

# ISAW Newsletter 12

## Spring 2015



INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD  
New York University

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# FROM THE DIRECTOR

It's January, so I write from the Dakhla Oasis in Egypt, practically the most remote part of that land whether pharaonic or Roman—or even today, when it has no air service (the nearest is in Kharga, two and a half hours away) and takes over ten hours to reach by road under good conditions. Once upon a time, such distance would have shielded me from the daily business of ISAW administration, but those days are gone. I awake most days to the stuffed in-box produced by the penchant in New York to send me urgent messages, preferably with bulky attachments, at the end of the working day, when I am long asleep. And the inter-session is, if anything, busier than most times, as we read graduate applications and the still more numerous—252 this year—visiting research scholar applications, trying to sort out the most competitive, coordinate rankings, and draw up our shortlists.

Dreadful and frustrating though my feeble DSL connection in Dakhla is (I remind myself to pound the table, not the computer), I am well connected compared to Sören Stark during his field season in Uzbekistan, about which you can read here (p. 7). And other members of the faculty periodically scatter across the globe in the course of their research as well (Dan Potts in Armenia, p. 6). We are in our own way a very global institute, and of course NYU prides itself on its character as a global network university. We are in the midst of renovating our web site, which will improve our ability to stream lectures or mount good digital avatars of our exhibitions to the world. But ISAW is also an intensely local community, within our walls on East 84th Street. We talk to one another over lunch or coffee, we bump into visitors in the exhibition, we discuss ISAW's research over a cup of hot cider with friends, we sit next to interesting people at lectures. In January's Fireside Chat, I presented my work on ancient graffiti with guest curator Roberta Casagrande-Kim, discussing the topic with supporters of diverse interests and backgrounds. The event was successful in connecting our friends with the community and work of ISAW, and we look forward to more Fireside Chats in upcoming months.

Technology can do a lot to keep us connected when we are not in the building; we interview prospective graduate students or staff members by Skype, and faculty members are telepresent at meetings via our videoconferencing system, the most exotic so far no doubt being Robert Hoyland from Addis Ababa. But how far can such telepresence go without undermining the sense of community? If it is better than nothing, it is not really a substitute for physical presence, with all of the serendipity that this fosters. Remote contact tends to be agenda-driven rather than spontaneous. The technology improves steadily, but it is hard to see that distinction disappearing, even with Tom Elliott's dream robotic avatar roaming the halls of ISAW. (Indeed, an absent but bossy director might imagine having a director-robot surveying the building and its inhabitants more effectively than he could in person, not to mention sitting in for him at faculty meetings; but I digress.)

Leaving fantasy aside, however, the question of how to balance the demands for a global role, lots of travel, and extended time in the field, that research and teaching put on us, with our roles as members of a resident community is not likely to be solved soon. It is not unique to ISAW, only perhaps more acute than in most humanities institutes. (Physicists are long since used to the situation.) It is a problem born of our wealth of opportunities and technologies, and we will have to put our creativity to work in achieving a humane way of scholarly life that seizes opportunities but makes them work in the context of community.

Roger Bagnall  
Leon Levy Director

*Cover photo by the Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology  
Courtesy of Richard Zettler, Associate Curator-in-Charge of Near East Section*

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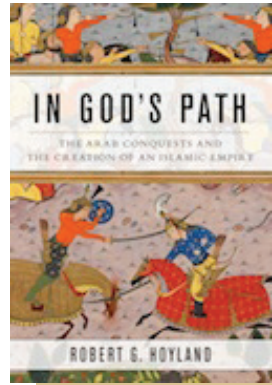
# ISAW News and Publications

## Recent Publications

A selection of 2014-2015 academic year publications by members of the ISAW community

### Faculty and Staff

**Robert Hoyland**  
*In God's Path: the Arab Conquests and the First Islamic Empire.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.



Ed., *The Late Antique World of Early Islam: Muslims among Christians and Jews in the East Mediterranean.* Princeton: Darwin Press, 2014.

Ed., *Iran in the Early Islamic Period. Politics, Culture, Administration and Public Life between the Arab and the Seljuk Conquests.* Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Ed., with B. Sadeghi, et al. *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone.* Leiden: Brill, 2014.

### Junli Diao

“Fu hao,” “fu hao,” “fuHao,” or “fu Hao?” A Cataloger’s Navigation of an Ancient Chinese Woman’s Name.” *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly* 53.1 (2014): 71-87.

with Mirtha A. Hernández. “Transferring Catalogue Legacies into Descriptive Metadata Creation in Digital Projects: Catalogers’ Perspective.” *Journal of Library Metadata* 14.2 (2014): 130-145.

## South Caucasus Colloquium

### Karen Rubinson

#### ISAW Research Associate

Twenty scholars – students and professors – from New York and the nearby region – gathered at ISAW in December for the South Caucasus Colloquium, an opportunity to informally share current research, exchange information on hard-to-find resources, ask for input on research questions and meet others in disparate fields who work in the same, sometimes challenging, geographic region. Among those attending were historians, archaeologists, art historians, archaeozoologists,

### Exhibition Catalogue

Eds. J.Y. Chi and P. Azara. *From Ancient to Modern: Archaeology and Aesthetics.* New York: Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University and Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming 2015.

### Research Associates

**Gilles Bransbourg**  
“The Later Roman Empire.” In *Fiscal Regimes and the Political Economy of Premodern States*, eds. A. Monson and W. Scheidel, 258-281. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

“Currency debasement and public debt management at the time of the 2nd Punic War.” In *Essays in Honor of R. B. Witschonke*, eds. P. V. Alfen, M. Amandry and G. Bransbourg. New York: American Numismatic Society, 2015.

### Judith A. Lerner

“Arthur Upham Pope and Sasanian Art.” In *Arthur Upham Pope and a New Survey of Persian Art*, ed. Y. Kadoi. Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2015.

