

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Newsletter 20 Winter 2018



From the Director

In twelve years of campaigning, Alexander III of Macedon—Alexander the Great—reached the Libyan Desert and India before dying in Babylon in 323 BCE. ISAW's Spring exhibition gives prominence to Islamic versions of the legends of the Alexander Romance, in which the journeys of Iskandar (Alexander) extended even to Russia and the fringes of the apocalyptic land of Gog and Magog. The great sages whom Iskandar visited in pursuit of wisdom were not limited to Aristotle, the tutor of the historical Alexander, but included Plato, Socrates, and Hermes Trismegistus.

In the present issue of the ISAW Newsletter we highlight some of the journeys ISAW doctoral students have recently made as recipients of fellowships from NYU Global Research Initiatives, one of the ways in which NYU's network of campuses and research institutes in thirteen countries worldwide harmonizes with the ambitious geographical scope of ISAW's mission. Washington DC may have been the closest any of our students got to Gog and Magog, but they too were enabled to access learning through contact with present day sages and with the records of the past. Travel to do research in distant libraries and museums is as essential a part of ISAW's doctoral experience as travel to ancient sites.

Our Visiting Research Scholar program exists not just for the sake of what happens during the scholars' residence at ISAW—their research projects and contributions to our graduate and undergraduate teaching—but also cumulatively, to build our own virtual global network. This issue features the appointment of one of our earliest VRSS, Wu Xin, to the faculty of Fudan University in Shanghai, and the return to New York of a slightly more recent VRS, Mathieu Ossendrijver, to be our 2018 Rostovtzeff Lecturer. Our selection from the many recent publications of ISAW people also includes books by no less than four former VRSS.

Alexander Jones
Leon Levy Director and Professor of the History of the Exact Sciences in Antiquity

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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Cover Photo: *Shahnamah*. Iskandar Encounters the Angel Israfil (detail). Author: Abu al-Qasim Firdausi (940-1019 or 1025); Copyist: Muhammad al-Katib al-Qiwam Shirazi; Language: Persian. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, folio: H. 45.2 cm; W. 30.2 cm. Probably Turkey, 1562-1583. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Purchase—Smithsonian Unrestricted Trust Funds, Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program, and Dr. Arthur M. Sackler: S1986.256. Image © Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Photo: @Andrea Brizzi

Exhibitions

Romance and Reason: Islamic Transformations of the Classical Past

February 14 – May 13, 2018

Romance and Reason: Islamic Transformations of the Classical Past brings together an exceptional group of rare manuscripts that testify to the fertile relationship between medieval Islam and the classical world. With material ranging from lavishly illuminated romances, to eye-opening medical and scientific treatises, the exhibition provides an engrossing visual record of how, over the course of centuries, Islamic scholars, scientists, doctors, artists, and others transformed Ancient Greek material for their own day.

Organized by ISAW in partnership with the National Library of Israel, *Romance and Reason* has been curated by Roberta Casagrande-Kim, Research Associate, ISAW; Samuel Thrope, Selector, and Raquel Ukeles Curator, National Library of Israel. Jennifer Y. Chi was curatorial and design manager for the project.

ISAW Director Alexander Jones notes, “The history of human culture is as much a story of intellectual and cultural exchange and absorption as it is one of conflict and conquest. There can hardly be a better example of this than the story told by the manuscripts in *Romance and Reason*. With works from the 11th through 18th centuries, created in Iran, Afghanistan, India, and Turkey these provide a compelling portrait of the flourishing of learning and art in the Islamic world. ISAW is delighted to have assembled this superb collection of manuscripts, and is deeply grateful to the international lenders to this exhibition.”

The Story of Alexander

No single figure from Greco-Roman antiquity was more lauded by or deeply absorbed into Islamic tradition than that of Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE), or Iskandar. *Romance and Reason* will present approximately thirty illuminated versions of the earliest-known Persian accounts of the life of Iskandar: the *Shahnama*, or *Book of Kings*, an epic poem written by Firdausi between 977 and 1010 CE, and the *Khamsa*, or *Five*

Poems, by Nizami, dating from the late 12th century CE. With a variety of often lavish, exquisitely executed illuminations, the manuscripts here were created over the course of five centuries. Together, they will portray the evolution of Iskandar’s character and identity, showing him as warrior, king, seeker of truth, and more—reflecting growth and change

in the Islamic world and the increasingly integral role that Iskandar played in its founding story.

A 17th-century version of the *Khamsa* in the exhibition includes an illustration of Alexander attending the death of his half-brother Dara, King of Persia. It depicts the moment when Dara passes the throne on to Iskandar—who is half Greek and half Persian by birth—legitimizing Iskandar’s claim to the Persian throne. This is one of the most commonly illustrated scenes in epic stories of Iskandar, shedding light on an event that ensured his full absorption into the narrative of Persian history. The high artistic quality of this illumination, including the gold background and intricate floral motifs framing the folios, suggests that the manuscript may have been commissioned by the court or an especially affluent buyer.

Another version of the *Khamsa*, this one from the 16th century, shows Iskandar the warrior, depicted battling the Russians. (The *Khamsa* includes nine

chapters dedicated to Iskandar’s Russian campaign.) Galloping toward the enemy, one of whom he has speared, he is represented as a proper Persian king, with an early Mughal-style helmet, long and highly embroidered tunic over trousers, embellished quiver, and an equally precious harness for his mount. In the background, the two armies watch each other and the duel below.

One of the Iskandar folios in *Romance and Reason* comes from a manuscript known as the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, the most

luxurious, ambitious, and artistically complex 14th-century version of this text. One of the two pages on view here, titled *Iskandar Builds a Rampart*, shows Iskandar as protector. It tells the story of how, facing pleas for protection from invasion by the so-called savages from the land of Gog and Magog, he gathers artisans from across the globe to construct two massive walls to prevent the invasion. He is seen here—complete with a halo—entering on horseback from the left as he and his retinue watch the artisans at work.

