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INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Newsletter 23 Winter 2019

NYU | ISAW

From the Director

Eating and drinking, and the social practices associated with them, are activities that both unite all civilizations of the past and present and help to define their diversity. How do we learn about them? This issue of the ISAW Newsletter features research and teaching at our Institute that illuminate the roles of food and drink in ancient societies across the continents.

From the third millenium BCE, Beate Pongratz-Leisten examines the concept of abundance symbolized by the palm tree at Nimrud. At Bashtepa (Uzbekistan), Sören Stark and his colleagues have found abundant remains from which the diet of a Hellenistic and Post-Hellenistic Central Asian community can be reconstructed, revealing not only aspects of a way of life but also a local environment that must have been radically different from Bashtepa's present desert surroundings. A few centuries earlier and further west, ISAW doctoral student Lorenzo Castellano's palaeobotanical analyses of materials from Lorenzo d'Alfonso's excavation at Kınık Höyük (Cappadocia, Turkey) point to a flourishing local wine industry, unique for central Anatolia in this period. A different kind of evidence, not from the remains of what people ate but from human teeth and bones, leads Visiting Assistant Professor Daniela Wolin to clues to the nutrient deficiencies in the diet of late second millennium BCE China.

Teaching gives ISAW's faculty and students the opportunity to embed and contextualize their own work within that of other present and past scholars. Two graduate seminars described in this issue relate in different ways to the theme of ancient food and drink. Lorenzo d'Alfonso's forthcoming seminar will explore the production, circulation, and consumption of wine and beer in the eastern Mediterranean and western Asia. Overlapping this in geography, but contrasting in scope, Claire Bubb's recent seminar was devoted to medical-scientific and societal perspectives on food and diet in the Greco-Roman world.

In the light of this cornucopia of teaching and research at ISAW, it is especially timely that Dorian Fuller, Professor of Archaeobotany at University College, London, will present this year's Rostovtzeff Lectures series in March and April on Feeding Civilizations: A Comparative Long-Term Consideration of Agricultural and Culinary Traditions across the Old World. In four lectures whose topics span several millennia and regions from Subsaharan Africa to China, Professor Fuller will offer a framework for seeing the development of agriculture and cooking in the ancient world both as prerequisites for civilizations to exist and causes of their differentiation.

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: Fish and vegetables hanging up in a cupboard, still-life. Mosaic, Roman artwork2nd century CE. From a villa at Tor Marancia, near the Catacombs of Domitilla. Galleria dei Candelabri, Musei Vaticani. Marie-Lan Nguyen (2006)

Lectures

Tenth Annual M.I. Rostovtzeff Lecture Series

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

Feeding Civilizations: A Comparative Long-Term Consideration of Agricultural and Culinary Traditions across the Old World

Dorian Q. Fuller (Professor of Archaeobotany, University College London)

Dorian Fuller grew up in San Francisco, California. He took his B.A. at Yale University, majoring in Anthropology and Organismal Biology (1995). He received a British Marshall scholarship to study for an M.Phil. in Archaeology at Cambridge University (1997). He then received his Ph.D. from Cambridge with a dissertation on "The Emergence of Agricultural Societies in South India: Botanical and Archaeological Perspectives" (2000). He became a Lecturer at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London in 2000, where he has taught on archaeobotany, environmental archaeology, Nubia, and Asia. He was promoted to Reader (2009) and then Professor of Archaeobotany (2012). He has carried out archaeological fieldwork in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, China, Turkey, Iraq, Morocco, Ethiopia, and Sudan and archaeobotanical laboratory analyses even more widely. He co-authored *Trees and Woodlands in South India: Archaeological Perspectives* (2008) and has published more than 300 articles and chapters. He received a European Research Council Advanced Investigator Grant on "Comparative Pathways to Agriculture" (2013-2018) and several major grants from the UK Natural Environment Research Council.

An activity that all humans and all societies share is the cooking, preparation and sharing of food. And while food is a biological necessity it is heavily framed by cultural traditions and social constructs. It is well-known that cooking separates Homo sapiens and its immediate ancestors from all other primates, and this involvement with easier to digest cooked foods afforded us larger brains, smaller guts, and a new focus for the evolution of technology and techniques—for getting, preparing, storing, and serving food. A subfield of archaeology, archaeobotany, has concerned itself with the recovery of material traces of plants, an essential component of all dietary diversity, providing evidence both of what people ate, where it came from—field or forest—but also how it was transformed into the artefacts we call prepared foods, drinks or meals. As recognized by the French anthropologist Lévi-Strauss in works such as *Le Cru et le Cuit* (1964), the raw, the cooked, and the rotten provide a potent framework through which to view cultural constructions of the social and natural world.

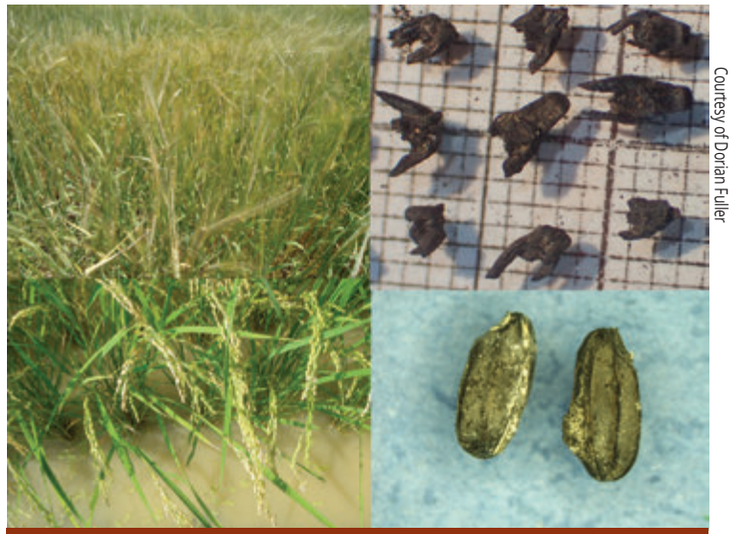
These lectures will explore how agricultural production and cooking traditions both underpinned the possibility of civilization and also helped to characterize the regionally distinct forms that civilization took across the Old World, especially in China, Mesopotamia, Egypt, southern India, and parts of sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, the lecture series will explore how plants were transformed through domestication into the basis of agricultural economies and how plant products were turned into the food products that both supported large human populations and underpinned social differentiation. The term *civilization* is used in two senses: first, in the sense common in English anthropological literature as relating to cities, states, and hierarchical or complex societies; and, second, in a Francophone (Maussian) sense of defining regional constellations of cultural patterns that transcend individual polities but unite regional networks societies.

