories with hypothetical constructions of what existed beyond ancient ken, drawing both on actual facts from exploration and trade as well as pure fabrication. The objects on display show how geographical remoteness translated into projections of mythical and semi-mythical societies outside their controllable universe, ranging from the bizarre to the utopian.

An integral part of the exhibition is the digital compendium designed by ISAW's Department of Digital Programs (<http://isaw.nyu.edu/exhibitions/space/index.html>). Available online and in the gallery space, this innovative and highly interactive website allows visitors to explore how modern technologies improve geographic information about the ancient world and promote collaborative projects aimed at the development of historical geography.

Upcoming Exhibition

Masters of Fire: The Copper Age in the Holy Land

February 13, 2014 - June 8, 2014

Masters of Fire: The Copper Age in the Holy Land focuses on the metallurgical revolution that occurred during the Chalcolithic period (4500-3500 BCE) in the Southern Levant when metallurgists first used the lost wax casting technique, resulting in the creation of some of the most sophisticated copper objects from all of the Ancient Near East. In addition to these extraordinary metal objects, the Chalcolithic material record includes zoomorphic and anthropomorphic ossuaries, human statuettes in a variety of forms and media, and some of the earliest preserved textiles. ISAW's exhibition will present objects from all of these categories, providing its audience with a comprehensive view of this seminal period in Ancient Near Eastern history.



Measuring and Mapping Space Lecture Series

October 4, 11am

Gallery Talk: Curatorial Dialog

Tom Elliott, ISAW, and Roberta Casagrande-Kim, Guest Curator

October 10

Ptolemy's Map of the World

Alexander Jones, ISAW

November 14

To Hell and Back: Travels and Geographies of Roman Hades

Roberta Casagrande-Kim, Guest Curator

December 19

What Can the Peutinger Map Tell Us About Roman Cartography?

Richard Talbert, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

All lectures are held in the Lecture Hall and are open to the public. Admission closes 10 minutes after the scheduled start time.

Additional details may be found on our website: isaw.nyu.edu/exhibitions/space

Above: Askos, Terracotta
South Italy, third century BCE
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Frederic H. Betts, 1911: 11.43

Left: Ptolemy, *Geographia*
Folios 56 verso–57 recto (Part II, pages 2 and 3),
World Map
Manuscript, Florence ca. 1460
Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations:
MA 097S

RESEARCH & TEACHING

Tracing Nomadism's Development in Iran

D.T. Potts

One of the leitmotifs of Near Eastern archaeology over the past few decades has been nomadism. This has cropped up in many different contexts, from the Negev to the Iranian Plateau, and in many different time periods. The sub-text to much of what has been written is essentially that we, as archaeologists, were too pre-occupied with excavating great monuments and cities to concern ourselves with the allegedly large number of often undocumented, hence invisible, nomads who also contributed their share — through livestock and secondary products like milk or wool — to the rise of complex civilizations. Had we been more observant, we would have realized this long ago. Even though nomads are notoriously difficult to detect in the archaeological record, it is not because they didn't exist. They just didn't leave palpable traces. Even when physical, archaeological evidence of their presence cannot be adduced, we must have faith in their existence, in all periods from the Chalcolithic (some would say the Neolithic) onwards, despite the fact that science is not normally associated with acts of faith.

In my own case, I came to this topic through my work in the Mamasani region of western Fars province (Iran), an area considered by some scholars unsuited to sedentary settlement. Surveys in the valleys between Kazerun and Gachsaran brought to light numerous mounded sites, many of them with long histories of occupation, sometimes spanning 6,000 years. These were the sedentary villages of settled farming communities, not the remains of nomads. This prompted me, about five years ago, to undertake an investigation into the entire history of nomadism in Iran, from its earliest manifestations to the modern era. Why I felt compelled to follow the story of nomadism in Iran right up to the present day is easily explained. Not a few archaeologists have written, with great vehemence, about the fact that, in their opinion, there is no reason to believe that the behavior and lifeways of nomads of the modern day differed markedly from those of the prehistoric past. Therefore, insights drawn from ethnographic studies of current or recent nomadic groups in Iran, like the Qashqa'i or Bakhtiari, ought to provide keys to understanding ancient nomadism.