Finally, in a folio from another 16th-century *Shahnama*, Iskandar confronts his death. Titled *In Babylon Iskandar Sees the Stillborn Baby, Omen of His Death*, this tells the story of the last of several omens of his early death that Iskandar has experienced. It is the capstone to the *Shahnama*’s romance of Iskandar, which began with his stream of conquests and ends with his self-recognition. The scene is in Babylon, where a monstrous birth—a stillborn child with the head of a lion and the hoofs and tail of an ox—has taken place. The child, who is shown alive in this image, is presented to the King, in the company of two court scholars who interpret the prophecy. Iskandar, who understands that this means that his time has come, is shown in a gesture of reflection and mourning.

Medicine, Mathematics, and Science

The second section of *Romance and Reason* is devoted to Islamic developments in medicine, mathematics, astrology, and astronomy, with manuscripts that illustrate the ways in which physicians, mathematicians, scientists, and others in the Muslim world changed and elaborated on their classical predecessors, transforming works of the past into materials of use in their own place and time.

Highlights of the exhibition’s especially rich assortment of medical materials include four 12th-century manuscripts, all by different artists, illustrating vignettes from the five-volume *De materia medica*, written in the 1st century CE by the Greek physician Dioscorides Pedanius, as well as one of the most important medical works written by an Islamic scholar: *The Canon of Medicine*, by Persian physician, astronomer, and thinker Avicenna. This remained a major textbook until the nineteenth century, as important to the Islamic world as Hippocrates was to the Greeks.

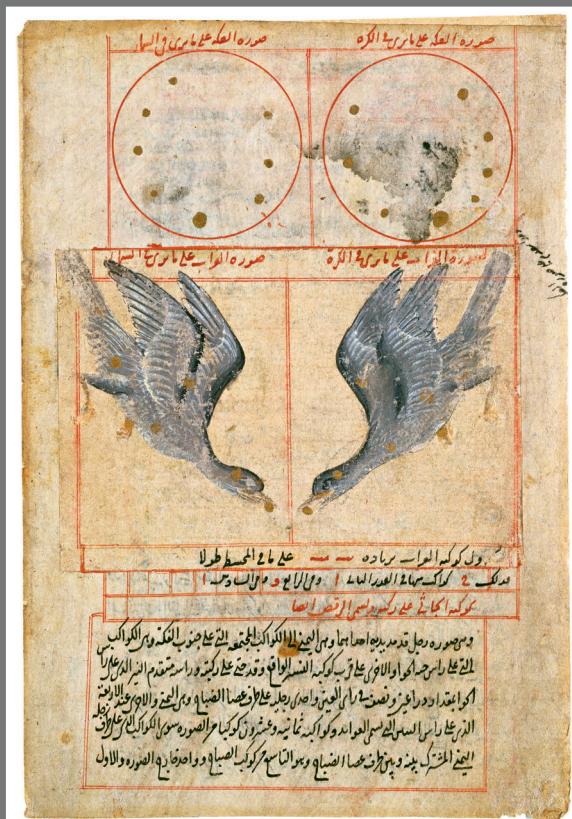
Among the most stunning medical depictions in the exhibition is “The Human Female Body Showing a Fetus in the Womb and Other Organs,” a page from a 14th-century, five-volume treatise on surgery by Mansur ibn Ilyas of Shiraz. While ibn Ilyas’s work was influenced by the anatomical studies of the Greek physician Galen, as well as by Aristotle’s embryological theory, the diagrams in his treatise were derived from Western Medieval works. It is possible that this depiction—in which the fetus appears remarkably accurate—was ibn Ilyas’s invention. He may have reused his diagram of the venous system, shown nearby, removing its labels and adding a uterus with a fetus in a breech position.

Mathematics is an especially fertile field of Islamic accomplishment. Indeed, by absorbing, expanding, synthesizing, and refining Greek geometry, and combining Euclidean geometry with other methods of solving numerical problems, Islamic mathematicians invented a new field of mathematical research—algebra (*al-jabr*). *Romance and Reason* includes a focused group of important mathematical manuscripts, including two commentaries on the 13th-century *Book of the Fundamental Theorems of Geometry*, by Shams al-Din Samarqandi, and the monumental *Key to Computation*, in which mathematician Al-Kashi set out to apply computation to mathematical, astronomical, and physical measurements, providing invaluable contributions to the study of specific weights of metals, gems, and other substances.

While astrology is not considered a true science today, in the ancient world it was a subject of study by physicians, mathematicians, scientists, philosophers, and other scholars. Islamic astrology continued and refined earlier methods—Babylonian, Iranian, Indian, and Greek—of determining the influence of the heavenly bodies on human events. This section of *Romance and Reason* contains an 18th-century copy of an 11th-century commentary on Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos*, a fundamental text on the philosophy and practice of astrology, as well as four versions of a 13th-century encyclopedia titled *Miracles of Things Created and Miraculous Aspects of Things Existing*, turned to pages that focus on astrological symbols, including images of the constellations and planets of the northern and southern hemispheres, as well as a number of zodiac signs. A later (19th-century) version, created in India, has exceptionally beautiful illustrations.

The Classical astronomy that was absorbed into Islamic civilization included aspects of Greek, Babylonian, and Indian science. As with other branches of knowledge, Islamic scholars developed and transformed the practice and literature of astronomy to suit the needs of their own science and society. The exhibition demonstrates this with a page from the early 13th-century *The Compendium on Astronomy*, by Mahmud al-Jaghmani, which illustrates a method for determining the direction of Mecca from any location, clearly of critical importance to Muslims. Other manuscripts here include an 18th-century commentary on al-Jaghmani’s *Compendium*, and a 16th-century version of the 10th-century *Book on the Shapes of the Fixed Stars*, by Abd al-Rahman ibn Umar Sufi, in which the author describes the classical system of constellations according to both the ancient Greek and Islamic classifications, and more.

This exhibition and its accompanying catalogue were made possible by generous support from the Selz Foundation, the David Berg Foundation, Barbro and Bernard Osher, and the Leon Levy Foundation. Additional funding was provided by the Persepolis Foundation, Hicham and Dina Aboutaam, and an anonymous foundation.



Book on the Shapes of the Fixed Stars (Kitab suwar al-kawakib al-thabita). The Constellation of Corvus the Raven (detail). Author: ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Umar Sufi (903–986); Language: Arabic. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, folio: H. 20 cm; W. 14.6 cm. Iran, 16th century. Brooklyn Museum, Designated Purchase Fund: 74.23. Photo: Brooklyn Museum.