“Seals.” In *Herat: Collections of the Museum and Archive in Herat, 'Areia Antiqua' II*, eds. U. Franke and M. Müller-Wiener. Berlin: Museum für Islamische Kunst, forthcoming 2015.

### Naomi F. Miller

“Gordion.” In *The Archaeology of Food: An Encyclopedia*, eds. M. Beaudry and K. Metheny. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, forthcoming 2015.

with H. Pittman. “Puabi’s Diadem(s): The Deconstruction of a Mesopotamian Icon.” In *From Ancient to Modern: Archaeology and Aesthetics*, eds. J. Chi and P. Azara, 106-131. New York: Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University and Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming 2015.

scholars of religions, languages, and genetics, whose research time-frames ranged from the Mesolithic through early Islamic times. Although we all have our field-specific professional meetings, the unique environment of the South Caucasus – three countries, a robustly varied geography and a multiplicity of languages – means that the Colloquium provides an opportunity for shared knowledge relevant to our many different fields. Although prehistoric and historic boundaries of cultures and traditions shifted often, the geologic and geographic constraints of the region yield many interesting comparative resonances through time.

### Jocelyn Penny Small

Review of “The Etruscan World.” ed. J. MacIntosh Turfa. *Etruscan Studies* 17.1 (2014): 100-102.

### Visiting Research Scholars

#### Jonathan Ben-Dov (2010-11)

“Early Texts of the Torah: Revisiting the Greek Scholarly Context.” *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 4 (2013): 210-234.

with L. Doering. *The Construction of Time in Antiquity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2015.

#### Ari Bryen (2008-09)

*Violence in Roman Egypt: A Study in Legal Interpretation.* Empire and After. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

“Martyrdom, Rhetoric, and the Politics of Procedure.” *Classical Antiquity* 33 (2014): 243-248.

“Law in Many Pieces.” *Classical Philology* 104 (2014): 346-365.

#### Matteo Compareti (2013-14)

“Coronation and Nawruz: A Note on the Missing King at Afrāsyāb.” In *Sogdians, Their Precursors, Contemporaries and Heirs. Based on Proceedings of Conference “Sogdians at Home and Abroad” Held in memory of Boris Il’ich Marshak (1933-2006)*. 174-189. St. Petersburg: State Hermitage Publishers, 2013.

“Sogdiana and the ‘Others’: Specimens of External Borrowings in Pre-Islamic Sogdian Art.” In *Cultural Transfers in Central Asia. Before, During and After the Silk Road*, eds. M. Espagne, et al., 74-79. Samarkand: IICAS, 2013.

“Two Seal Impressions from Käfer Qal’a (Samarkand) and the Representations of Iranian Divinities.” *Journal of Persianate Studies* 6 (2013): 127-142.

“Teratologia fantastica in Subcaucasia. La migrazione di motivi decorative tra l’Iran e il Caucaso.” In *Al crocevia delle civiltà. Ricerche su Caucaso e Asia Centrale*, eds. A. Ferrari and D. Guizzo, 11-50. Venezia: Edizioni Ca’ Foscari, 2014.

For example, this year evidence of metallurgical sources and traditions were discussed both by a graduate student who has done survey and excavation in Georgia and by a professor who is using modern mining maps to guide a search for ancient metal use in Armenia. These discussions provided immediately useful information for a participating numismatist who works with Islamic materials. Such serendipitous exchanges (no formal papers or arranged sessions here!) are what make the South Caucasus Colloquium such a successful undertaking and such exchanges exemplify the mission of ISAW.

“Understanding Central Asian Zoroastrianism through Sogdian Art Forms.” *Fezana Journal* 28. 2 (2014): 49-54.

“Iranian Themes in the Afrasyab Hall of the Ambassadors Paintings.” *Fezana Journal* 28.2 (2014): 55-60.

#### Sabine R. Huebner (2007-08)

Ed., with Beatrice Caseau. *Inheritance, Law and Religions in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds.* Paris: Collège de France, 2014.

“It is a difficult matter to be wronged by strangers, but to be wronged by kin is worst of all” - Inheritance and Conflict in Graeco-Roman Egypt.” In *Inheritance, Law and Religions in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, ed with B. Caseau, 99-108. Paris: Collège de France, 2014.

“A Cross-Cultural Approach to Succession and Inheritance in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds.” In *Inheritance, Law and Religions in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, ed with B. Caseau, 5-8. Paris: Collège de France, 2014.

“Pères et fils dans l’antiquité tardive - L’expérience de Basile de Césarée.” In *Les réseaux familiaux Antiquité tardive et Moyen Âge*, in memoriam A. Laiou et È. Patlagean, ed. B. Caseau, 45-68. Paris: 2012.

Review of the Oxford Classical Dictionary. *Historische Zeitschrift* (2014).

Review of M. Schnizlein, “Patchworkfamilien in der Späantike.” *Klio* 96.2 (2014).

#### Anna Lanaro (2013-14)

“A Goddess among Storm-Gods. The Stele of Tavşantepe and the Landscape Monuments of Southern Cappadocia.” *Anatolian Studies* 65 (2015).

#### Jinyu Liu (2007-08)

*An Introduction to Roman History* (in Chinese). Beijing: Peking University Press, 2014.



Caucasus mountains, Black Sea, and Caspian Sea  
Photo courtesy of Jacques Descloitres, MODIS Land Rapid Response Team

## Christine Proust (2009-10)

Ed., with A. Bernard. *Scientific Sources and Teaching Contexts throughout History: Problems and Perspectives*. Dordrecht, Heidelberg, New York, London: Springer, 2014.

“Does a Master always Write for his Students? Some Evidence from Old Babylonian Scribal Schools.” In *Scientific Sources and Teaching Contexts throughout History: Problems and Perspectives*, eds. A. Bernard and C. Proust. 69-94. Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London, New York: Springer, 2014.

with A. Bernard and M. Ross. “History of mathematics education in Classical Antiquity.” In *Handbook on the History of Mathematics Education*, eds. A. Karp and G. Schubring. 27-53. New York: Springer, 2014.

