

aia

New York Society News



THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Our banner year continues

This column is the last I will write as President of the New York Society, as my term will end this Fall. I have enjoyed working with an energetic and hard-working executive board and getting to know the New York Society's members. Our Society accomplished a lot this year.

With rare exceptions, we have been on the Golden Trowel list each month. This list recognizes societies that have gained new members. In May alone, in addition to ten renewed memberships, eight new members signed on. But as they say on national public radio, keep the members coming. If you know someone who might like to join, please bring them to a lecture or other event and encourage them to join the New York Society.

Our lecture program this year was exceptional. Scholars from throughout the United States presented their latest research on a broad range of topics covering archaeological projects throughout the world. We are fortunate, as well, to have numerous universities, museums and centers with which to

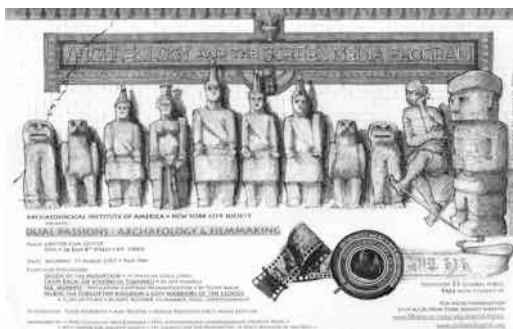
partner. These associations provide different venues for our lecture series and stimulate our society to stretch our range of topics to match them with the interests of other local organizations.

This year's first Film Program was a great success as described on the following page of this newsletter. What could be more natural than a film program in New York? Still the project was truly innovative as our chair was successful at drawing experts throughout the city, making it possible to present new films and commentary by film makers, producers and key research persons. Our second Film Program will be launched in 2009. We would especially like to hear from you about the kinds of film programs you would like to see and, of course, would welcome having you join our film committee.

At the heart of the AIA are two issues that have attracted me to the organization. The AIA has worked hard to stop the trafficking of antiquities and established itself at the forefront of preserving the world's archaeological resources and cultural heritage. This effort is a perfect complement to its major initiative, to provide public programs for professionals and non-professionals, making it unique among archaeological organizations.

Rita Wright
President, AIA New York Society
Associate Professor of Anthropology, NYU

opposite: the snazzy poster and logo for our film program, designed by Steve Bracy.



NEW YORK SOCIETY

INAUGURATES PROGRAM ON ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE SCREEN MEDIA

On March 31st, 2007, the New York Society successfully launched its first film program, Dual Passions: Archaeology and Filmmaking. The visual conceptualization of the project and event is captured by the striking poster and logo created by Steve Bracy (as seen on the cover page of this newsletter). The day-long event focused on a dialog between archaeologists and documentary film makers. Two films and clips from three others were featured. Producers of each of the films provided commentary on their motivations, approaches and intended audiences. The program was free to all students and at nominal cost to adults.

The two full-length films were *Queen of the Mountain* by Martha Goell Lubell, an independent film maker, and *Mr. Mummy*, produced by Amy Wray. The first film chronicled the biography of Tessie Goell, the first modern excavator at Nimrud Dagh. The film's depiction of Goell's passion and obsession excited the imagination of anyone who has ever dreamed of excavating. *Mr. Mummy*, a replication of Egyptian mummification, offered intriguing insights into the mechanics of ancient mortuary techniques. Bob Brier, a major spokesman for the study of mummies, conveyed his enthusiasm, taking a lead role in this, his first film. Both Lubell and Wray provided insightful commentaries on their films.

Films shown in part included *Taypi Kala: Six Visions of Tiwanaku* by Jeff Himpele; *Nubia: The Forgotten Kingdom*; and *Lost Warriors of the Clouds* by Amy Bucher. The audience was thrilled to learn what motivated these documentary film makers to choose their subjects and to target specific audiences. Two other participants contributed to the success of the event. Ronn Wade, the anatomy consultant for *Mr. Mummy*, treated the audience to the best kept secrets of Egyptian embalmers. Using body parts to illustrate his talk, he revealed the intricacies of preserving mortal remains. Peter Herdrich, an AIA Trustee and Senior Producer of TV's *Inside Edition*, moderated the entire event. An end-of-the-day panel discussion allowed him to bring his diplomatic skills as an emcee to bear. The program was held at the Cantor Film Center at NYU, a state of the art center for cinematography, and was attended by over a hundred people from a broad spectrum of backgrounds. This attendance furthered the goals of the project to encourage an awareness of archaeology among a larger segment of the population in order to recruit new members to the Society. In addition to membership brochures, other information was provided, including available scholarships and field work opportunities. A special table was staffed by the executive board and students for this purpose. The program captured the interest of both academic and lay sponsors. They included New York University, College of Arts and Science; the NYU Anthropology Undergraduate Student Association and its Center for Ancient Studies. Other important sponsors were the New York Council for the Humanities and the Executive Board of the New York Society. Jim Sibal chaired the event; committee members included Karen Rubinson, Marissa Schlesinger, Linda Roccas, Jeff Lamia, Whitney Keen, Larissa Bonfante and Rita Wright.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR MARCH 2009 FILM PROGRAM

The New York Society board is in need of two volunteers to work closely with the film committee. The first would help with outreach efforts, while the second would utilize aesthetic and organizational talents to create t-shirts featuring past and future AIA Film Program logos. If you are interested in offering your services to the film committee, please email Jim Sibal directly at JHSibal@aol.com.