Faculty Focus

Seminar: Art, Archaeology and Museology

Lillian Tseng, Associate Professor of East Asian Art and Archaeology
Jennifer Chi, Deputy Director and Chief Curator, Brooklyn Museum

Lillian Tseng and Jennifer Chi led a graduate seminar at ISAW in the fall of 2017 to explore how museology facilitates the study of art and archaeology in the ancient world. Issues that were examined in depth include the history and development of museums, narrative methodologies that are currently employed with ancient art exhibitions, the role that cultural property plays in the selection of objects for exhibitions and acquisitions, and how digital assets are changing the way we display art. Distinguished guests invited to address different topics were, in alphabetical order, Agnes Hsu-Tang, Annette Juliano, Judith Lerner, Philippe de Montebello, Jack Soutanian and Katherine Tsiang.

Through the guidance of Jennifer Chi, students had a front row seat to the installation of the exhibition, *Restoring the Minoans: Sir Arthur Evans and Elizabeth Price*, and had the opportunity to meet Elizabeth Price, the Turner Prize-winning video artist, and discuss *A RESTORATION*, which was the centerpiece of the show. In addition, students presented critical reviews of installations at the Brooklyn Museum and had invaluable conversations with the organizing curators.

The seminar successfully bridged the academic and curatorial worlds, helping students understand that visual products can pro-

duce and transmit innovative knowledge, not unlike academic work. The course forms part of a larger curricular and programmatic initiative at ISAW to introduce students to museology and the collecting and display of ancient objects and to provide students with the opportunity to gain experience doing curatorial work under the supervision of the ISAW Exhibitions department.



Photo courtesy of Danni Pasuma



Photo courtesy of Kamosh Hashemzadeh

Professor Lillian Tseng and Jennifer Chi conducting a seminar at the Brooklyn Museum

Bone Working and the Chinese Bronze Age Economy

Rod Campbell

Associate Professor of East Asian Archaeology and History

The economies of the first Chinese dynasties are as little studied as they are crucial to an understanding of early Chinese civilization. Despite nearly a century of work our sources remain elite-biased and scholarly focus remains resolutely on rich tombs and royal palaces. Even what little study has been done on the economy of China's first historical dynasty, the Shang, has been centered on elite crafts and putative state monopolies. A lack of early economic records has led Chinese economic historians to assume the absence of economic development before the textual evidence of the Eastern Zhou period, some 500 years after the Shang. In the Chinese Bronze Age Economics Project, my collaborators and I have been gradually changing that picture.

Our work on a gigantic bone working site at Tiesanlu, Anyang demonstrated that millions of quotidian bone artifacts were mass-produced for wide distribution. Subsequent work at the only well-excavated Shang village in existence, Guandimiao, showed that the mass-produced products of the Anyang workshop reached even this tiny, poor and remote village (200 km from Anyang, population < 100). Both the existence of bone artifact factories (producing mostly hairpins) and the presence of their products in small villages demonstrate the need to think beyond elite exchange networks and reconsider the complexity of

the early Chinese economy. Continuing this work over the summer of 2017 at two new sites, we discovered evidence for a kind of bone working intermediary to unskilled domestic production and specialized mass-production.

This type of bone working, evidenced at a recently excavated locus at Anyang, called Wangyukou, and at the regional center of Daxingzhuang in Shandong province (300 km from Anyang), is characterized by the skilled, or semi-skilled production of a large variety of everyday bone tools. Combined with the palace workshops, this suggests the existence of at least four different modes of bone artifact production, each associated with a different distribution network and some kind of generalized means of exchange: fine palace production; large-scale specialized mass-produced artifacts; small, unspecialized workshop production; and domestic production. If the bone economy is this complex, what does

that say about the ceramic, bronze, textile, lacquer, wood, stone economies? Whatever the answers to these questions turn out to be, the truth is sure to be richer and more complex than has been considered, and with a thorough economic re-appraisal, the rest of the narrative of early Chinese civilization will have to be re-written as well.



Photo courtesy of Rod Campbell

Daxingzhuang Bone-Working Team

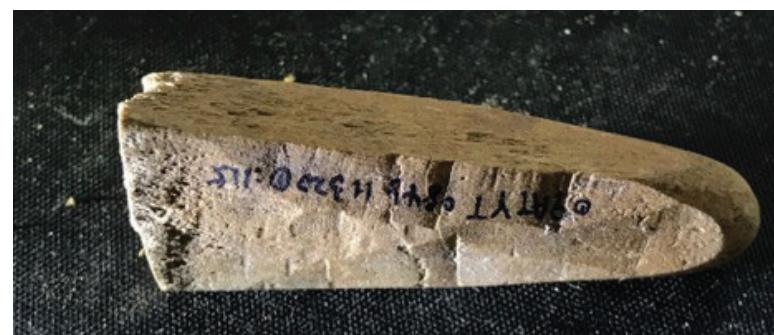


Photo courtesy of Rod Campbell

Chisel marks on worked antler, Wangyukou, Anyang

Conferences

Future Philologies: Digital Directions in Ancient World Text

Conference organized by Patrick J. Burns (ISAW Assistant Research Scholar, Digital Projects)
April 20

As any classicist will tell you, the study of Greek and Latin has benefitted tremendously from the work of a small but dedicated cadre of early digital humanists. Scholars in other areas of antiquity are now beginning to draw on this experience and resources developed by digital humanists and computer scientists working on modern languages to a broad array of historical languages. The ISAW Library is organizing "Future Philologies" as a forum for leading scholars to discuss common challenges and new directions in the development of digital corpora, resources, and tools for ancient languages. The aim is not only to find common ground on technical matters, but also to promote dialogue between and across languages and scripts, extending ISAW's scholarly mission to the digital plane by offering "an unshuttered view of antiquity across vast stretches of time and place." Participants will present on digital text and language projects in Greek, Latin, Coptic, Arabic, Classical Persian, Classical Chinese, and languages represented in cuneiform scripts. Computer and information scientists will also present technical perspectives on innovations in language research certain to have an impact on the next generation of philologists.