The result of my investigations have now been compiled into a book, finished last semester at ISAW, entitled *Nomadism in Iran: From Antiquity to the Modern Era*, which will be published next year by Oxford University Press. The book is anything but concordant with prevailing views, at least as far as Iran is concerned. My reading suggests that the 'evidence' of prehistoric nomadism is flimsy, not to say non-existent. Sherd scatters on hillsides, shallow sites (which often end up having meters of deposit), locations in areas today frequented by nomads — all of these have been cited as 'evidence'. My contention is that, far from representing evidence of nomadism, this sort of material more likely reflects traces of herders who were themselves members of sedentary village communities. Herds and flocks of goat and sheep have been kept in villages all over Iran for many millennia, but the standard pattern of grazing has dictated that only a few members of each community, shepherds and herders accom-



Chief of the Sagwand
"Sartip Khan Tipa,"
by C.J. Edmonds,
1917-1918; courtesy
Royal Geographical
Society with the
Institute of British
Geographers

panied their herds and flocks on migration, to higher elevations with cooler temperatures in the summer, and to lower elevations with warmer temperatures in the winter. This has nothing to do with the more extensive sort of nomadism associated with the Bakhtiari and Qashqa'i of recent centuries. Herodotus distinguished between Persian tribes he considered sedentary agriculturalists and those he called nomads, and references to 'kurds', a generic term for herders, became increasingly common in the Sasanian and early Islamic era. It was not, however, until the eleventh century AD, when Turkmen tribes entered Iran from the north, leading to the establishment of the Saljuq dynasty, that nomadism on a large scale came to Iran. This trend increased markedly with the Mongol invasion, and really accelerated from 1500 onwards when thousands of Turkmen rallied behind Shah Isma'il, founder of the Safavid dynasty, and eventually conquered all of Iran. These Turkmen, whose ancestors had originated in Central Asia, in fact moved into Iran from Turkey and northern Syria. They were deployed in many different parts of the region, assigned pasturage and moved (deported) to the northeastern frontier where they formed a bulwark against potential invasion by the Uzbeks. By the nineteenth century

Shahsevan chiefs and tribesmen,
by Morgan Phillips Price, 1912; courtesy
Royal Geographical
Society with the
Institute of British
Geographers



Western travellers estimated that no less than half of Iran's population was nomadic. And when archaeologists began to pay attention to Iranian nomads in the mid- to late-twentieth century, they assumed these groups had always been where they then were, had always lived as they then lived, and completely ignored both the background of their arrival, and the vicissitudes they had undergone in the twentieth century — forced sedentarization, mandatory schooling, increasing production for the market, altered migration routes due to the loss of their former grazing lands at the hands of the government, and the list goes on. Nomadism in Iran has a long, varied and fascinating history, but it is not an organic development, an integral part of Iranian prehistory prior to the first millennium BC, when Herodotus first wrote of Persian nomadic tribes.

Epigraphic Survey of the Mardin Region, Southeast Turkey

Robert Hoyland

The limestone mountain range in southeast Turkey that lies immediately to the east of the upper reaches of the River Tigris has a history stretching back millennia. The Assyrians called it Kashieri and frequently fought for control of it with the Mittani, Hurrians and sundry Aramaean tribes in the late second and early first millennium BC.

Moving on a few centuries we find it still a contested land, coveted by the Roman and Persian empires. It is a harsh but beautiful place and this, plus the degree of protection afforded by its elevation (900-1,400 meters), enticed considerable numbers of Christian solitaries to make it their home. Once they had vanquished the demons said to live there and won over its

natives to the virtues of the faith, the mountain range, now known as Tur 'Abdin ("Mountain of the Worshippers"), became one of the foremost centers of Christian monasticism.