“Mathematical Lists: from Archiving to Innovation.” In *Tradition and Innovation in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 57th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, ed. A. Archi. 215-223. Rome: Eisenbrauns, 2014.

“A tree-structured list in a mathematical series text from Mesopotamia.” In *Text, Textual Acts and the History of Science*, eds. K. Chemla and J. Virbel. Springer, forthcoming 2015.

“Des listes pour apprendre, résoudre, classer, archiver, explorer ou inventer.” In *The Frontiers of Ancient Science: Essays in Honor of Heinrich von Staden*, eds. K.D. Fischer and B. Holmes. 491-510. Berlin: De Gruyter, forthcoming 2015.

## ISAW to begin archaeological investigations in Armenia

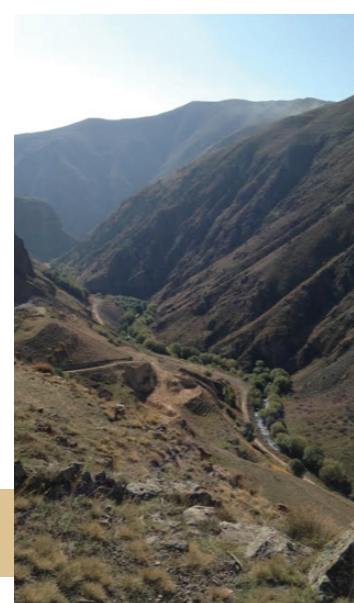
**Daniel T. Potts**

**Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology and History**

In early October, 2014, Dan Potts travelled to Yerevan where he met with Dr. Pavel Avetisyan, Director of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the

National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, Dr. Mkrtich Zardaryan and other Armenian colleagues. In addition to delivering a lecture at the Institute, Dan was able to make a short trip to the southern province of Syunik in company with Dr. Zardaryan, a Clas-

sical archaeologist by training and a veteran of nearly a decade of fieldwork in and around Sissian. From Sissian it is less than 200 kms to the Iranian border, and throughout its history this southernmost part of the Caucasus had many close ties to the cultures and ancient states established in northwestern Iran. This is also an area rich in both precious and base metals, with a number of active gold, silver and copper mines currently in operation. Syunik has enormous potential, particularly since it is poorly known in comparison with the areas closer to Lake Sevan and the capital Yerevan, or with the northern part of Armenia. ISAW and the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding for collaborative research and Dan and Mkrtich Zardaryan are scheduled to conduct an initial season of survey in summer, 2015, with a view to identifying one or more sites for a major excavation.



Countryside around Sissian in the Syunik area where ISAW will be working

with R. Middeke-Conlin. “Interest, price, and profit: an overview of mathematical economics in YBC 4698.” *Cuneiform Digital Library Journal* 3 (2014). [http://cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdlj/2014/cdlj2014\\_003.html](http://cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdlj/2014/cdlj2014_003.html).

“Mathématiques en Mésopotamie.” *Images des Maths* (2014). <http://images.math.cnrs.fr/Mathematiques-en-Mesopotamie.html>.

## Caroline Sauvage (2009-10)

“Spindles and Distaffs: Late Bronze and Early Iron Age eastern Mediterranean use of solid and tapered ivory/bone shafts.” In *Interdisciplinary Studies in Textiles and Dress in Antiquity*, eds. M.-L. Nosch and M. Harlow, 184-226. Oxford: Oxbow books, 2014.

“Les relations internationales dans la méditerranée orientale (XVe-Xe siècles).” *Egypte, Afrique & Orient* 76 (2014): 19-28.

“Notices of objects 15134A, 15134B, 76873.01, 91196, 91197.01-02, 91194, 91195, 76673, 76698.05, 91331, 76704, 76714+76882.05, 76715, 81206, 81214, 91330.” In *La Grèce des origines, entre rêve et archéologie*, eds. A. Bouchet et al. Paris: RMN, 2014.

with R. Hawley and D. Pardee. “The Scribe Thab’ilu as attested in the Epigraphic Finds from the 5th Season of Excavations at Ras Shamra.” *Ugarit Forschungen* 44: 384-411.

“Nouvelle réflexion sur le dépôt aux 80 jarres de Minet el-Beida.” In *Hommage à Yves Calvet*, eds. M. Al-Maqdissi and et al. Leuven, forthcoming 2015.

## Between Steppe and Sown: Archaeology in the Borderlands of Bukhārā

**Sören Stark, Assistant Professor of Central Asian Art and Archaeology**

The archaeological investigation of the “long wall” of Bukhārā and questions of the role of the frontier in an oasis context is the research objective of a field project jointly conducted by ISAW and the Institute of Archaeology of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences in Samarkand that I lead. In the course of four field seasons we have prospected and documented all remaining sections of the “long wall”—once running at a total length of at least 300 miles and encircling the entire oasis—including about two dozen fortified border towns, fortresses, forts and watch-towers, directly associated with this “long wall”. In order to better understand the creation, the development over time, and the ultimate purpose of this impressive defense system, excavations have been carried out at numerous spots, both at the wall itself and adjoining fortified sites.

The 2014 field team consisted of scholars and students from Germany, China, Russia, Uzbekistan, and the U.S. We finished our excavation at Ganch-tepa, a small sized 5-9th century A.D. border fortress. Simultaneously we started new excavations at the citadel site of a former border town, now called Khoja-Ajvandi-tepa. In addition, a small team carried out a systematic survey of sites northeast of Bukhārā, along the narrow stretch of the Zerafshan rivers towards Karmina and Dabūsiya, documenting ca. 60 new sites: fortified towns, rural castles (with or without adjacent settlements), border fortresses, and kurgans (nomadic burial tumuli). This was complemented by an UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) based aerial survey of sites that had been visited and studied in the previous years.