The conference is co-sponsored by ISAW, the NYU Center for the Humanities, the NYU Division of Libraries, the NYU Center for Ancient Studies, and the NYU Classics Department. RSVP required at isaw.nyu.edu/rsvp.

Text and Image: Transmedial Inquiries into Ancient Near Eastern Cultures

Conference organized by Beate Pongratz-Leisten (ISAW)
April 27



Wall Relief from the Throne Room in Ashurnasirpal II's Northwest Palace at Nimrud

In the ancient Near East many monuments and artifacts incorporated both pictorial and written compositions. "Text and Image" has long been a trope in philological and art historical studies inquiring into the mixture or conjoining of the verbal and the visual. Image and language, and discourse and icon, are disjunctive symbolic systems, and there are sense-making operations that do not necessarily take a narrative form. Moreover, when it comes to narrative, it has been long recognized that the migration of a story or message from one medium to another presents cognitive consequences, and that the narrative potential will necessarily be differently actualized. Rather than perceiving of narrative as a linguistic object, this workshop examines narrative in cognitive terms, understanding it in the first place as a mental image recognizable in various

media. The papers of this workshop will look at the strategies deployed in the construction of narrative, verbal and pictorial; the interface between the pictorial, myth, and ritual; the glorification of the rulership through text and image, and how the interplay between these intensified the intersection with the divine; the autonomy of the visual in ancient Near Eastern art; and techniques of writing and drawing on clay, which required the scholarly professions to develop artistic skills. RSVP required at isaw.nyu.edu/rsvp.

Appetite for the Past

Conference organized by Yitzhak Jaffe (ISAW Visiting Assistant Professor) and Kelila Jaffe (NYU Food Studies)
April 30

This endeavor will bring scholars of the ancient world and food specialists together to create and serve the fruits of their collaborative efforts to the NYU community. Teams composed of chefs and scholars are cooperating on research projects focusing on food to study and create a consumable final product. A tasting symposium requiring separate registration will take place on May 1st at the NYU Department of Nutrition and Food Studies.

The workshop is the result of the combined efforts of ISAW, the NYU Department of Anthropology, and the NYU Department of Nutrition and Food Studies, with additional sponsorship from the NYU Center for Ancient Studies. RSVP required at isaw.nyu.edu/rsvp.



Kitchen Scene from Dahuting 打虎亭 Tomb, Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 CE)

Lectures

Ninth Annual M.I. Rostovtzeff Lecture Series

The Sky over Ancient Iraq: Babylonian Astronomy in Context

Mathieu Ossendrijver, Humboldt University Berlin
March 21-April 11, 2018

The Rostovtzeff Lectures are supported in part by a generous endowment fund given by Roger and Whitney Bagnall



Mathieu Ossendrijver is Professor for the History of Ancient Science in the Department of Philosophy at the Humboldt University Berlin. He holds a PhD in Assyriology from the University of Tübingen and a PhD in Astrophysics from the University of Utrecht. His primary research interests are Babylonian astral science and mathematics, Mesopotamian science in general, and contextual aspects of Babylonian scholarship.

In four lectures Mathieu Ossendrijver will explore the textual evidence for Babylonian astronomy during the first millennium BCE, with an emphasis on new textual finds, insights from recent investigations of various corpora of astral science and their interconnections, and questions inspired by new approaches informed by the wider historiography and sociology of science.

March 21, Lecture I: *Babylonian Astronomy: Interpreting an Ancient Science*

In the first lecture the geographical and historical contours of Babylonian astronomy are sketched, the cuneiform sources are introduced, and the methodological framework for interpreting Babylonian astronomy as an ancient science is discussed. Babylonian astronomy takes us to ancient Iraq, where thousands of cuneiform tablets with an astronomical content have come to light since the end of the nineteenth century. What can we learn by studying these tablets? While early interpretations were strongly shaped by modern mathematics and astronomy, the focus of much current research has shifted to uncovering the conceptual framework of Babylonian astronomy and exploring its practical, institutional, political, religious, and social context. In order to achieve this, methodological considerations from the wider historiography and sociology of science are increasingly applied.

March 28, Lecture II: *Keeping the Watch: Babylonian Astronomical Diaries and More*

The second lecture will focus on the astronomical diaries and related texts, which are observational reports that emerged in Babylonia during the seventh century BCE and continued to be written for at least six centuries. Apart from astronomical phenomena, market prices, weather phenomena, river levels and historical events were also reported in these texts. They provide unique opportunities for reconstructing observational practices and the predictive methods to which these texts turn out to be intricately linked.

April 4, Lecture III: *Algorithms, Tables, and Figures: New Insights into Babylonian Mathematical Astronomy*

The third lecture will present new insights into Babylonian mathematical astronomy, which emerged after about 400 BCE. The underlying mathematical methods for predicting lunar and planetary phenomena are predominantly based on purely arithmetic methods, that is, they operate by manipulating sequences of numbers. However, recent discoveries have corrected this firmly entrenched arithmetic characterization of the Babylonian methods by revealing that some tablets employ geometric concepts in order to compute the distance traveled by a planet. These geometric methods imply a surprisingly deep understanding of the graphical connections between time, velocity and distance on the part of some Babylonian astronomers.

April 11, Lecture IV: *Astronomers, Temples, and Society: Babylonian Astronomy in Context*

The fourth lecture will discuss the scholars who pursued astronomy and their institutional, religious, social, and economic context. This takes us to the main temples of Babylon and Uruk, in which most of the Babylonian astronomers were employed during the second half of the first millennium BCE. The lecture will also explore how the astral sciences were increasingly linked to other branches of Babylonian scholarship and what role astronomy and astrology played in Babylonian society.



Publications

Recent Publications

A selection of books by ISAW faculty, research associates, and former scholars.

For a more comprehensive list of recent publications, please visit: isaw.nyu.edu/news/recent-publications-february-2018

Claudia Chang (ISAW Research Associate), *Rethinking Prehistoric Central Asia: Shepherds, Farmers, and Nomads* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017).