Thanks!

aia New York Society lecture series for 2007-2008

October 15, 6:00

Joan Oates, "Recent Excavations at Tel Brak, Syria"

Columbia University Faculty House (with the Columbia University Ancient Near East Seminar)

Tel Brak is one of the largest ancient tell sites in NE Syria. This lecture focuses on the 2006 excavations, which produced unexpectedly early evidence for 'urban' growth together with a unique series of 'industrial' buildings. Large quantities of both exotic raw materials and finished products were accompanied by many clay sealings, all dated around 4000 BC. Slightly later, and also unparalleled, is a massive 'death pit' from which a large number of human bodies have been recovered. These appear to literally have been thrown into the pit after a period of exposure following some sort of 'massacre'; the bodies are accompanied by faunal and ceramic evidence for an associated celebratory, or perhaps mourning, feast.

October 23, 6:30

The Brush Lecture: Heather McKillop, "Canoe Travel and Sea Trade of the Ancient Maya"

NYU, Jurow Hall (with the New York University Center for Ancient Studies)

The discovery of the first ancient Maya wooden canoe paddle at the K'ak' Naab' underwater site in Paynes Creek National Park, Belize, provides the only direct evidence of Late Classic Maya canoe travel and navigation. Evidence indicates that canoe trade, both along rivers and the sea, was extensive. Coastal trading ports such as Wild Cane Cay participated in coastal-inland trade as well as coastal trade bringing goods and resources from more distant lands. With the collapse of the cities in the southern lowlands at the end of the Classic period, the traders at Wild Cane Cay realigned their trading to emerging powers such as Chichen Itza, and later Tulum, in the northern lowlands during the Postclassic.

November 28, 6:30

Randall White, "The Abri du Poisson Affair"

Schermerhorn Hall, room 612, Columbia University (with the Columbia University Center for Archaeology)

In the Vézère Valley of SW France, there is a rock shelter with a 25,000 year-old sculpted salmon on its ceiling. This bas-relief is surrounded by chisel and drill marks left in 1912 when an attempt was made to extract it for sale to a German museum. The Swiss archaeologist Otto Hauser, very active at the time in the region, is most frequently blamed for this aborted attempt at antiquities trafficking. The story that has been told to generations of prehistorians is largely false and hides a complex reality.

Coming Attractions: This winter and spring the AIA-NYS will host lectures by Martin Beckmann, Larissa Bonfante, Beryl Barr-Sharrar, John Darnell, and C. Brian Rose. Dates, locations and abstracts for these will appear soon in your mailbox as well as in the winter newsletter and on the AIA-NYS website:

www.library.csi.cuny.edu/roccos/nyaia/nyaia.html.

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Send news of your own or your colleagues' excavations, new books, awards,
or any other items you deem of interest to: Ellen Morris (efm2110@columbia.edu)
snail mail: c/o New York Society News, 217 Manhattan Avenue #7A, New York, NY 10025

Spotlight on

Columbia University's Center for Archaeology

Revival of the New York Archaeological Consortium in Columbia University's Center for Archaeology in the spring of 2006 began an expansion of the Center's public programming. In addition to its original lecture series and graduate student conference, begun in 2001, the Center now also hosts every two weeks a series of discussions about current research and a series of workshops. In May of 2008, the Center will be the first venue in the United States for the Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG), a lively and innovative conference in archaeology, begun more than thirty years ago in the UK (*for more on TAG, see the back page of this newsletter*). These events involve students, faculty, and staff in the Columbia-Barnard community, as well as those from New York University, the City University of New York, the American Museum of Natural History, and other metropolitan-area institutions. The archaeologically informed public at large is also always welcomed.

The Center's workshop series draws on many areas of expertise in order to investigate new and old technologies and skills. Jeffrey Lamia, a retired banker and skilled potter, who has served as the treasurer for the Archaeological Institute of America and is on the board of the New York Society of the Archaeological Institute of America, offered two innovative pottery workshops. Students learned hands-on about working with different kinds of clay as well as about building techniques, including work with a potters' wheel. Jeff's enthusiasm and interest in ancient Greek pottery manufacture made their creation come alive for students who had been working with original sherd material from Greece during the academic year.

A two-part series of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for Archaeologists, taught by Yuri Gorokovich, an Associate Research Scientist until 2007 for the Center for the International Earth Science Information Network, made use of the GIS lab in the Department of Earth and Environmental Engineering at Columbia. The workshop focused on the potential application of GIS resources to archaeology, ArcGIS data entry, georeferencing techniques and coordinate system transformation,

and creating GoogleEarth applications.