Our final work at Ganch-tepa ultimately confirmed our hypothesis that this castle was initially centered on a large open courtyard. This is a type of castle hitherto undocumented in Sogdiana—but well known from further south: late-antique Bactria/Tokharestān. Perhaps the introduction of this type of castle belongs to the larger context of a certain ‘Bactrianisation’ of Sogdian culture during the rule of the Kidarite dynasty (originating from Bactria-Gandhāra), over Sogdiana in the 5th century A.D. Thus, the unusual plan of Ganch-tepa is best explained by assuming that the castle originated as a Kidarite state fortress. But last year’s works also showed that it was soon altered and turned into a rather typical seat of a local aristocrat (dihqān), with the courtyard turned into a central reception room and surrounding corridors, once decorated with wall paintings (small fragments of which we found in 2012). Long after the building had fallen into ruins this reception room and the central courtyard below was partly destroyed by a system of tunnels uncovered

during the 2014 season. A coin of Muhammad II Khwārezm-shāh suggests that these tunnels were and possibly created in the time around the Mongol invasion—perhaps as a hide out.

Simultaneously we started excavating at the site Khoja-Ajvandi-tepa (named after a local Muslim saint whose mazār is situated nearby, one of the most important in Bukhārā) at the eastern fringes of the oasis. This site of a former border town caught our attention prior to excavation because of its circular citadel, which is unique in Bukhārā. During our first season we exposed a mighty outer 5th century A.D. ring of fortifications in an excellent state of preservation, with rectangular towers at regular intervals, featuring a checkerboard pattern of arrow slits spread over the entire façade. The resulting polygonal plan of the citadel is unique in all of Western Central Asia for this period and still awaits explanation. As we continued to excavate we were surprised to find this outer ring of fortifications was preceded by a comparable polygonal inner ring of fortification with rectangular towers, anticipating most architectural features of the outer ring wall, but—judging from the oldest ceramic material from the site—dating to the 4th century A.D. The fortifications of this older phase appear also in an excellent state of preservation making them one of the best-preserved 4th century A.D. fortifications in this part of Central Asia (fig. 1). It appears the site has great potential to substantially improve our knowledge about one of the most enigmatic periods in the history of Western Central Asia: the transitional era between antiquity and the early Middle Ages that witnessed substantial upheaval and change in the course of the ‘Hunnic invasions’ into Sogdiana.

In cooperation with a team of specialists from the Archaeocopter project at the University of Applied Sciences in Dresden, we conducted an UAV based aerial survey. The first aerial survey using light and low-cost UAVs (DJI Phantoms) in this part of Central Asia, one of our main objectives was to test the feasibility of aerial vehicles under the particularly difficult wind



Fig. 1

conditions in this area. The results were excellent: During only five days we were able to document a total of 12 border fortresses (ranging from 0.5 to 30 ha), plus the famous 11th c. mosque at Degaron (fig. 2). In the coming months our colleagues in Dresden will be generating detailed 3D models for each of them.

## Exploring the First Capital of the Mongol World Empire and its Hinterland

Jan Bemann, ISAW Visiting Research Scholar

For the past decade I've been leading a team from Bonn University focused on the archaeology of Mongolia. Following an invitation of the Mongolian Academy of Science we started to explore the first capital of the Mongolian World Empire, Karakorum, which is said to be founded by Genghis Khan in 1220 and was expanded and enclosed with a wall by Ögödei Khan in 1235. It is situated in the Orkhon Valley in the heart of modern Mongolia, in an area famous for a couple of impressive monuments of several steppe empires. The Orkhon Valley was given UNESCO World Heritage Site status in 2004. We initiated our first excavation in the center of Karakorum at the intersections of the main roads to get an idea of the extent of settlement debris and the rise and decline of the city. Our key assumption was that the ups and downs of the importance of the city must have left traces in the amount and quality of the building activities and the supply of luxurious goods such as Chinese porcelain. To tackle these questions we organized a large interdisciplinary team consisting of a palaeobotanist, archaeozoologists, historians, archaeometallurgists, a numismatist and several other researchers.

During the last few years we conducted a pedestrian survey in selected areas of the Orkhon Valley, mapped many newly discovered walled enclosures using a drone and a SQUID (superconducting quantum interference device) – a very sensitive magnetometer developed by the Institute of Photonic Technology in Germany. We were impressed by the density and variety of sites in the valley. For example, we investigated a settlement and production site which supplied the capital with building material about 5 km southwest of Karakorum. In the upper Orkhon Valley, close to the river, 13 km south-southwest of the ancient capital, we



Fig. 2

discovered a stone quarry with an inscription in Chinese which testifies that craftsmen from a town near the modern city of Hohhot, Inner Mongolia province in China, were working in the quarry. A complete report of this extraordinary site will be published in the forthcoming volume of the *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology*, which is based at ISAW.

Complementary to the pedestrian survey we realized in cooperation with the German Aerospace Center in Berlin an airborne prospection of 714 km<sup>2</sup> in the middle Orkhon Valley including the two large urban centers Karabalgasun, the capital of the Uyghur empire (744-840), and Karakorum. Now we can prove that the urban complexes are not solitary but are embedded in a network of production sites, residences, signal towers, even farmsteads, and elite cemeteries. These results will dramatically alter the understanding of the nomads as non-civilized people or barbarians. Our research was mainly funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation and the Ministry of Science and Education.