The peoples of Inner Asia in the second half of the first millennium BC have long been considered to be nomads, engaging in warfare and conflict. This book, which presents the findings of new archaeological research in southeastern Kazakhstan, analyzes these findings to present important conclusions about the nature of Inner Asian society in this period. Pots, animal bones, ancient plant remains, and mudbricks are details from the material record proving that the ancient folk cultivated wheat, barley, and the two millets, and also husbanded sheep, goats, cattle, and horses. The picture presented is of societies which were more complex than heretofore understood: with an economic foundation based on both herding and farming, producing surplus agricultural goods which were exported, and with a hierarchical social structure, including elites and commoners, made cohesive by gift-giving, feasting, and tribute, rather than conflict and warfare. The book includes material on the impact of the first opening of the Silk Route by the Han emperors of China. (Routledge)

Aristocrats and Statehood in Western Iberia, 300–600 C.E.

Damián Fernández

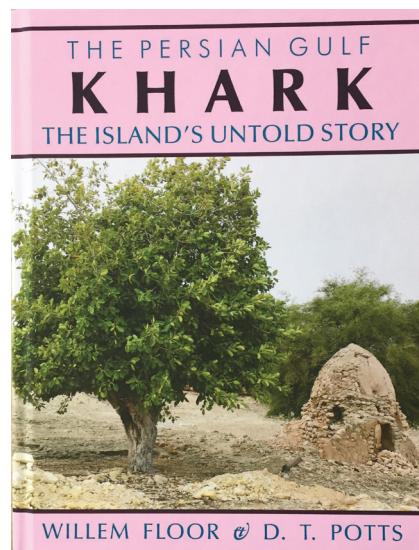
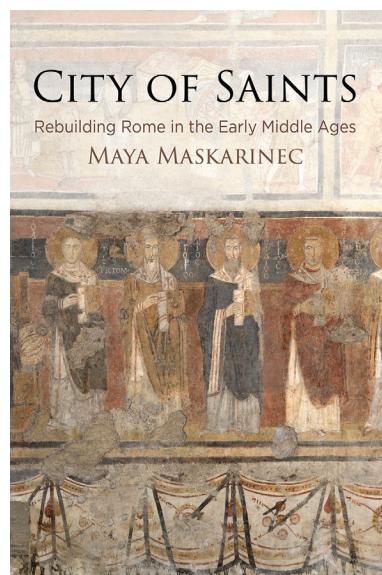


Damián Fernández (ISAW VRS 2009-10), *Aristocrats and Statehood in Western Iberia, 300-600 C.E.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

In a distant corner of the late antique world, along the Atlantic river valleys of western Iberia, local elite populations lived through the ebb and flow of empire and kingdoms as historical agents with their own social strategies. Contrary to earlier historiographical accounts, these aristocrats were not oppressed by a centralized Roman empire or its successor kingdoms; nor was there an inherent conflict between central states and local elites. Instead, Damián Fernández argues, there was an interdependency of state and local aristocracies. The upper classes embraced state projects to assert their ascendancy within their communities. By doing so, they enacted statehood at the local level, bringing state presence to the remotest corners of Iberia, both under Roman rule and during the later Suevic and Visigothic kingdoms. (Penn Press)

Maya Maskarinec (ISAW VRS 2016-17), *City of Saints: Rebuilding Rome in the Early Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

Conventional narratives explain the rise of Christian Rome as resulting from an increasingly powerful papacy. In *City of Saints*, Maskarinec looks outward, to examine how Rome interacted with the wider Mediterranean world in the Byzantine period. During the early Middle Ages, the city imported dozens of saints and their legends, naturalized them, and physically layered their cults onto the city's imperial and sacred topography. Maskarinec documents Rome's spectacular physical transformation, drawing on church architecture, frescoes, mosaics, inscriptions, Greek and Latin hagiographical texts, and less-studied documents that attest to the commemoration of these foreign saints. These sources reveal a vibrant plurality of voices—Byzantine administrators, refugees, aristocrats, monks, pilgrims, and others—who shaped a distinctly Roman version of Christianity. *City of Saints* extends its analysis to the end of the ninth century, when the city's ties to the Byzantine world weakened. Rome's political and economic orbits moved toward the Carolingian world, where the saints' cults circulated, valorizing Rome's burgeoning claims as a microcosm of the "universal" Christian church. (Penn Press)



Willem Floor and D.T. Potts (ISAW Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology and History), *The Persian Gulf: Khark: The Island's Untold Story* (Washington DC: Mage Publishers, 2017).

The island of Khark was an important link in Persian Gulf navigation, supplying passing ships with water, victuals, and pilots for ships sailing to and from Basra. In the eighteenth century, the Dutch made the island their center of trade in the Persian Gulf, and by the nineteenth century the island was dubbed "the most important strategic point in the Persian Gulf." This book presents the history of Khark from its pre-Islamic occupation, as attested both archaeologically and in written sources, to the modern day. (Mage Publishers)

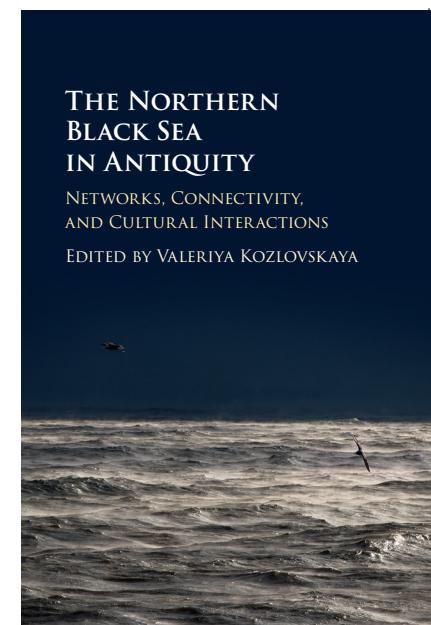
Valeriya Kozlovskaya (ISAW VRS 2008-9), ed., *The Northern Black Sea in Antiquity: Networks, Connectivity, and Cultural Interactions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