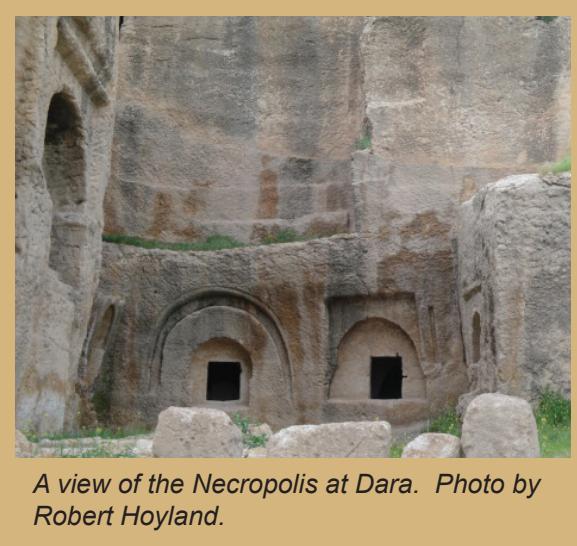
Still today it shelters a few functioning monasteries, and in its heyday there were said to have been thousands of monks, whether in caves or convents. These holy men coexisted with peasants and nomadic pastoralists, some of whom occasionally founded dynasties, such as the Marwanid Kurds (990-1085) based at Diyarbakir and the Artukid Turkmens at Mardin (1106-1409).

All these different peoples have left mementos of their stay in the form of inscriptions on stone.

A project directed by the Mardin Archaeological Museum in Turkey aims to record these writings and as a part of this project Dr Andrew Palmer (Munster) and I, plus a small team of willing helpers, are publishing the Greek, Syriac and Arabic inscriptions of the region.

Last Spring, we selected two sites for prospection. The first was the mighty Byzantine city of Dara, which was built on the orders of Emperor Anastasius (491-518 AD) to serve as a forward base for the empire after their loss of Nisibis (modern Nusaybin on the Turkish-Syrian border) to the Persians. The limestone for the construction of the city was cut from nearby outcrops.

Once they ceased to be useful as quarries they were employed as necropolises, since their smooth rock faces and the relatively soft limestone made it easy to carve tombs from them. The Turkish authorities had cleared one of the



A view of the Necropolis at Dara. Photo by Robert Hoyland.

necropolises of some fifteen feet of earth a couple of years previously and exposed numerous tombs, many adorned with inscriptions. In total, we collected around forty new Greek texts and twenty-five Syriac ones, attesting to the deaths of local residents from the sixth to the eighth centuries AD.

Next we moved on to the village of Ma'arre, at the southern end of the route that led from Nisibis to the town of Midyat, which was conquered by Assurnasirpal in 879 BC. Ma'arre started out as a small agricultural settlement of cave dwellings, but seems to have enjoyed a rise in prosperity around 1100 AD, when it became common to add vaulted chambers to the caves and to commemorate this by placing on the ceiling or walls a message in plaster. The messages are in Arabic or Syriac or both, and convey the name of the architect and of the one who commissioned the work, and sometimes a note about some local event before giving a valediction. They are simple texts, but give us a little window onto the life of this rural community over the past millennium.

Settlements in the Shadow of Fortresses in Azerbaijan

Emily Hammer

Visiting Assistant Professor at ISAW

In the Late Bronze Age (1500-1150 BC) and Iron Age (1150 BC- AD 300), stone fortresses dotted hilltops and rock outcrops in the highlands of eastern Turkey, northwestern Iran, and the south Caucasus (modern Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia). Fortresses are frequently the most highly visible ruins of any ancient period in this region and are indicative of the first emergence of territorial polities. Large populations living in agricultural plains below fortresses would have been needed to provide the labor necessary to construct and maintain them. However, almost all archaeological work in the region has focused on excavation of elite and administrative areas within the fortresses themselves. Little is known about the domes-

tic settlements that must have been associated with these fortresses or their inhabitants.

Who were the people that lived in the shadows of fortresses? In particular, were they sedentary agriculturalists, as archaeologists have long assumed, or were they seasonally mobile pastoralists? What was the political relationship between these people and elites residing within the fortress walls? These are the questions that drive my current fieldwork in Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan, which is an outgrowth of my previous research on mobile pastoralists in southeastern Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Nakhchivan (Naxçivan), a small, semi-autonomous exclave of the Republic of Azerbaijan located

between Armenia and Iran, is one of the least archaeologically explored areas of the Middle East and South Caucasus regions. Over two summers (2012, 2013), the fieldwork I have conducted there has revealed a multiple fortress-settlement complex that offers the opportunity to examine ancient fortress communities. Our team has shown that the dominant fortress on the plain was part of a settlement complex consisting of two fortresses and a domestic settlement, all of which may have been surrounded by a wall enclosing at least 1,210 acres. The size of the enclosed area is particularly significant: in the South Caucasus, settlements of pre-Medieval periods rarely encompass more than 25 acres, including their fortification walls.