March 27, Lecture I: *Domestication, Demography, and Settlement: Alternative Mathematics for Early Agriculture*

This lecture will reconsider the origins of agriculture based on recent empirical evidence that tells us both how grain crops were domesticated and how slowly this process unfolded, in West Asia, East Asia, parts of Africa, and India. Archaeobotany is providing a growing evidence base for the ways in which plants became adapted as crops through morphological changes, which were in turn tied to shifts in human practices. The co-evolution was slow, however, and it will be argued that the more revolutionary shift towards agricultural economies was substantially later (a few millennia) than the start of domestication itself. Agricultural economies can be defined as those systems in which wild foraging came to make a much reduced or even marginal caloric contribution to diet, and efforts at food production began to take place at a landscape scale. Different regional trajectories, however, differed in terms of the nature of landuse due to fundamental differences in the potential of crop yields, and the diversity of the initial crop package. This meant that some regions, such as West Asia based on wheat, barley, and pulses or the Yangtze based on flooded rice and fish, were able to sustain denser populations, while other regions, like savannas in Africa or India or the northern Chinese steppe were more prone to agricultural expansion through population dispersal and regional infilling. Thus from the starting point of domestication we can trace variations in productive capacity that underpinned the demographic processes that led to the emergence of cities across parts of the Old World.

April 3, Lecture II: *From Sustainability to Investment Agriculture: Logics of Productive Consumption and Disparity*

Between the Neolithic origins of agriculture and the establishment of hierarchical, urban societies, key agricultural transformations took place. These included both the expanded production of staple grains, underpinned by innovations in agriculture, and the development of additional domesticated crops, especially perennial trees and shrubs. Innovations varied across Old World regions, but included the deployment of animal labour in tillage (in West Asia), control of water (in Yangtze China), new crop combinations and rotations that improved maintenance of soil fertility (in North China), but also interdependent specialization in pastoral versus crop production (in parts of Africa). Post-Neolithic agricultural innovation also included the domestication of perennial tree fruits and vines, from olives, grapes and dates in the West, to peaches and jujube in the East, to cotton, mango and citron in India. These new perennial crops required a new time perspective, investment for yields 5, 10 or 20 years in the future, and with nothing like the caloric return of grains. This only became possible through the development of secure, longer term land tenure, and made sense in terms of a logic of production for trade, as agricultural produce became part of the emerging commodification that was prevalent in early cities. This overall trajectory was one of a shift from a Neolithic emphasis on sustainability of food supply and landuse towards investment agriculture for longer-term wealth generation from the land. The varied potential of land to return investment contributed to disparity between landholders and across regions.



Courtesy of Dorian Fuller

Photographs of rainfed wheat from Iraq (top left) and flooded rice from Japan (bottom left) alongside archaeobotanical evidence from the Neolithic: wheat spikelet forks from Çatalhöyük, Turkey (top right), ca. 6500 BC, and rice grains from Tianluoshan, China (bottom right), ca. 4750 BC.

April 8, Lecture III: *Sticking with the Spirits: Eastern Cuisines, Grain Wines, and Civilization*

While regional variation in the production of food and farming systems underpinned trajectories towards civilization, these foodstuffs were transformed in distinctive ways, that defined, or perhaps flavoured, regional civilization. In other words how the raw became the cooked constructed distinct regional styles of culinary civilization. This can be derived from the observation that the early Near East developed cereal farming in the absence of cooking ceramics, with an emphasis on flour and bread (a theme of the next lecture), whereas East Asian societies were making pots and boiling in them millennia before the first hint of cultivation. In this lecture we explore the patterns of cooking and brewing in East and South East through a triangulation that includes the archaeological tools of food processing, the genetic variations in crops that indicate past selection for aesthetic or culinary traits like stickiness, and ethnographic or historical sources on how foods were prepared, and understood as they were consumed routinely or ritually.

April 17, Lecture IV: *Baking up Western Civilization and Some African Alternatives*

Baked bread is both basic to west Asian civilization and distinctive of it in the global context. The origins of cereal agriculture in Western Asia preceded the development of cooking pots, but instead processing focused on production of flour and breads. This is most obvious in the widespread archaeological distribution of ovens from southeastern Europe through the Indus and up the Nile to Nubia. It is also reflected in the relative prominence of querns for grinding, as well as new archaeobotanical techniques for identifying crumbs of bread or crusts of porridge. At first bread may have been the distinctive new cereal food, unlike anything that was easily cooked from wild gathered foods. But later bread lent itself to portability, and therefore to sharing among traders, travellers and across the echelons of society. It complemented the cheeses and butters that pastoral producers might also make portable. Bread could be shared as offerings to distant gods alongside odours of incense and roast sacrificial meats. Meanwhile production of agricultural commodities, like grapes and wine, provided innovations that were to transform bread, namely yeast for leavening and from brewing beers—a process that relied on individual grain germination rather than whole grain cooking—but that resulted in an agricultural produce that could take its place within the urban economy, and social interaction.