The Northern Black Sea region, despite its distance from the centers of classical civilizations, played an integral role in the socio-economic life of the ancient Greco-Roman world. The chapters in this book, written by experts on the region, explore topics such as the trade, religion, political culture, art and architecture, and the local non-Greek populations, from the foundation of the first Greek colonies on the North Pontic shores at the end of the seventh and sixth century BCE through the first centuries of the Roman imperial period. This volume closely examines relevant categories of archaeological material, including amphorae, architectural remains, funerary and dedicatory monuments, inscriptions, and burial complexes. Geographically, it encompasses the coastal territories of modern Russia and Ukraine. *The Northern Black Sea in Antiquity* embraces an inclusive and comparative approach while discussing new archaeological evidence, offering fresh insights into familiar questions, and presenting original interpretations of well-known artifacts. (Cambridge University Press)

THE NORTHERN BLACK SEA IN ANTIQUITY

NETWORKS, CONNECTIVITY, AND CULTURAL INTERACTIONS

EDITED BY VALERIYA KOZLOVSKAYA



THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF DEATH IN ROMAN SYRIA

BURIAL, COMMEMORATION, AND EMPIRE

LIDEWIJDE DE JONG



Lidewijde de Jong (ISAW VRS 2010-11), *The Archaeology of Death in Roman Syria: Burial, Commemoration, and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

In the first centuries of the Common Era, an eclectic collection of plain and embellished underground and aboveground tombs filled the cemeteries of the Roman province of Syria. Its inhabitants used rituals of commemoration to express messages about their local identity, family, and social position, while simultaneously ensuring that the deceased was given proper burial rites. In this book, Lidewijde de Jong investigates these customs and the belief systems that governed the choices made in the commemoration of Syrian men, women and children. Presenting the first all-inclusive overview of the archaeology of death in Roman Syria, this book combines spatial analysis of cemeteries with the study of funerary architecture, decoration, and grave goods, as well as information about the deceased provided by sculptural, epigraphic, and osteological sources. It sheds a new light on life and death in Syria and offers a novel way of understanding provincial culture in the Roman Empire. (Cambridge University Press)

Community News

Appointment of Clare Fitzgerald, Associate Director for Exhibitions and Gallery Curator Alexander Jones, Leon Levy Director and Professor of History of the Exact Sciences in Antiquity

I am delighted to announce the appointment of Clare Fitzgerald as Associate Director for Exhibitions and Gallery Curator at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, effective March 12, 2018. Dr. Fitzgerald will lead ISAW's acclaimed program of exhibitions exploring themes related to ISAW's mission to foster study and understanding of the ancient world through innovative, connective, and interdisciplinary approaches.

Clare Fitzgerald holds a PhD in Art History from Emory University (Atlanta), where she has been Senior Manager of Educational Programs at

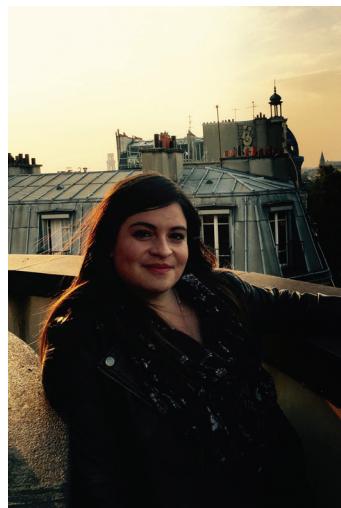
the Michael C. Carlos Museum. Her academic background is in Egyptology, with a particular research interest in coffins and tombs. She has held a number of fellowships, including at the American Research Center in Egypt and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She has been a Consulting Curator and Guest Curator at the Munson-Williams-Proctor Art Institute (Utica, NY), and Guest Curator at the Newark Museum, where she oversaw the reinstallation of the museum's Ancient Mediterranean collection, which opened in December.



ISAW Students Receive NYU Global Research Initiatives Fellowships

Marc LeBlanc, Assistant Director of Academic Affairs

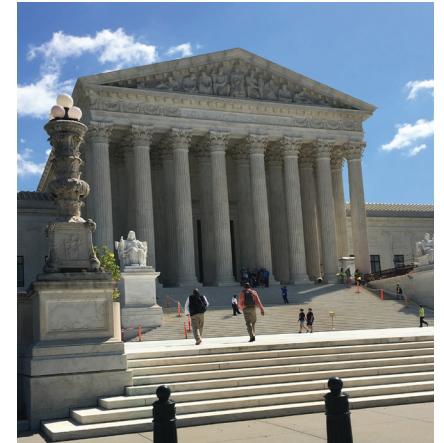
ISAW students Irene Soto, Sam Mirelman, Maria Americo, and Fan Zhang are all recent recipients of NYU Global Research Initiatives (GRI) fellowships, which form part of an NYU provostial initiative to support research and academic exchange at NYU Research Institute sites outside of New York, in locations such as Athens, Berlin, Florence, London, Prague, Shanghai, and Washington, DC, and Tel Aviv.



During the 2016-2017 academic year, **Irene Soto** was the recipient of two NYU GRI fellowships to support her dissertation research and writing. Irene spent three months during fall 2016 working on her doctoral dissertation, entitled "The Economic Integration of a Late Roman Province: Egypt from Diocletian to Anastasius," as a GRI fellow at NYU Paris, which is located in the heart of the Latin Quarter. During her time in Paris, Irene had the opportunity to conduct research in the libraries of the Sorbonne, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, which houses the Cabinet de Médailles, and the Collège de France. After her GRI fellowship in Paris formally ended, Irene was able to remain in residence at NYU Paris during spring 2017 and take a class on multilingualism in Egypt with Prof. Jean-Luc Fournet at the Collège de France. During summer 2017, Irene participated in a six-week dissertation writing workshop as a GRI fellow in London. The fellowship provided housing in historic Bloomsbury and office space at NYU London, which Irene describes as "a majestic town house located next to the British Museum, as well as a 5-minute walk from the Institute of Classical Studies library." Being in London allowed Irene to meet with one of her dissertation advisors at Oxford, Prof. Andrew Meadows, through whom she joined Oxford's "Coin Hoards of the Roman Empire" project. According to Irene, the best aspect of her fellowships was "meeting many different people from European institutions and other NYU departments."