In order to find the settlement complex and identify the domestic areas in the shadows of the two fortresses (Oğlanqala and Qızqala, meaning "boy's castle" and "maiden's castle" in Azerbaijani) our team had to use various survey methods. Some features, such as parts of the surrounding wall, can be identified by carefully examining high-resolution satellite imagery. We frequently use both modern color imagery from Google Earth as well as old black and white satellite imagery from the 1960s and 1970s, which shows some features that have been destroyed since that time. Settlements associated with fortresses are most likely to lie in the valleys or plains below them, but these areas also have been transformed in recent decades by Soviet "land amelioration" programs and decades of mechanized agriculture. Sometimes this transformation is so complete that settlement areas can only be found by mapping the distribution of pottery sherds on the ground surface in fallow fields and along irrigation canals.

The large settlement between Oğlanqala and Qızqala was partially visible to us because it had been transected by a ditch dug adjacent to a modern irrigation canal and because portions of the settlement area had been destroyed by bulldozer activity in an adjacent gravel quarry. A large part of our fieldwork in 2013 involved documenting the features (walls, floors, and pits) that are visible in the stratigraphy exposed by the ditch and the bulldozer cuts, collecting pottery that has eroded out of this area, and taking samples for carbon-14 dating. On the basis of our work thus far, we can already say that the settlement below Oğlanqala and Qızqala was inhabited for at least 7,000 years and that the site in that period of time accumulated at least 11 meters of cultural stratigraphy. The bulldozers and ditch have undoubtedly destroyed one of the best-preserved portions of this important settlement. However, this destruction also allowed us to collect an enormous amount of information about the size, character, and chronology of the site in the span of only a few weeks.

Our work thus far only represents the first of many steps towards answering our research questions. In the coming years, my collaborators, Lauren Ristvet (University of Pennsylvania) and Hilary Gopnik (Emory University), and I plan to carry out a research program focused on understanding the identity and subsistence strategies of the people living in the settlement complex as well as their regional trade connections and political relationship with elites living within the fortress walls. We have the additional goal of encouraging gender diversity within the local academic community by recruiting female Azerbaijani and American graduate students to join our team.

Field team documenting walls visible in the ditch that transects the settlement below Qızqala fortress. Left to right: Vəli Baxşəliyev, Emily Hammer, Hilary Gopnik, Jennifer Swerida, Nilüfər Ağayeva. Photo by Lara Fabian, July 2013.



LECTURES & CONFERENCES

Seventh Annual Leon Levy Lecture

Sponsored by The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation

Historical Perspectives on Sumerian Vistas

Piotr Michalowski

George G. Cameron Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

November 7, 2013

The cultures of ancient Mesopotamia and surrounding regions are often designated, in the West at least, as the “cradle of civilization.” Such generalizations may seem attractive, but they often distract us from the complexities of history and obscure the differences between ancient cultures. The two major cultures of the region, Egypt and Mesopotamia, followed very different developmental paths with relatively little mutual influence and many of the resemblances that moderns perceive resulted from the use of similar technologies and not from the diffusion of ideas. The underpinnings of Mesopotamian culture were developed in the fourth and third millennia BCE, and this is relatively late in view of the antiquity of human occupation of the Near East. These foundations are often labeled as “Sumerian” but this ethno-linguistic term has become suspect of late. This lecture will explore certain aspects of these “Sumerian” foundations, from politics to language and literature and offer new perspectives on the development of heterogeneous early Mesopotamian civilizations.

About the Speaker: Piotr Michalowski is the George G. Cameron Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations at the University of Michigan. He is an expert on ancient Mesopotamia, with special emphasis on the earlier periods. He has written on languages, literature, politics, society and history and has explored a variety of subjects including poetics, geographical and historical imagination, as well as myth and music. His most recent book is *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur: Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom* (2011). He is currently president of both the International Association of Assyriologists and the American Oriental Society.