Teaching and Research

Expansionist Politics and the Creation of an Emblem of Universal Kingship

Beate Pongratz-Leisten, Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Studies

At the end of the third millennium BCE, in his famous hymn accounting the renovation of the temple of the warrior god Ningirsu, Gudea, ruler of Lagash, relates how Ningirsu and his consort Bau took possession of his new residence. The gods' arrival was celebrated with a theogamy of the couple in their bedchamber that had been sumptuously adorned by the king. The hymn expounds on how the divine union generated abundance in the rivers, marshes, sheepfolds, and the entire land. This early royal account of creating the cultic context for the divine marriage and the divine response by providing the land with abundance and prosperity sets the stage for our interpretation of the symbol of the sacred tree, which, in Assyria, came to be represented as a palm tree during the second half of the second millennium BCE, and which developed into a central element of Assyrian iconography.

Courtesy of the British Museum

Wall relief from the Throne Room in Ashurnasirpal II's Northwest Palace at Nimrud showing the sacred tree flanked by two representations of the king who again is accompanied by genii performing pollination (British Museum 124531)

With the far reaching expansion of Assyria to the West, during the ninth century BCE under King Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BCE), a programmatic icon was created to express the notion of universal control. The iconographic configuration is reminiscent of the Hittite royal aedicule seals which, with the expansion of Suppiluliuma I (1344-1322 BCE) into Syria, combined the name of the king in the middle, flanked by the signs for 'Great King' with the winged sun disk to propagate the notion of universal kingship. In Assyria, the iconographers chose a similar structure while exchanging its individual constituents. They replaced the royal name with the sacred tree in the shape of a stylized date palm surrounded by palmettes which was flanked by two representations of the king – or even ancestor kings - on both sides and above hovered the god Ashur or the sun god Shamash (scholarship is divided in this regard) in the winged disk whose gesture of pointing his finger towards the king insinuated the situation of the god selecting the king into his office and of subsequent perpetual human-divine communication.

Drawing of the aedicule seal of Suppiluliuma I

In rituals, the saplings and fruit of the palm tree stand in as symbols for profuse growth and fertility. While the tree's rich productiveness was associated with agricultural abundance, and while it is represented in many variations, often with protective genii only, this particular iconic configuration as chosen by Ashurnasirpal II crystallized the notion of universal control effected by the interdependence of plenitude and prosperity provided by the gods in response to the king's proper cultic behavior on the one hand, and of guaranteed divine protection due to continuous human-divine communication on the other. The eternal cycle of human-divine interdependent action was not only represented on a large relief behind the throne pedestal in the king's throne room, but also embroidered on the clothes (here on the right sleeve of the shirt) of the Assyrian ruler (here with the winged sun disk), who through his very performance and agency embodied this complex ideological message.

Courtesy of the Hood Museum

The icon on the sleeve of the king's shoulder

Courtesy of the Hood Museum

A black and white enlarged detail of the icon

Research and Teaching on Ancient Wine

Lorenzo d'Alfonso, Associate Professor of Ancient Western Asian Archaeology and History

Recent fieldwork in Cappadocia (Turkey), at the site of Kınık Höyük, uncovered unique evidence of grapevine cultivation and wine production in the first millennium BCE central Anatolia. In this region, the Neo-Hittite rock reliefs depict the Storm-god of the vineyard, holding a grapevine in one hand and an ear of wheat in the other, in place of the usual iconography of mace and thunder. This indicates that grapes and wine were key for this region in pre-classical times. ISAW PhD student Lorenzo Castellano conducted palaeobotanic analyses which prove that grapevine cultivation was widespread, becoming so intensive between ca. 500-50 BCE that the inhabitants of the site regularly used pruned grapevine branches as fuel for fires. This evidence is unique within central Anatolia; in contrast, even the floral record from Gordion, capital of ancient Phrygia, counts almost no grapevine remains in the same period.

Since Ancient Greek poets, historians, and vase painters conceived Phrygia as the most ancient nation in the world, attributing to it nearly all pre-classical Anatolian memory, they associated Phrygia with wine cultivation, production, use, and inebriation. Thus, the Phrygian golden-touch King Midas was said to have captured half-man, half-horse Silenus by filling a spring with wine and intoxicating him in order to profit from his wine-derived, inspired wisdom.

In an ISAW graduate course this spring, we will explore these early periods of wine production and their development in western Asia and the eastern Mediterranean. In addition to studying archaeological methodologies to investigate ancient wine and the context of its use, circulation, and storage, the course will investigate the social rituals associated with wine-drinking and how these developed from the late Neolithic down to the archaic Greek banquet (symposion). Simultaneously, the course will cover beer-drinking and its relation to the evolution of wine's economic and cultural value in the Mediterranean.

Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Silenus Captured Drunk by the Guards of King Midas: Black-figure Painted Wine Jar, c 510 BCE

Research on the study of ancient wine has made enormous progress in the last twenty years, identifying the area between the south Caucasus and eastern Turkey as the place of domestication of the grapevine and the first production of wine.

Teaching and Research

The Dinner Table of the Silk Roads Two Thousand Years Ago

Sören Stark, Associate Professor of Central Asian Art and Archaeology

As our excavations at the Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic site of Bashtepa in the Kyzyl-kum desert in central Uzbekistan continued over the summer of 2018, we obtained more fascinating data regarding the diet of its former inhabitants.

First, there is evidence of meat—a lot of meat: in 2018 alone, we recovered well over 150 pounds of animal bones from both domesticated and wild species, pointing to meat consumption on a surprisingly massive scale at this rather small site (less than half a hectare in size). But our seed-record (investigated by Rob Spengler and his team at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Jena, Germany) shows that the inhabitants of Bashtepa also consumed free-threshing wheat (a highly compact variety as well as a lax-eared variety), hulled six-rowed barley (possibly also two-rowed barley), broomcorn millet, foxtail millet, grass peas, and lentils. All of this was probably washed down by generous portions of wine, as suggested by the ubiquitous presence of grape seeds in our flotation samples (see image for our flotation device in action). This serves as a reminder that wine consumption, often excessively practiced, has very deep roots in the feasting culture of the Greater Iranian world to which the ancient inhabitants of Bashtepa belonged.