Sam Mirelman received an NYU GRI fellowship to support research on his doctoral dissertation, "Text and Performance in the Mesopotamian Liturgical Tradition," in Berlin for three months during spring 2017. During his stay in Berlin, Sam was provided with work space in the NYU Berlin academic center, which is located in a converted former brewery complex, Kulturbrauerei, in the Prenzlauer Berg district, and had the pleasure of meeting various other PhD students and faculty from various disciplines, who were also there in Berlin as recipients of GRI fellowships. Sam's fellowship in Berlin was especially important for his dissertation research because it allowed him to spend an extended period of time working on the cuneiform tablet collections of the Vorderasiatisches Museum, including an important collection of Sumerian (Emesal dialect) lamentations from Babylon, which date to the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE. These tablets, some of which can be joined to tablets in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, are the central focus of Sam's dissertation, which investigates these and related tablets for the unique information that they contain concerning the performance traditions of ancient Babylonia. Sam is especially grateful to the "very helpful staff at the NYU Center, who were always available for advice and support."

As an NYU GRI fellow, **Maria Americo** spent three months in Washington, DC during fall 2017. Being in Washington, DC allowed Maria to conduct research in two world-class libraries with particular relevance to her doctoral dissertation topic: the Library of Congress and the George Washington University Library. Maria was provided with office space and a work station at NYU's Constance Milstein and Family Global Academic Center in DC, which she describes as "a wonderfully quiet building, accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week," which was particularly conducive to long stretches of uninterrupted and focused dissertation writing. According to Maria, biweekly meetings of NYU researchers at the DC site provide "fellowship the opportunity to build a scholarly community while they are away from home to discuss their research, work, and life in DC." During her time in DC, Maria completed a 248-page draft of her doctoral dissertation, entitled "An Analysis of Ninth-Century Reception of Claudius Ptolemy's Astronomy in the Arabic Tradition." Reflecting on her fellowship, Maria notes "the GRI fellowship's generous support gave me the opportunity to research and write, without the distraction of any other obligations, at just the moment I needed it. For that, I will always be grateful."



According to **Fan Zhang**, the recipient of an NYU GRI fellowship in Shanghai during fall 2017, "the GRI fellowship allowed me to spend three productive months working on my dissertation and job applications." During her fellowship at the NYU campus in Shanghai, Fan benefitted tremendously from academic exchanges with faculty and fellows of the Center for Global Asia and made significant progress on her doctoral dissertation, entitled "Cultural Encounters: Ethnic Complexity and Material Expression in Fifth-century Pingcheng, China." In addition, Fan was able to attend several job market workshops organized by the NYU Shanghai Humanities group during the fall; these workshops were especially helpful to Fan since she is finishing her dissertation this year and is currently on the academic job market. Outside of campus, Fan had the opportunity to build connections with other universities and institutes in Shanghai, such as Fudan University, where she gave a talk on her dissertation research. Based on the overwhelmingly positive experience that Fan had in Shanghai, she hopes that more ISAW members will join the GRI fellowship program and visit the NYU Shanghai campus in the future.



Visiting Student Update: Xiaoyan Qi

Marc LeBlanc, Assistant Director of Academic Affairs



Xiaoyan Qi, who spent the 2015-16 academic year as a visiting student at ISAW, successfully defended her doctoral dissertation, entitled "The History of Hellenism in Sogdiana," and received her PhD from Nankai University in Tianjin, China, on November 19, 2017. According to Xiaoyan, her time at ISAW provided her with "the opportunity to meet and study

under a host of world renowned scholars," including Roger Bagnall, Judith Lerner, Annette Juliano, Sören Stark, and Robert Hoyland, who introduced her to new historiographic and methodological approaches to scholarship. One highlight of Xiaoyan's experience in New York was conducting research in the ISAW Library, where she spent countless hours tracking down new references in the stacks and reading. Another highlight was her participation in the American Numismatic Society's Eric P. Newman Graduate Seminar in Numismatics during summer 2016. Xiaoyan remembers her year at ISAW very fondly and notes that the experience of studying at ISAW "changed my life and opened a world of opportunities that I did not ever imagine possible."

Community News

Visiting Research Scholar Update: Wu Xin

Diane Bennett, Associate Director for Administration

Visiting scholar from one of ISAW's first cohorts, Wu Xin has recently started as Professor of Central Asian and Iranian Studies in the History Department of Fudan University, Shanghai, China. She has also been awarded a three-year Scholar of the Orient grant by Shanghai, which will continue to fund her research. At Fudan, she will be teaching on the Art and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, Iran and Central Asia and plans to resume her archaeological excavation at Kyzyltepa in Uzbekistan in the Spring of 2018. She has taken a little break from excavating to become the proud mom of twins!



Photo courtesy of Wu Xin

Digital Programs

Tom Elliott, Associate Director for Digital Programs

Starting in 2013, a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for the Digital Corpus of Literary Papyrology (DCLP) provided funding for ISAW to work jointly with the Institute of Papyrology at the University of Heidelberg and other institutions. Under the leadership of Roger Bagnall and managed by Tom Elliott, the DCLP team successfully documented nearly 15,000 fragments of ancient literary works and produced nearly 1,000 digital texts over the past four academic years. These records are now openly available at LitPap.info, using software that in the coming year will be integrated into the existing Papyri.info system operated by our partners in the Collaboratory for Classics Computing at Duke University.

Elliott, in collaboration with Prof. Sarah Bond (University of Iowa, Classics) conducted a workshop on the Pleiades gazetteer of ancient places at the annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America (Boston, January 2018). Entitled "Turning Spatial with Pleiades," the workshop focused on ways that Pleiades and its partner resources can be used to involve undergraduates in scholarly research; to prepare maps for teaching, presentation, and publication; and to connect one's own digital projects to the scholarly graph of Linked Open Data for ancient studies.