Additional funding provided by The Evelyn Sharp Foundation and the Leon Levy Foundation. This event is free and open to the public. Seating is limited; registration is required to 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

Organized by Karen Rubinson, ISAW Research Associate

December 14, 2013

Now in its second year, this colloquium brings together local scholars with widely varied interests in the ancient South Caucasus in order to share updates on current research and to con-

sider on-going and one-time activities that will further the study and knowledge of the region through the synergy of the group. The meeting is by invitation only.

Stay informed!

Get the latest updates on conferences, exhibitions, and lecture information by joining ISAW's weekly email list. Join the list by

contacting us at isaw@nyu.edu. For additional information and conference schedules, visit our website:

isaw.nyu.edu/events

ISAW Public Lecture Series Fall 2013

October 8

The Forgotten Kingdom of Tuwana in Central Anatolia

Lorenzo d'Alfonso, ISAW

AIA Lecture, 6:30 pm

October 15

Transport Amphorae and Mediterranean Trade 400-250 BCE: A View from Cyrenaica, Libya

Kristian Göransson, Swedish Institute of

Classical Studies in Rome

October 22

Global Implications in Local Life: Syrian Emar and Social History

Daniel Fleming, ISAW Visiting Research

Scholar

October 24

Writing Among the Illiterate: Modes of Text Production in Hittite Society

Theo van den Hout, University of Chicago

October 29

Hittite Religion and Ancient Greece: Seven Types of Relationship

Ian Rutherford, ISAW Visiting Research Scholar

November 7

Seventh Annual Leon Levy Lecture
sponsored by The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation

Historical Perspectives on Sumerian Vistas

Piotr Michalowski, University of Michigan

*Registration required at isaw@nyu.edu

November 19

Heishuiguo: A Transit Hub on the Prehistoric Silk Road

Liangren Zhang, ISAW Visiting Research

Scholar

December 3

A Scientific Revolution Comes to Archaeology and History at Harvard

Michael McCormick, Harvard University

December 11

An Introduction to Jewish Literature from Late Antiquity

Yehudah Cohn, ISAW Research Associate

For information on exhibition-related lectures, please refer to page 9.

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.

Upcoming Lectures

January 28

Emily Hammer
Visiting Assistant
Professor

February 4

Adam Schwartz
Visiting Assistant
Professor

February 25

Thelma Thomas
Visiting Research
Scholar

Fifth Annual M. I. Rostovtzeff Lecture Series

Displacements: Migration, Mobility and Material Culture in the West Mediterranean

Peter van Dommelen

Joukowsky Family Professor of Archaeology and Professor of Anthropology,
Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World, Brown University

March 10

Out of Place: Migrations Past and Present

March 17

Going Local

March 24

Rural Connections

March 31

Connected Communities

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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 right, there are links for 'Jobs', 'Contribute', 'News', and 'Log In'. A search bar is located to the right of these links. The main header reads 'INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD' and 'NEW YORK UNIVERSITY'. On the left side, there is a vertical navigation menu with the letters 'I', 'S', 'A', and 'W' in a column, and a list of categories: 'ABOUT ISAW', 'ACADEMIC PROGRAMS', 'EVENTS', 'EXHIBITIONS', 'LIBRARY', 'RESEARCH', 'PUBLICATIONS', 'ONLINE RESOURCES', and 'PEOPLE'. Below the menu, the address '15 East 84th St. New York, NY 10028' and phone/fax numbers are listed. The main content area features a photograph of a building facade. To the right of the photo is the 'Exhibition: Measuring and Mapping Space' section, which describes the current exhibition and its focus on ancient geographic knowledge. Below this is the 'Upcoming Events' section, listing two events: '22 October 2013: Global Implications in Local Life: Syrian Emjar and Social History' by Daniel Fleming, and '24 October 2013: Writing Among the Illiterate: Modes of Text Production in Hittite Society' by Theo van den Houli. On the right side of the main content area, there is a 'current exhibition' section featuring a circular image of a globe and the text 'Gregorio Dotti, La Sfera Folio 14 verso, Florence 1450 CE. The Morgan Library and Museum, MS M.721.' At the bottom of the page, there are links for 'NYU Home', 'Privacy Policy', 'Site Map', and 'RSS Feed'.