Finally, a four-part textile workshop was created and taught by Susan Edmunds, a tapestry weaver, whose background in Classics inspired her to produce and host the DVD, *Textile: An Introduction to Wool-Working for Readers of Greek and Latin*. These inventive workshops took participants through the process of weaving from the selection, carding, and preparation of a sheep's fleece, to hand spinning and different forms of weaving. Each person learned on a mini-backstrap loom and had the opportunity to test out larger looms. An entire workshop centered on the warp-weighted loom, a loom in common use in the ancient Mediterranean world and northern Europe. A visit to the Metropolitan Museum's Textile Conservation Studios and Antonio Ratti Textile Center formed the final session.

A full program is planned for the 2007-2008 year, with workshops about animal and human bone, conservation, pottery, and ancient tool production. For further information about the Center for Archaeology and its program, please visit:

www.columbia.edu/cu/archaeology

ARCHAEOLOGY ZONE: DISCOVERING TREASURES FROM PLAYGROUNDS TO PALACES

This October, The Jewish Museum in New York will open a new children's exhibition on the theme of archaeology for teachers, students, and family audiences. *Archaeology Zone* is inspired by the Museum's renowned collection of extraordinary art and artifacts.

Children will be invited to discover the world of archaeology through a fascinating in-depth study of art and artifacts from ancient times to the present day. They will explore the methods employed by archaeologists after an excavation occurs, specifically, how they analyze the objects that have been unearthed. The exhibition will elucidate how the analysis of artifacts teaches us about the development of art and cultures over time, while establishing connections to objects and ideas in our daily lives. Assuming the role of the archaeologist, children will embark on an exciting adventure where they will encounter unusual objects and determine how and why they were made.

Children will piece together two larger-than-life vessels, examine replicas through weighing

and magnifying, interpret symbols in a colorful mosaic, create works of art inspired by unique objects in the Museum's collection, dress in costumes from long ago, and much more. This exhibition will also include an introductory video, original artifacts, and colorful illustrations that will provide a visual context for how objects were used and preserved over time.

Educators, if you are interested in bringing a class to tour this exciting new exhibition email: schedulingcoordinator@thejm.org for more information. Visitors to the Museum can view this exhibition during regular Museum hours.

Archaeology Zone: Discovering Treasures from Playgrounds to Palaces

The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Avenue,
New York, New York 10128

www.thejewishmuseum.org

Opens: Sunday, October 14, 2007

TIME TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND KEEP THE OLD (AS THE GIRL SCOUTS SAY)

With a new year we urge each of our current Friends to continue to be a member of this select group. For others who are curious about the Friends, the Friends are a small group of enthusiasts who want to supplement the Society's regular lecture series with additional talks in more informal settings.

This past year, Professor Terry D'Altroy of Columbia University gave a beautifully illustrated and extremely informative living room talk on the Moche civilization, predecessors to the more famous Inka, and Prof. Og-

den Goelet discussed ancient Egyptian views on nudity and sexuality at NYU's Kevorkian Center Library. This Fall Dr. Susan Braunstein will guide the Friends through a tour of the Jewish Museum.

If you would like to know more about the Friends, please contact Rita Wright, Acting Chair, either by e-mail at rita.wright@nyu.edu or by phone at (212) 998-8568. Alternatively, join the fun immediately by sending a check in the amount of \$150 for individual or \$275 for dual membership -- or more,

that's okay, too -- payable to the AIA (NYS in lower left), to:

Ira Haupt, II
11 Park Place
Suite 1602,
New York, NY 10007

The Friends provide a great resource to the New York Society. Through these funds the Society is able to develop an enriched program with a broader scope than the three lectures provided through the AIA headquarters.

The British Invasion Strikes Again *with* TAG-NYC at Columbia

From May 23rd to May 25th Columbia University will host the very first meeting of the Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) ever held in the United States. As most readers will know, British TAG is an annual conference that has been held at various universities across the British Isles since 1979 with the aim of promoting debate and discussion of issues in archaeological theory. This consciously unusual conference is now a cherished tradition and has been/continues to be the venue in which much of the most influential thinking in British archaeology is initially presented and actively engaged.

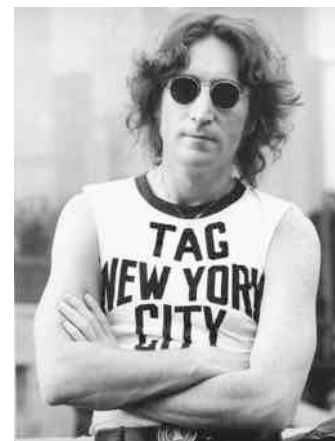
TAG-NYC will aim to capture the spirit of British TAG (innovative, inclusive, informal, inexpensive) and to start an analogous annual tradition over on this side of the Atlantic.

For information on how to contribute papers, sponsor sessions, and/or offer your services as a volunteer (*always appreciated!*), please write to

TAG-NYC@columbia.edu.

Much more information may be found on the conference website:

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/archaeology/conference/tag/index.htm>.



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