Photo courtesy of Tom Elliott

Nicola Reggiani, University of Parma (Italy), Todd Hickey, University of California, Berkeley, David Raztan, Valeria Piano, University of Florence (Italy)

Public Events

25	JANUARY ARCE Lecture: <i>My Violent King: War and Violence in Non-Royal Sources</i> Niv Allon, The Metropolitan Museum of Art		The 9th Annual M.I. Rostovtzeff Lecture Series <i>The Sky over Ancient Iraq: Babylonian Astronomy in Context</i> Mathieu Ossendrijver, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin
30	<i>Cutting Rome Down To Size: The Gentle Art of the Historical Summary</i> David Levene, ISAW Visiting Research Scholar	21	Rostovtzeff Lecture I: <i>Babylonian Astronomy: Interpreting an Ancient Science</i>
8	FEBRUARY AIA Lecture: <i>Greeks in the North: The Excavation and Survey of a Trading Port in Aegean Thrace</i> Nathan Arrington, Princeton University	28	Rostovtzeff Lecture II: <i>Keeping the Watch: Babylonian Astronomical Diaries and More</i>
20	<i>Revisiting Harappan Iconography: Seals, Sealing and Tablets as Small Windows onto the Indus Valley Civilization</i> Marta Ameri, ISAW Visiting Research Scholar	29	<i>Savoring the Past: The Archaeology of Food and Foodways</i> Katheryn Twiss, Stony Brook University
22	<i>Fragments of Greek Science in a Palimpsest from Bobbio</i> Alexander Jones, ISAW	4	APRIL Rostovtzeff Lecture III: <i>Algorithms, Tables, and Figures: New Insights into Babylonian Mathematical Astronomy</i>
27	Film Screening: <i>"The Poor Man of Nippur" in the Original Babylonian</i>	11	Rostovtzeff Lecture IV: <i>Astronomers, Temples, and Society: Babylonian Astronomy in Context</i>
8	MARCH ARCE Lecture: <i>Dirty Pictures for a Dangerous Goddess: The Turin Erotic Papyrus</i> Ann Macy Roth, New York University	12	Exhibitions Lecture: <i>Alexander to Iskandar: Paintings from Persian and Turkish Manuscripts</i> Ayşin Yoltar-Yıldırım, Brooklyn Museum
20	<i>Unscripted: The Visuality of Monumental Script in Ptolemaic Egypt</i> Emily Cole, ISAW Visiting Assistant Professor	17	<i>What Do Barbarians Eat? Food and Society at the Fringes of the Shang and Zhou World</i> Yitzchak Jaffe, ISAW Visiting Assistant Professor
		24	<i>Babylonians and Elamites in the Zagros: Where Did One World End and the Other Begin?</i> Daniel Potts, ISAW
		10	MAY Exhibitions Lecture: <i>The Migrations of Islamic Science in Renaissance Europe</i> Robert G. Morrison, Bowdoin College

All events require an RSVP at isaw.nyu.edu/rsvp or 212.992.7800 and begin at 6pm in the Lecture Hall unless otherwise noted. Admission to lectures closes 10 minutes after scheduled start time. Please visit isaw.nyu.edu for event updates.

On a limited, first-come, first-served basis, ISAW is able to provide assistive listening devices at public events in our Lecture Hall. To ensure an optimal listening experience, we recommend that guests bring their own headphones (with a standard 1/8-inch audio jack) to connect to our devices. Please direct questions, comments, or suggestions to isaw@nyu.edu.

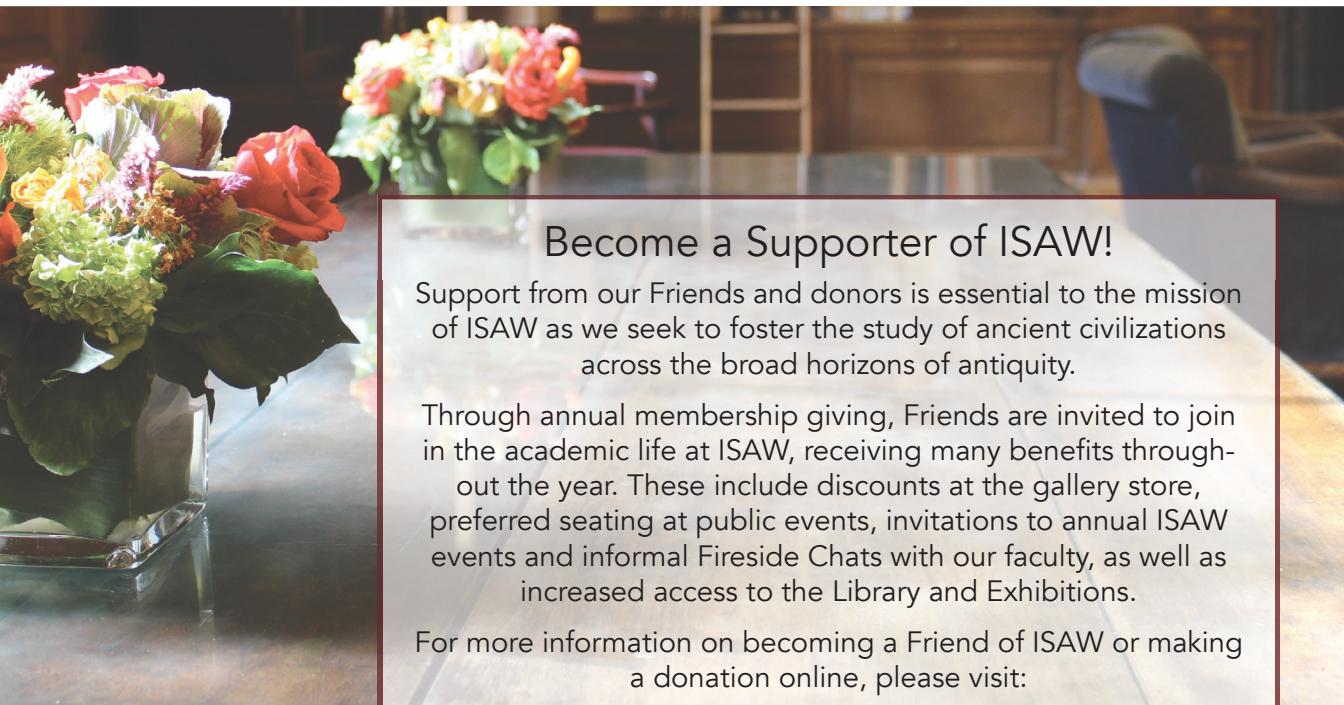
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