Courtesy of Sören Stark

Floating soil samples from Bashtepa at the base near Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Somewhat more surprising, especially if one's gaze wanders across nothing but sand dunes in the endless desert plain in which Bashtepa is now situated, is the abundance of fish bones in our record. In fact, fish of all kinds – from very small, anchovy-like species to large carps – must have been a fixture on the dinner tables of Bashtepa. This is a clear indication that the ancient settlement at Bashtepa was once surrounded by a landscape that must have looked very different from today's: full of lakes, ponds, and meandering rivers.

Finally, by carefully floating numerous soil samples, we detected that the waste deposits at Bashtepa are full of highly fragmented eggshells. We are currently trying to determine if these are chicken eggs. This would provide us with one of the earliest Central Asian examples of this favorite breakfast staple.

Food and Diet in Greco-Roman Antiquity

Claire Bubb, Assistant Professor/Faculty Fellow of Classical Literature and Science

This past spring I led a group of students and scholars from ISAW and NYU Classics in a seminar considering food and diet in Greco-Roman antiquity through three different lenses: science, practice, and culture. Beginning with an overview of theories of nutrition and digestion, we discussed medical advice on regimen, a concept that in the Greco-Roman world extended beyond diet as we think of it today to include sleep, exercise, bathing, sexual habits, and even wardrobe. The Greeks in particular put a major emphasis on diet as a preventative tool, but also regarded dietetic change as a safer and gentler therapeutic alternative to the pharmacopeia. We then considered the practicalities of diet, finding that food penetrated all areas of antiquity; our readings here ranged from archaeological surveys of animal bone fragments on ancient farms to Virgilian poetry, from reconstructions of Greek religious sacrifice and Roman military diets to economic theories of supply and demand in the grain trade. Finally, we turned to the culture surrounding food. Here we saw that, like today, the ancients were acutely aware of the social and philosophical ramifications of the foods they chose to eat. Diet was a means through which to express—and be judged for—one's wealth, status, taste, and moral convictions. As Juvenal reminds us, "you must know your own measure and keep it in sight in matters great and small, even in the business of buying fish" (Satire XI.35-38 (Braund)).

Roman mosaic from in house VIII.2.16 in Pompeii. Museo Archeologico Nazionale (Naples), inv. nr. 120177

From Oracle to Human Bones: Documenting Health in Late Shang, China

Daniela Wolin, Visiting Assistant Professor, 2018-2020

Inscriptions on oracle bones document ritual divinations carried out by the elite members of society during China's Late Shang period (ca. 1250-1050 BCE). These inscriptions include health-related issues, such as a series of divinations seeking to identify which ancestor was causing King Wu Ding's "sick tooth" in order to provide a conciliatory sacrificial offering. While we cannot directly diagnose the maladies that appear in the paleographic record, bioarchaeological analyses of human skeletal remains from the core site of Yinxu in Anyang city, Henan province have revealed a suite of possible candidates for the cause of Wu Ding's toothache. Specifically, widespread caries (cavities), abscesses, and periodontal disease have all been documented among the population. These pathologies would not only have been extremely painful, but could ultimately result in tooth loss – or worse.

A large periapical abscess in the maxilla of a Bronze Age individual

Bioarchaeology is well-suited to identify periods of health and nutritional stress occurring across a person's lifetime. For example, dental defects can record episodes of physiological stress during childhood. Deficiencies in vitamins and minerals – often exacerbated by chronic infection – also leave lasting signatures on the skeleton. While the in-depth study of one individual can inform us about their lived experiences, putting a face to the ancient world, population-wide studies can communicate larger social trends and trajectories in health. When integrated with the paleographic record and archaeological evidence from nearly a century of systematic excavations at Yinxu, the bioarchaeological research carried out by myself and other scholars can contribute to our overall understanding of the dynamic interplay between health and the socio-political, cultural, and economic conditions of Bronze Age China.

Community News

On Friday, January 4th, 2019 the American Society of Papyrologists (ASP) called an "exceptional business meeting" at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Classical Studies in order to award Professor Emeritus Roger Bagnall, the first Leon Levy Director of the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, the title of Honorary President.

As Prof. James Keenan recounted at the ceremony, Prof. Bagnall played an integral role in the life of the Society from its early days as an undergraduate at Yale in the late 1960s through its subsequent development over the last fifty years, repeatedly serving as an officer, an editor of its scholarly publications, and a trustee. In his remarks Prof. Keenan noted not only Prof. Bagnall's tireless service to the organization and his contributions to its journal (Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists) and monograph series, but also his pioneering scholarship, his instrumental role in organizing, implementing, and now endowing papyri.info, which has become the indispensable online tool in papyrology, and his commitment to training the next generation of papyrologists through the resurrection and endowment of the ASP Summer Institutes.

The ASP has bestowed the title of Honorary President for Life only once before in 1973, on Herbert Chayyim Youtie of the University of Michigan, one of the Society's original 25 members.

Courtesy of David Ratzan

L to R:Todd Hickey (ASP President), Jennifer Sheridan Moss (Past President), Roger Bagnall, William Johnson (Secretary-Treasurer)

Exhibitions

Hymn to Apollo: The Ancient World and the Ballets Russes

March 6 —June 2, 2019

Hymn to Apollo: The Ancient World and the Ballets Russes explores the seminal role of antiquity in shaping the radically new creations of the famed ballet troupe founded in 1909 by Sergei Diaghilev.