My research at ISAW will be focused on a comparative analysis of the archaeological evidence of the steppe empires in Mongolia. Archaeological investigations of nomadic empires and their urban centers present a critical, yet still rare, subject of scientific inquiry in need of inclusion within broader discussions of urban development, political complexity, and greater world history. Therefore, it is my aim to examine these empires through an integration of the full corpus of archaeological evidence with studies of known historical records within the methodological framework of historical archaeology, comparative analyses and empirical urban theory. Up to now, archaeologists have contributed relatively little to the discussion on steppe empires or urban centers and still less applied themselves to comparative analyses. The methodical approach I apply is the intensive, diachronically comparative study on the basis of primary data of one region.

*Copying an inscription in a stone quarry using a pre-vulcanized full ammonia natural latex*



## At the Intersection of Work, Economy, and Society: Studying the Working Lives of Romans

Elizabeth A. Murphy, ISAW Visiting Assistant Professor

*Lanius et pistor et candelabrarius*: the butcher, and the baker, and the candelabra maker. These trades and hundreds of others are attested on ancient Roman reliefs and in epigraphy. Across the Roman world, craftspeople could be found in a wide range of workshops - from small domestic operations to large-scale ventures employing dozens of individuals. They could also be identified in a wide range of archaeological contexts - on an agricultural estate, in a rural village, in a military fort, in an industrial suburban zone, or in the heart of a large city. As witnesses to daily and seasonal rhythms of work, workshops represent dynamic venues in which individuals mundanely labored; interacted with other workers, customers, and suppliers; defined their own social positions and identities; and in some cases even resided.

My research investigates the material remains of Roman period (1st – 6th c. AD) working lives in the eastern Mediterranean. By studying the locations of production, the techniques of manufacture, as well as the products, my work reconstructs the organization of production in order to pose questions concerning the transmission of technical knowledge, the organization and interrelations of workers, and decision-making strategies concerning workplace economics. By comparing the organizations of different industries it becomes possible to unravel diversity in production practice, and the extent to which organizational practices represent patterned decision-making strategies influenced by structural features of Roman economy and society.

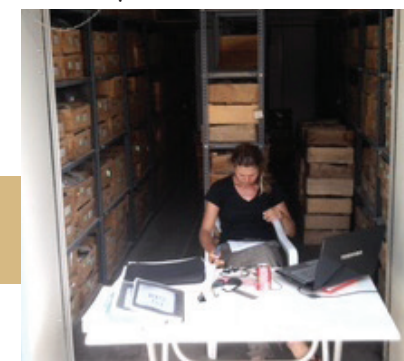
Fieldwork has been central to these studies, and through my continual work with the Sagalassos Ar-

chaeological Research Project (based at the University of Leuven, Belgium), I have excavated and studied the remains of several Roman- and Byzantine-periods pottery workshops at the site of Sagalassos, Turkey. This past summer, this research was extended to consider the relationship between different industries operating within the ancient city, by tracking evidence of: shared resources, transmission of technologies and technical knowledge, and common patterns in the organization of the production process. This fieldwork has begun with the investigation of sites of metal and ceramic production.

I have recently initiated a project analyzing legionary production sites. This research will assess the influence of military supply networks and worker organization on crafts production for the Roman military. Sites specifically operated by the legions are included in this study, and should offer a means to assess how highly regimented contexts of labor organization might impact the production process and the formation of workgroups. This study kicked off in December (2014) at the National Museum of Wales at Cardiff with the analysis of artifact material from the legionary ceramic production site at Holt, Denbighshire.

Through the extraordinary support of the ISAW community and its wonderful resources, my period here is already proving fruitful and has resulted in several articles that are currently under review.

*The working life of an archaeologist: analyzing material at Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project in SW Turkey*



## Prisons in Ancient Mesopotamia

Nicholas Reid, ISAW Visiting Research Scholar

I am currently writing a history of prisons in ancient Mesopotamia. Until the 1970s little thought had been given to the history of prisons. And once they began to be investigated, the ancient Near Eastern evidence was largely overlooked or merely treated through the lenses of biblical data. Many of the issues and concepts of crime and punishment facing our world today can be traced into the proto-historical and early historical record of ancient Mesopotamia. Even ideas, such as reform through caging, that may have been considered relatively recent developments of Western thought were contemplated in the ancient Near East.

The word “prison” is used in translations and editions of ancient Near Eastern texts, but the native terminology and the functions of these institutions have not been considered with sufficient theoretical rigor. The traditional difference between a jail and a prison is that the jail is a holding place until punishment whereas a prison is a place of detention for punishment. Today, correctional facilities primarily hold the convicted, but these same institutions can also be utilized to hold people awaiting trial when bail is not offered or the conditions of bail are not met. Such multi-functional and pragmatic uses of prisons correspond to the early

development of prisons. The editors of the *Oxford History of Prisons* state the cage, which originally served as a place of detention until punishment, began to be used to detain those who had committed offenses that did not deserve to face a form of corporal punishment. The same may be said of prisons in ancient Mesopotamia, as some people were held under guard until a case could be decided, while others were incarcerated as an act of punishment. The evidence of detainment as punishment in early Mesopotamia stretches back to the third millennium B.C. But what is perhaps more surprising about this phenomenon is that such practices are well attested in numerous texts which mention the length of time served, rations, offenses, and various concepts of reform.

The details of prison sentences and the lengths of time served are not readily available in most legal proceedings, but some of the information that is lacking in legal texts can be filled out by administrative documents, which list prisoners spending as little as a few days and as long as three years and five months. Unlike jails in the classical period, where most detained individuals had to seek provision outside of the jail through letter writing and other means, Mesopotamians living under guard typically received rations from official adminis-



*"The Reforms of UruKagina"*  
Photo courtesy of K. Wagonsonner

trative bodies, though at least one prisoner claims in a letter to be starving.