Background

Ancient Greece left us tantalizing clues about the nature of dance in antiquity, with depictions of dancers in sculptures in the round and in relief, vase paintings, and other media. Yet without technical treatises or dance notation, ancient dance remains elusive, a lost art. What we do know, thanks to texts by authors including Plato, Petrarch, and Aristotle, to name only a few, is that it was performed, usually by a chorus, in conjunction with music, poetry, and theater—one component of something like what would later be interpreted as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or total work of art; that it was central to religious rituals; and that it had the potential to express fundamental truths about the human condition.

The mysteries of the ancient rituals to which dance was integral attracted many early twentieth-century artists, choreographers, and composers, who drew freely and imaginatively from the evidence provided by artifacts and texts, creating something radically new by looking back. In this they were helped by the numerous archaeological objects entering Western European museums and other collections and appearing in newspapers and magazines during the so-called golden age of archaeology. *Hymn to Apollo* shows how this company brilliantly interpreted images and forms from ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt to pioneer radically new approaches to choreography, music, costume, and stage design.

Attributed to the Frignano Painter. Skyphos with a Dancing Maenad. Late Classical, 375–350 BCE. Terracotta. Campania, Italy. H. 16.5 cm; W. 15 cm. Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Gift of Dr. Harris Kennedy, Class of 1894: 1932.56.39 Photo: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College

Exhibition

Hymn to Apollo opens with a terracotta skyphos (375–350 BCE), painted with a dancing maenad (a worshipper of Dionysus). While images like this figure did not represent actual dance steps, we can see that they did reveal poses and costumes that would offer a wealth of choreographic and formal inspiration to Ballets Russes collaborators. The dancer depicted here, for example—full-figured and wearing a loose-fitting dress, her head thrown back in ecstasy—provides a vivid image of the Dionysian passion that would inform some of the Ballets Russes best-known productions.

Among those who drew on classical art and motifs was the Ballets Russes' prolific set and costume designer Léon Bakst (1866–1924). This may be seen in a watercolor of a costume that Bakst designed for Tamara Karsavina, who danced the role of Chloé in the Ballets Russes production *Daphnis et Chloé*. The image shows how the Greek-inspired costumes designed by Bakst gave the Ballets Russes dancer greater physical freedom and more overtly expressive gestures than traditionally dressed ballerinas. Indeed, the figure's powerful sense of movement and her provocative dress are reminiscent of the maenad on the skyphos described above.

Inspired, in part, by ancient art and mythological figures, *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* (*The Afternoon of a Faun*) choreographed for the Ballets Russes by Vaslav Nijinsky, is a story of sexual awakening. With music by Claude Debussy and scenery and costumes by Bakst, it tells the tale of a faun who pursues a group of nymphs on their way to bathe, frightening off all but one. When she too flees, dropping her scarf, the faun, danced by Nijinsky himself, finds the scarf and uses it to mime a final sexual gesture that scandalized audiences when the ballet was first performed in Paris in 1912.

Hymn to Apollo includes a group of stunning photographs of *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* taken by Adolf de Meyer (1868–1946), one of the preeminent photographers of the pre-World War I Ballets Russes. Seeking to create an environment that evoked a world apart, de Meyer used his own lighting schemes, shot some images through gauze, and elaborately retouched his negatives, giving his pictures a painterly quality. Maintaining both the shallow stage space created by Bakst's designs and Nijinsky's two-dimensional treatment of space, the photographs, like Nijinsky's choreography, have the look of ancient relief carving.

Apollo was the god of music, poetry, knowledge, and healing, and stood for order and intellectual enrichment; he was half-brother to Dionysus, who is identified with devotion to the pleasures of the body. Apollo, too, inspired Ballets Russes productions, including *Apollon Musagète* (1928), choreographed by a young George Balanchine (who would later revise it for New York's City Ballet) with music by Igor Stravinsky. Rather than representing Apollo as a heroic Olympian

Léon Bakst. Costume Design for Tamara Karsavina as Chloé, for *Daphnis et Chloé*. ca. 1912. Graphite and tempera and/or watercolor on paper. H. 28.2 cm; W. 44.7 cm. Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT, The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund: 1933.392 Image: Allen Phillips/Wadsworth Atheneum

from the very outset, the ballet followed his growth from, in Balanchine's words, "a boy with long hair" to his ascent to the peak of Mount Parnassus. Stravinsky's score was for strings alone, a serene and transparent orchestration that inspired Balanchine's choreography. *Apollon Musagète* is illuminated through photographs, a page from Stravinsky's hand-written score, and a digitized audio recording of the music.

Ancient Egypt was the source for *Cléopâtre* (*Cleopatra*) (1909), a one-act ballet featuring ecstatic Dionysian movement, with choreography by Michel Fokine, scenery and costumes by Bakst, and music by a potpourri of Russian composers. Cleopatra was initially performed by the daring, strikingly beautiful, and erotic Ida Rubinstein, and Amoun by Fokine himself. Bakst's dazzling costume for a female slave is here, a multi-colored, multi-patterned dress that contains a frieze-like design of Egyptian-style figures in profile.

Bakst's set and many of his costumes for *Cléopâtre* were destroyed in a fire on one of the company's many tours, and Diaghilev commissioned visual artists Sonia and Robert Delaunay to create new costumes and a new set. Watercolors and photographs of some of their designs show that while the artists looked to ancient Egyptian art for inspiration, their works, clearly conceived in a modernist register, straddle the line between abstract form and representation.

Bakst continued to have a working relationship with Ida Rubinstein after she left the Ballets Russes. One of their final collaborations was on Rubinstein's production of the ballet *Phèdre* (1923), represented here by an array of designs including costumes and stage props such as an amphora with decorations bearing similarities to a vessel excavated from the Egyptian tomb of Sennedjem, on view nearby.

Another contemporary artist called upon to work with the Ballets Russes was Giorgio de Chirico, who designed both costumes and sets for *Le Bal* (*The Ball*) (1929), a tale of love, deception, and jealousy unfolding at a masquerade ball. While the story does not take place in ancient times, de Chirico's designs—like his paintings—were nonetheless inspired by ancient landscapes and architectural ruins. As seen in a costume for a male guest, the artist painted architectural fragments directly onto the ensemble so that bricks, columns, and capitals come to life as the dancers move. *Le Bal* was Diaghilev's final ballet before his unexpected death in 1929, but the company's new, modern vision of the ancient world was one part of its enduring legacy in the history of dance.