Although many texts leave unstated the actual offenses that led to incarceration, a number of offenses could result in a period of detainment. The "Laws of Ur-Nammu" §3 (ca. 2100-200 B.C.), for example, contemplates a situation where a person is caged for wrongly detaining someone else. Other texts include false claims, inappropriately retaining silver, debt, and flight as acts that result in confinement. The "Reforms of UruKagina" (conventionally dated to the Early Dynastic IIIb Period, ca. 2500-2340 B.C.) refers to debt, misusing correct or setting up false measures, theft, and even murder. Rather than issuing judgment, this royal inscription claims that UruKagina released such prisoners as an act of justice and piety. While it cannot be known if this ruler performed such deeds, ideas about reform extend beyond the prison to the prisoner. A hymn to a prison god claims that the prison is like a womb that gives birth to new life, refines character, and snatches the prisoner from the jaws of death. This reforming nature of prisons can be juxtaposed to the prisoner complaints and their escape attempts, enabling an historical investigation into prisons through numerous textual genres and from the perspectives of the elite and the prisoner. In my upcoming lecture at ISAW, "Mesopotamian Prison Blues," I will be outlining my research relating to this untold story of the history of prisons.

## LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS

### Long-Term Occupation and Seasonal Mobility in Mongolia:

#### A Comparative Analysis of Two Communities

Jean-Luc Houle, Assistant Professor, Western Kentucky University

April 9 at 6pm

An important aspect of the development of more complex forms of social organization was the emergence of larger more integrated communities. These complex societies frequently came into existence after the establishment of face-to-face sedentary agricultural life. However, many mobile pastoralist societies also exhibited complex features of social organization. This presentation compares Bronze and Iron Age settlement data as well as data from burial and ritual sites to try and understand under what circumstances pastoralists in the Khanuy Valley region of central Mongolia man-

aged to develop complex social organizations while it does not seem to have been the case in the Khoton Lake region of western Mongolia.

Preliminary results suggest that environmental conditions and stability of occupation, rather than simply continuity of occupation, played an important role. In addition, findings also suggest a need for caution when interpreting common archaeological indicators of mobility and residential fixedness.

## The Sixth Annual M.I. Rostovtzeff Lecture Series

### *Sumer in the Mesopotamian World: Reading Traditions & Traditions of Reading*

Gonzalo Rubio, Associate Professor of Classics & Ancient Mediterranean Studies, and History, Pennsylvania State University

*Early Dynastic tablet from Fāra (ancient Shuruppak) containing the so-called Tribute List (mid third millennium B.C.E.). Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin, VAT 12653. Photo courtesy of CDLI P010581*



In a distinctively modern understanding, the term Sumerian often appears essentialized (the Sumerian World, Sumerian Art, etc.). This practice, however, reflects a construct, which is at odds with the original sources and stems from conflating linguistic realities and perceived identities. Instead, the civilization that blossomed in the southernmost region of Ancient Mesopotamia can be approached in accordance with categories that attempt to reflect (or at least not to ignore) their own original, explicit and implicit, discourses, inasmuch as they can be reconstructed. Any such reconstruction has to deal primarily with the nature of textual production in Sumerian and constitutes an endeavor defined and defied by the inherent writtenness of these traditions already in the third-millennium BCE.

In this regard, our own reading of the Sumerian corpus and its tradition can be contrasted with the ancient readings enacted in Mesopotamia itself, particularly long after the Sumerian language had become a cultural relic to which only a few scholars and bureaucrats had access.

## Workshops

April 17

*MARGINS Workshop*

Organized by ISAW Visiting Research Scholar Nicholas Reid and graduate student Jonathan Valk, this workshop will investigate the social position and life courses of people at the margins of Ancient Near Eastern society, in order to arrive at a more nuanced picture of life in the Ancient Near East.

May 1

*Ritual and Narrative: Texts in Performance in the Ancient Near East*

Beate Pongratz-Leisten, Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Inspired by theater studies in the eighties and nineties, interdisciplinary research of ethnology, anthropology, religious studies, and historical studies concerned with cultural performance promoted the performative turn by emphasizing physical activity over thought and mind. This move towards action entailed a move away from text. This workshop turns towards a more precise

March 10

*Traditions of Origins: Where Did the Sumerians Come From? And Where Did They All Go?*

March 12

*Origins of Tradition: Literature & Political Theology in Sumer*

March 24

*Reading Early Economy Now: Bureaucracy & Administration in Sumer*

March 26

*Reading Early Cult Then: Sex & the Temple in Mesopotamian Memory*

definition of ritual versus theater and performance and reintroduces the complex relationship between text and performance. It explores the various forms of ritual texts transmitted in ancient Near Eastern literature, the relationship between ritual text and ritual performance.

May 30

*Translating the Past, (re)shaping History?*

Perrine Pilette, ISAW Visiting Research Scholar Christian Late antique and medieval historiographical texts were often gradually composed, accumulating multiple layers of historical knowledge. Given the cultural diversity of the Middle East, this knowledge was often based on sources composed in a different linguistic, and sometimes religious, environment (or themselves based on such sources). In this perspective, this workshop intends to explore the impact of the translation on the actual historical knowledge in such corpuses.

# EXHIBITIONS

## *From Ancient to Modern: Archaeology and Aesthetics*

February 12 – June 7, 2015

Jennifer Chi, ISAW Exhibitions Director and Chief Curator

Pedro Azara, Professor of Aesthetics and the Theory of Art, Polytechnic University of Catalonia

*From Ancient to Modern: Archaeology and Aesthetics* displays a series of spectacular early Mesopotamian objects together with rich documentation, opening a window onto the transformation of an archaeological object into a work of art. This transformation raises fundamental and critical questions: What biographies were initially given to these objects by their discoverers? How were these objects filtered through the eyes and voices of the press to be seen for the first time by the public? How were the objects' biographies affected by or reflective of the tastes of the time? How were the items presented in museums and received by artists of the period? And finally, how do they continue to influence artistic production today? The goal of *Archaeology and Aesthetics* is to illustrate that these biographies do not begin and end in antiquity, or even upon the discovery of the objects through modern-day excavation, but continue to be written through scholarly inquiry and reconsideration, through museum displays and the relationships they create for the viewer, and through the ways in which they inspire artists of our time. The discovery of an object in the modern trench is in fact the starting point for a multiplicity of approaches, each creating a better understanding of the ancient object.



*Standing Male Figure. Gypsum, Alabaster, Shell, Black Limestone, Bitumen, Tell Asmar, ca. 2900–2600 BCE Fletcher Fund, 1940 MMA: 40.156*

The exhibition begins with a gallery devoted to a number of early Mesopotamian archaeological sites. Concentrating on the city of Ur and several sites in the Diyala River Valley, the display includes many now-iconic objects, including a wide array of Sumerian stone sculptures, spectacular jewelry in a variety of materials, and luxury items such as high-quality ostrich-egg vessels. These are shown alongside a rich selection of documentation—field notebooks, excavator's diaries, archival photographs, and original newspaper clippings—illustrating the ways in which the finds were carefully described and presented to the press, the general public, and the academic community. Selected objects are followed as they were strategically presented to an international audience, effecting their transformation from archaeological item to aesthetic work.

The exhibition continues with a gallery devoted to twentieth-century artistic responses to ancient Mesopotamian objects. As the artifacts began to make their way into museums across pre-WWII Europe, artists such as Alberto Giacometti, Henry Moore, and Willem de Kooning began drawing inspiration from the new kind of energy and vision they believed this material possessed. The Tell Asmar figurine illustrated here entered the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection in the 1940 and is said to have been one source for Willem de Kooning's hugely influential *Women* series.

Finally, many artists today return to the archaeological object to explore its role as a window onto human history and cultures rather than as an aesthetic object. *Archaeology and Aesthetics* highlights the work of Jananne al-Ani, who was born in Kirkuk, Iraq, and lives and works in London, and the Chicago-based artist Michael Rakowitz, who is of Iraqi-Jewish heritage.

Both create art expressive of the traumatic loss of human heritage caused by wars and the spreading conflict in the Near and Middle East. A papier-mâché figurine from Rakowitz's ongoing work *The invisible enemy should not exist (recovered, lost, stolen)* 2007 is also illustrated here. His use of food packaging and Arabic newspapers is meant to represent the now-disposable nature of these irreplaceable icons from one of the world's earliest civilizations.

Together, the many and varied objects and materials on display in ISAW's galleries provide the viewer with an unprecedented understanding of the ever evolving transformation of the archaeological object into a work of art.



*This exhibition was made possible through the generous support of the David Berg Foundation, Agnes Gund, the Tianaderrah Foundation, Hicham and Dina Aboutaam, Fred and Diana Elghanayan, and the Leon Levy Foundation.*

Catalogue on sale in ISAW's gallery-attendant office for \$39.95 and on Princeton University Press's website at <http://press.princeton.edu/>.

*Photo Credits:*

*Above: Michael Rakowitz, The invisible enemy should not exist (recovered, lost, stolen): Seated statue of the scribe Dudu (IM 55204) Middle Eastern Packaging and Newspapers, Glue H. 54 cm; W. 24.5 cm; D. 34.5 cm 2014 Courtesy of the artist and Lombard Freid Gallery; 12183 Photo credit: © Bruce White*

## *From Ancient to Modern: Archaeology and Aesthetics* Lecture and Gallery Talk Series

### February 12

*Glam-Ur-ous: The Art of Archaeology and Aesthetics\**

Jennifer Chi, ISAW Exhibitions Director and Chief Curator, and Pedro Azara, Polytechnic University of Catalonia

### February 26

*Sumerian Art and the Modernist Avant-Garde\**

Zainab Bahrani, Columbia University

### March 17

*A Closer Look: What Does Puabi Want?\**

Kim Benzel, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

### April 16

*More than a Matter of Style: The Diyala Expedition and its impact on Mesopotamian Archaeology\**

Clemens Reichel, University of Toronto

\*RSVP required at [isaw.nyu.edu/rsvp](http://isaw.nyu.edu/rsvp) or 212.992.7800

All events are at 6pm and are open to the public.

Admission closes 10 minutes after the scheduled start time.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## ISAW Library News

### David M. Ratzan, ISAW Head Librarian

The fall term was a busy one for the ISAW Library. At the end of the 2013-2014 academic year, the collection had grown to 36,296 items. We are therefore quickly reaching our capacity here at 15 East 84th Street and over the next year will be exploring offsite storage for our collection, which is still growing by an average of 250 items a month. One bit of exciting news is that you may now keep up with our progress on a regular basis. This fall we started the ISAW Library Blog and a monthly update of new titles in the collection. The blog features a mix of updates, news, and original content connected to the Library's collections, projects, and research (and there will be a good deal of news coming out of the Library over the next year), and the list of new titles is available in two formats, a static HTML webpage on the Library website and a Zotero library. Zotero is an online bibliographic manager, which allows users not only to search the contents of online "libraries" and "collections" (such as "ISAW Library New Items/July 2014"), but also to download bibliographic records directly into a variety of structured formats. In other news, we had another chan-

### Welcoming Marc LeBlanc,

### Assistant Director for Academic Affairs



Just before the winter holiday, Marc LeBlanc joined ISAW as Assistant Director for Academic Affairs. Marc received his B.A. in Egyptology and Classics (Latin and Greek) from Brown University and his M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Egyptology from Yale University. His dissertation, a

diachronic study of the Sed Festival in ancient Egypt, includes new translations of ancient texts describing the ritual performances of the Sed Festival and sheds new light on the prehistory of the Sed Festival and the development of royal iconography and ideology in Predynastic Egypt. Prior to joining us, Marc worked for three years in academic administration at the Bard Graduate Center: Decorative Arts, Design History, Material Culture, most recently as Associate Director for Research Programs.