Support

Hymn to Apollo: The Ancient World and the Ballets Russes and its accompanying catalogue were made possible by generous support from the Selz Foundation, The New York Community Trust—LuEsther T. Mertz Advised Fund, Anne H. Bass, the Evelyn Sharp Foundation, and the Leon Levy Foundation. Additional funding has been provided by Mr. and Mrs. Frederick W. Beinecke.

Public Programs

Gallery Talks: *Object Histories*
Wednesdays, March 6–May 29
11:30-11:50am; No RSVP Required

March 12 Lecture: *Hymn to Apollo**
Clare Fitzgerald, ISAW; 7:00pm
*La Maison Française NYU, 16 Washington Mews

March 25 Event: *Afternoon of a Faun: Nijinsky, Robbins and Antiquity;** 6:30pm
*Center for Ballet and the Arts, 16-20 Cooper Sq

March 28 Lecture: *Pilgrimage to an Imagined West: Antiquity and the Early Ballets Russes*
Lynn Garafola, Columbia University

April 11 Lecture: *Moving in Parallel: Ancient and Modern Dance Makers*
Tom Sapsford, University of Southern California

April 13 Event: *Sketching from Models;* 1:00pm
Joan Chiverton, Fashion Institute of Technology

April 28 & 29 Event: *Reid Bartelme and Harriet Jung Design Dialogues* (with Works & Process at the Guggenheim);* 7:30pm
*Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 5th Ave

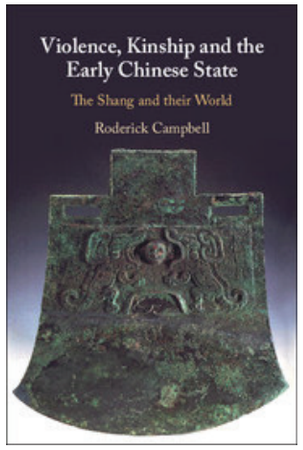
May 4 Event: *Sketching from Models*; 1:00pm
Joan Chiverton, Fashion Institute of Technology

May 9 Lecture: *Dance as Reverie: Ancient Preludes to a Modern Idea*
Anastasia-Erasmia Peponi, Stanford University

Publications

Recent Publications

A selection of books by ISAW faculty and former scholars



Roderick Campbell (ISAW Associate Professor of East Asian Archaeology and History), *Violence, Kinship and the Early Chinese State: The Shang and their World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

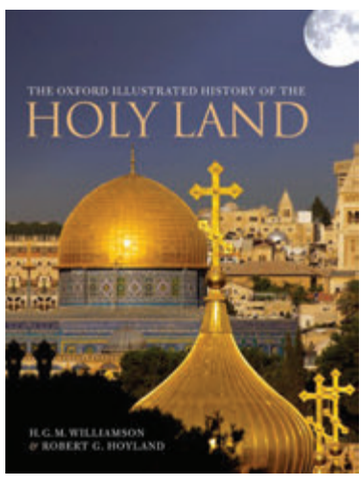
Situated between myth and history, the Shang has been hailed both as China's first historical dynasty and as one of the world's primary civilizations. This book is an up-to-date synthesis of the archaeological, palaeographic and transmitted textual evidence for the Shang polity at Anyang (c.1250–1050 BCE). Roderick Campbell argues that violence was not the antithesis of civilization at Shang Anyang, but rather its foundation in war and sacrifice. He explores the social economy of practices and beliefs that produced the ancestral order of the Shang polity. From the authority of posthumously deified kings, to the animalization of human sacrificial victims, the ancestral ritual complex structured the Shang world through its key institutions of war, sacrifice, and burial. Mediated by hierarchical lineages, participation in these practices was basic to being Shang. This volume, which is based on the most up-to-date evidence, offers comprehensive and cutting-edge insight into the Chinese Bronze Age civilization.

Robert G. Hoyland (ISAW Professor of Late Antique and Early Islamic Middle Eastern History), *The 'History of the Kings of the Persians' in Three Arabic Chronicles: The Transmission of the Iranian Past from Late Antiquity to Early Islam* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018).

This book translates the sections on pre-Islamic Persia in three Muslim Arabic chronicles, those of Ahmad al-Ya'qubi (d. ca. 910), 'Ali al-Mas'udi (d. ca. 960) and Hamza al-Isfahani (d. ca. 960s). Their accounts, like those of many other Muslim historians on this topic, draw on texts that were composed in the period 750-850 bearing the title 'The History of the Kings of the Persians.' These works served a growing audience of well-to-do Muslim bureaucrats and scholars of Persian ancestry, who were interested in their heritage and wished to make it part of the historical outlook of the new civilization that was emerging in the Middle East, namely Islamic civilization. This book explores the question of how knowledge about ancient Iran was transmitted to Muslim historians, in what forms it circulated and how it was shaped and refashioned for the new Perso-Muslim elite that served the early Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad, a city that was built only a short distance away from the old Persian capital of Seleucia-Ctesiphon.

Robert G. Hoyland (ISAW Professor of Late Antique and Early Islamic Middle Eastern History) and H. G. M Williamson, eds., *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Holy Land* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

The Oxford Illustrated History of the Holy Land covers the 3,000 years which saw the rise of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—and relates the familiar stories of the sacred texts with the fruits of modern scholarship. Beginning with the origins of the people who became the Israel of the Bible, it follows the course of the ensuing millennia down to the time when the Ottoman Empire succumbed to British and French rule at the end of the First World War.