Gabriel McKee,  
Cataloger and  
Assistant Research  
Scholar



ging of the guard in the library this autumn. Dawn Gross, an institution in her own right who had been with ISAW since the very beginning and rose to become the Assistant Head Librarian in 2010, moved back to her native Massachusetts in October to become the Cataloging & Metadata Librarian at University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. The library gods, however, are just gods, who both give and take away. And so, I am very glad to announce the happy arrival of Gabriel McKee, who joined the ISAW library team in September. A wizard of librarianship and an expert bibliographer who has curated exhibits at the Grolier Club, Gabriel jumped right into the life and library at ISAW. I speak for the entire ISAW community when I say that we are very lucky to have him.

### And Other News...

**Jonathan Ben-Dov (VRS 2010-11)** (University of Haifa), with colleagues from Computer Science at Tel-Aviv University, won a 3-year grant from the Israel Science Foundation in order to run the project: "Enhanced Algorithmic Methods as an Aid for Producing a New Edition of Cryptic Texts from Qumran".

**Matteo Compareti (VRS 2013-14)** has been invited to a new position, the Guitty Azarpay distinguished visiting professor in the history of arts of Iran and Central Asia, adjunct assistant professor, Near East department at the University of California Berkeley for three years.

**Yehudah Cohn (Research Associate)** is working on a new translation of the Mishnah, edited by Shaye Cohen and others, that will be published by Oxford University Press. The Mishnah (composed in Hebrew) is the foundational document of rabbinic Judaism, and its redaction is dated to around 200 CE. His contribution is Tractate Oholot, which deals with purity.

**Naomi F. Miller (Research Associate)** will return to the Penn Museum's project at Gordion, Turkey, where she will help the conservation team stabilize the excavated ruins, promote the creation of an "eco-park" to preserve the historical landscape of mounds and tumuli, and assist Ayşe Gürsan-Salzman with a cultural heritage project for local youth (June and July, 2015).

# Spring 2015 Public Events

## JANUARY

- 22** *A King and Courtiers Come to Boston: Homage to Egyptian Art History*\*\*  
Rita E. Freed, MFA, Boston & Wellesley College  
ARCE Lecture
- 27** *Nomadic Empires in Inner Asia: A Comparative Approach*  
Jan Bemmman, ISAW  
Visiting Research Scholar

## FEBRUARY

- 12** *Glam-Ur-ous: The Art of Archaeology and Aesthetics*\*  
Jennifer Chi, ISAW Exhibitions Director and Chief Curator, and Pedro Azara, Polytechnic University of Catalonia
- 17** *Writing Christian History in Islamic Egypt: The Case of the Medieval Arabic Text of the "History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria"*  
Perrine Pilette, ISAW  
Visiting Research Scholar
- 19** *Local Saints, National Politics, and the Power of the Past in Early Egypt*\*\*  
Janet Richards, University of Michigan  
ARCE Lecture
- 26** *Sumerian Art and the Modernist Avant-Garde*\*  
Zainab Bahrani, Columbia University

## MARCH

- 3** *The First Prisons in the History of the World: Incarceration, Punishment, and the Concept of Reform in Ancient Mesopotamia*  
Nicholas Reid, ISAW  
Visiting Research Scholar
- 17** *A Closer Look: What Does Puabi Want?\**  
Kim Benzel, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 30** *The Akchakhan-kala Wall Paintings: Kingship and Religion in Ancient Khorezm*  
Alison Betts, University of Sydney
- 31** *Jephtah's Daughter, Sarah's Son: Children, Death, and Scripture in Late Antiquity*  
Maria Doerfler, ISAW  
Visiting Research Scholar

**Sixth Annual M.I. Rostovtzeff Lecture Series: Sumer in the Mesopotamian World: Reading Traditions & Traditions of Reading**  
Gonzalo Rubio, Pennsylvania State University

**10 Rostovtzeff Lecture Series, I:**  
*Traditions of Origins: Where Did the Sumerians Come From? And Where Did They All Go?\**

**12 Rostovtzeff Lecture Series, II:**  
*Origins of Tradition: Literature & Political Theology in Sumer\**

**24 Rostovtzeff Lecture Series, III:**  
*Reading Early Economy Now: Bureaucracy & Administration in Sumer\**

**26 Rostovtzeff Lecture Series, IV:**  
*Reading Early Cult Then: Sex & the Temple in Mesopotamian Memory\**

## APRIL

**9** *Long-Term Occupation and Seasonal Mobility in Mongolia: A Comparative Analysis*  
Jean-Luc Houle, Western Kentucky University

**14** *The Rise of the Qin Empire and the End of Historiography in Early China*  
Vincent Leung, ISAW  
Visiting Research Scholar

**16** *More than a Matter of Style: The Diyala Expedition and its Impact on Mesopotamian Archaeology\**

Clemens Reichel, University of Toronto

**21** *Peoples and Places in Pre-Islamic Afghanistan: The Evidence of the Bactrian Documents*  
Nicholas Sims-Williams, University of London

**28** *Haupt Lecture: Egypt as Metaphor: Decoration and the Afterlife in the Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria*  
Marjorie Venit, University of Maryland  
AIA Lecture, 6:30pm

## MAY

**5** *Government Issue: Roman Legionary Crafts Production in Context*  
Elizabeth Murphy, ISAW Visiting Assistant Professor

**21** *Recent Discoveries at Amheida\*\**  
Roger Bagnall, Leon Levy Director  
ARCE Lecture

All lectures are held in the 2nd floor lecture hall and begin at 6 pm unless otherwise noted. Admission to lectures closes 10 minutes after scheduled start time. Please check [isaw.nyu.edu](http://isaw.nyu.edu) for event updates.

\*Registration is required at [isaw.nyu.edu/rsvp](http://isaw.nyu.edu/rsvp)

\*\*Registration required to [info@arceny.com](mailto:info@arceny.com)



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## 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.

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