Parts of the story, especially as known from the Bible, will be widely familiar. Less familiar are the ways in which modern research, both from archaeology and from other ancient sources, sometimes modify this story historically. Better understanding, however, enables us to appreciate crucial chapters in the story of the Holy Land, such as how and why Judaism developed in the way that it did from the earlier sovereign states of Israel and Judah and the historical circumstances in which Christianity emerged from its Jewish cradle. Later parts of the story are vital not only for the history of Islam and its relationships with the two older religions, but also for the development of pilgrimage and religious tourism, as well as the notions of sacred space and of holy books with which we are still familiar today.

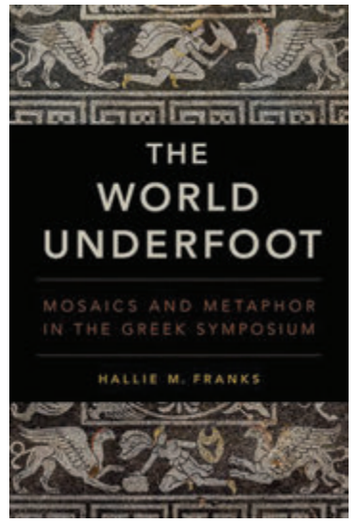
Sensitive to the concerns of those for whom the sacred books of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are of paramount religious authority, the authors all try sympathetically to show how historical information from other sources, as well as scholarly study of the texts themselves, enriches our understanding of the history of the region and its prominent position in the world's cultural and intellectual history.

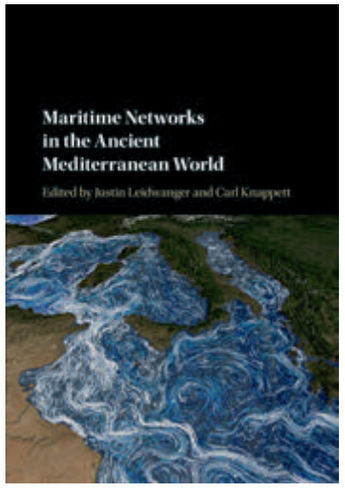
Alexander Jones (ISAW Professor of the History of the Exact Sciences in Antiquity and Leon Levy Director) and Liba Taub, eds., *The Cambridge History of Science*, Vol. 1: *Ancient Science* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

This volume in the highly respected *Cambridge History of Science* series is devoted to the history of science, medicine and mathematics of the Old World in antiquity. Organized by topic and culture, its essays by distinguished scholars offer the most comprehensive and up-to-date history of ancient science currently available. Together, they reveal the diversity of goals, contexts, and accomplishments in the study of nature in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, China, and India. Intended to provide a balanced and inclusive treatment of the ancient world, contributors consider scientific, medical and mathematical learning in the cultures associated with the ancient world.

Hallie M. Franks (ISAW Associated Faculty and ISAW VRS 2012-13), *The World Underfoot: Mosaics and Metaphor in the Greek Symposium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

In the Greek Classical period, the symposium—the social gathering at which male citizens gathered to drink wine and engage in conversation—was held in a room called the andron. From couches set up around the perimeter, symposiasts looked inward to the room's center, which often was decorated with a pebble mosaic floor. These mosaics provided visual treats for the guests, presenting them with images of mythological scenes, exotic flora, dangerous beasts, hunting parties, or the spectre of Dionysos: the god of wine, riding in his chariot or on the back of a panther. In *The World Underfoot*, Hallie M. Franks takes as her subject these mosaics and the context of their viewing. Relying on discourses in the sociology and anthropology of space, she presents an innovative new interpretation of the mosaic imagery as an active contributor to the symposium as a metaphorical experience. Franks argues that the images on mosaic floors, combined with the ritualized circling of the wine cup and the physiological reaction to wine during the symposium, would have called to mind other images, spaces, or experiences, and in doing so, prompted drinkers to reimagine the symposium as another kind of event—a nautical voyage, a journey to a foreign land, the circling heavens or a choral dance, or the luxury of an abundant past. Such spatial metaphors helped to forge the intimate bonds of friendship that are the ideal result of the symposium and that make up the political and social fabric of the Greek polis.





Justin Leidwanger (ISAW VRS 2011-12) and Carl Knappett, eds., *Maritime Networks in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

This volume brings together scholars of Mediterranean archaeology, ancient history, and complexity science to advance theoretical approaches and analytical tools for studying maritime connectivity. For the coast-hugging populations of the ancient Mediterranean, mobility and exchange depended on a distinct environment and technological parameters that created diverse challenges and opportunities, making the modeling of maritime interaction a paramount concern for understanding cultural interaction more generally. Network-inspired metaphors have long been employed in discussions of this interaction, but increasing theoretical sophistication and advances in formal network analysis now offer opportunities to refine and test the dominant paradigm of connectivity. Extending from prehistory into the Byzantine period, the case studies here reveal the potential of such network approaches. Collectively they explore the social, economic, religious, and political structures that guided Mediterranean interaction across maritime space.

Conferences

Opening of the Digital Exhibition: *The Sogdians: Influencers on the Silk Roads*

Organized by Judith A. Lerner (ISAW) and Thomas Wide (Freer|Sackler)
January 28, 5:00pm

This "born-digital" event celebrated the going "live" of the first exhibition, digital or otherwise, devoted to the Sogdians, a Central Asian Iranian people who served as "middlemen" in the circulation of people and commodities as well as religious and artistic ideas, along the Silk Roads, during the 5th to 8th centuries CE. The exhibition combines the latest academic research with a variety of digital media: from interactive maps to 3D photogrammetry, drone footage of archaeological sites, to video interviews with leading scholars. It is a case study of how the digital humanities can bring scholarship on the ancient world to new audiences.

Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum

Wall Painting of Sogdian Banqueters. Panjikent, Tajikistan (ancient Sogdiana), Site XVI:10, first half of 8th century CE. H. 136 × W. 364 cm. The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, SA-16215-16217

This collaborative project has been organized by the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. It is made possible through the generosity of the Leon Levy Foundation, with additional support from the Thaw Charitable Trust and the Smithsonian Provost Scholarly Studies Award program. It has involved curators, scholars, digital designers, and graduate students affiliated with NYU's Center for Experimental Humanities, ISAW, and Bard Graduate Center, along with partner institutions in Russia, France, Uzbekistan and Japan and an international group of scholars.

Because ISAW has taken a leading role in the development of the exhibition, it hosted a brief program featuring those who have been most instrumental in its development. At the reception that followed, guests were able to go online to view the exhibition.

MATERIA III: New Approaches to Material Text in the Ancient World

Conference organized by Joseph Howley (Columbia University), Stephanie Frampton (MIT), David M. Ratzan (ISAW)
April 5, 9:00am

The MATERIA Conference is a series of colloquia dedicated to presenting new research on books and other media in antiquity, bringing together scholars from a variety of disciplines—history, literature, epigraphy, papyrology, archeology, manuscript studies, etc. The first two MATERIA meetings, held in 2016 (Columbia University) and 2017 (MIT), pursued a more traditional focus on the book and the literary in order to advance a broader understanding of the history of the book in the Roman world. With MATERIA III at NYU's Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, we extend this discussion to consider approaches to material text in Greco-Roman antiquity and other ancient civilizations between 500 BCE and 500 CE in terms of, but also beyond, the category of "the book." We will explore a variety of objects ancient readers and users would have encountered that looked like books, but weren't, as well as practices related to reading and writing outside of books per se. Speakers will draw from evidence across the methodological spectrum of ancient studies and related fields to explore the wider world of literate activity, not by way of "literacy" or "the literary," but by way of practice, technology, and ideology. The aim is to foster discussion between scholars who work on disparate aspects of ancient material text, reading and writing, in different cultural traditions and who are interested in sharing their expertise with others who approach the topic from different perspectives.

Burning of tablets in Hadrianic debt relief, detail of the Anaglypha Traiani

The conference is co-sponsored by ISAW, Columbia University Faculty of Arts & Sciences Lenfest Junior Faculty Development Fund, and NYU Classics. RSVP required at isaw.nyu.edu/rsvp.

Public Events

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.

JAN

31 *The Practical Archaeologist's Approach to 3D Modeling and Related Technologies*
Sebastian Heath, ISAW

FEB

05 *Assyria Identities: The Role of Elite Individuals in the Art of Assyria*
David Kertai, ISAW Visiting Research Scholar

12 *The Archaeology of Colors: Polychromy and Classical Chinese Bronze Art*
Allison Miller, ISAW Visiting Research Scholar

19 *Mastering Speed: The Bronze Age of Mongolia*
Ursula Brosseder, ISAW Visiting Research Scholar

26 New York Aegean Bronze Age Colloquium: *The Recently Discovered Kiln Complex at Gournia: Its Construction and Operation within the Late Minoan IA Settlement*
Brian S. Kunkel, Hunter College

28 Theodore N. Romanoff Lecture (ARCE): *'The Medium is the Message': The Mechanics of Egyptian Royal Living-Rock Stelae*
Jennifer Grice Thum, Harvard Art Museums

MAR

12 *Return to Sumer: New Archaeological Investigations in South Iraq*
Stephanie Rost, ISAW Visiting Assistant Professor

12 Exhibition Lecture: *Hymn to Apollo**
Clare Fitzgerald, ISAW; 7:00pm
*La Maison Française NYU, 16 Washington Mews

14 AIA Lecture: *Discourses on Empire: Roman Baths Here, There, and Everywhere*
Maryl B. Gensheimer, University of Maryland

25 Exhibition Event: *Afternoon of a Faun: Nijinsky, Robbins and Antiquity;** 6:30pm
*Center for Ballet and the Arts, 16-20 Cooper Sq

28 Exhibition Lecture: *Pilgrimage to an Imagined West: Antiquity and the Early Ballets Russes*
Lynn Garafola, Columbia University

APR

11 Exhibition Lecture: *Moving in Parallel: Ancient and Modern Dance Makers*
Tom Sapsford, University of Southern California

The 10th Annual M.I. Rostovtzeff Lecture Series
Feeding Civilizations: A Comparative Long-Term Consideration of Agricultural and Culinary Traditions across the Old World
Dorian Q. Fuller, University College London
Supported in part by a generous endowment fund given by Roger and Whitney Bagnall

March 27: *Domestication, Demography and Settlement: Alternative Mathematics for Early Agriculture*

April 3: *From Sustainability to Investment Agriculture: Logics of Productive Consumption and Disparity*

April 8: *Sticking with the Spirits: Eastern Cuisines, Grain Wines and Civilization*

April 17: *Baking up Western Civilization and Some African Alternatives*

APR

13 Exhibition Event: *Sketching from Models*
Joan Chiverton, Fashion Institute of Technology; 1:00pm

23 *Beyond Meaning: The Form, Substance, Color and Pattern of Shang Things*
Roderick Campbell, ISAW
The reception to follow will celebrate recent publications by ISAW community members

28 & 29 Exhibition Event: *Reid Bartelme and Harriet Jung Design Dialogues* (with Works & Process at the Guggenheim)*
7:30pm
*Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 5th Ave

30 *Manuscript Networks and the Evolution of Technical Texts in Early China*
Ethan Harkness, ISAW Visiting Research Scholar

MAY

04 Exhibition Event: *Sketching from Models*
Joan Chiverton, Fashion Institute of Technology; 1:00pm

08 New York Aegean Bronze Age Colloquium: *Bringing the Pseira Fresco Fragments to Life: New Reconstructions of the Murals, Figures, Costumes, Textiles and Jewelry*
Bernice R. Jones, Independent Scholar

09 Exhibition Lecture: *Dance as Reverie: Ancient Preludes to a Modern Idea*
Anastasia-Erasmia Peponi, Stanford University

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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