

aia

New York Society News



THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Time to keep warm by journeying (in spirit) to archaeological hotspots!

It's cold outside! But, as usual, the New York Society has a full season ahead of lectures that will keep you thinking and thus keep your thoughts awake and warm with new information about archaeological sites around the world. And here in New York, with our annual Louis Blumengarten lecture on urban archaeology, Diana Wall will speak on "Africans in New Amsterdam" at the Brooklyn Museum. This will be our second time at the Brooklyn Museum, which certainly gave us a warm welcome. C'mon everyone – Brooklyn is a major cultural center of New York City and a short ride from Manhattan. We had a good audience last year and look forward to an even better crowd this April.

Other areas of the world we will "visit" this season include Costa Rica, Egypt, Greece and Polynesia. Pretty good for never having to leave New York! Thanks to our Program Chairs, Rachel Kousser and Michelle Hobart for this season's lecture series.

On October 14, the President, Board of Governors, and Archaeology Committee of the National Arts Club (NAC) awarded ARCHAE-
OLOGY, AIA's award-winning popular magazine, its medal of Honor for Distinguished Coverage of the Field of Archaeology Worldwide. Accepting on behalf of ARCHAE-
OLOGY and AIA was the magazine's Editor-in-Chief, Peter A. Young. The event was organized by Michele A.F. Kidwell, Chair of the

NAC's Archaeology Committee, of which I am also a member. Speakers included Frederick A. Winter, former President of the New York Society, Peter R. Herdrich, a member of the Board of Governors of the AIA and a staunch supporter of the New York Society, and President O. Aldon James, Jr., of the National Arts Club.

Computer animation is not just for video games. A new project to recreate a late Chalcolithic site in Cyprus is being supported by site preservation funds donated to the AIA Site Preservation Fund. The Project will use 3-D and computer animation technologies to help recreate the five-thousand-year-old Chalcolithic roundhouse in Cyprus. As the largest local society in the AIA, we are all a part of the innovations being made by the AIA.

The Friends of the New York Society are a very special group whose donations allow us to have the most expansive lecture program of any other local society – so think about joining the Friends, who enjoy special programs just for them (contact Jeff Lamia www.jlamia@nyc.rr.com for details). I look forward to seeing you at our lectures – bring a friend and urge that friend to join our New York Society!

-Lucille A. Roussin
Interim President, AIA New York Society

aia New York Society lecture series for Winter 2010

January 28, 6:30 (reception to follow)

The Brush Lecture:

“The Unintended Consequences of a Religious Conversion in Ancient Costa Rica.”

Payson Sheets, University of Colorado at Boulder

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

The early sedentary villagers of the Arenal area, Costa Rica, buried their deceased adjacent to their houses. That changed dramatically about 500 BC, as villagers created communal cemeteries separated from their villages, and they began elaborate feasting rituals at the cemeteries. Separations range from a few hundred meters to many kilometers, and processions back and forth were along precisely the same path, in single file. It is suggested that travel in an entrenched path to a special place became a highly valued cultural norm. A few centuries later, when complex societies developed, chiefs chose to emulate the entrenched entryways with monumental constructed features. Dr. Sheets will look at the Cutris chiefdom's huge sunken entryways and discuss how they may have functioned but been difficult to maintain.

February 17, 6:30 (reception to follow)

“Living Forever in Ancient Egypt”

Edward Bleiberg, Egyptian Department, Brooklyn Museum

15 E. 84th Street (cosponsored with the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World)

Ancient Egyptian religion required people to prepare for their deaths by living a life of justice and providing themselves with specific objects to furnish a tomb. Fulfilling these spiritual and material requirements would allow them to live forever in the afterlife. To lead a life of justice, the god Osiris had established clear rules which every educated Egyptian tried to learn. But the materials needed to furnish a tomb could be an impediment for people who were neither royal nor noble. Egyptians used a variety of methods to economize on these necessities. This talk examines both the spiritual and material struggles Egyptians underwent in order to live forever.

March 25, 6:30 (reception to follow)

The Norton Lecture: “The Delphic Oracle: Modern Science Examines an Ancient Mystery”

John Hale, University of Louisville

15 E. 84th Street (cosponsored with the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World)

Ancient Greek and Roman authors stated that Apollo's sacred oracle at Delphi was located at the site of a chasm or fissure in the rock; an emission of sweet-smelling vapor or gas; and a sacred spring. The priestess who pronounced the oracles sat on a tall tripod above the fissure where she could inhale the vapor, thus triggering a trance in which she could serve as a medium for the prophetic oracles. Most scholars have been skeptical of these reports, denying that there had ever been a fissure or a gaseous emission in the crypt of the temple. However, in 1995 an interdisciplinary team studied the evidence from geology, chemistry, and toxicology that related to the oracle. The results vindicated the ancient sources. Dr. Hale and his colleagues have gone on to study Greek oracle sites elsewhere in the Aegean and Asia Minor, where they have found similar geological features.

aia New York Society lecture series for Winter 2010 *continued...*

April 17, 2:00

The Louis Blumengarten Lecture: **“Africans in New Amsterdam”**

Diana Wall, City University of New York

Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Auditorium, 3rd floor, Brooklyn Museum (cosponsored with the Metropolitan Chapter of the New York State Archaeological Society and the Brooklyn Museum. Free museum admission from AIA membership card on that day)

Archaeologists studying the early colonial period in the United States tend to forget the Africans who formed an important part of the populations there. Here, Dr. Diana Wall uses archaeological discoveries to talk about the African presence in Dutch New Amsterdam.

May 5, 6:45 (reception at 6:15)

“The Polynesian Quest: Charting the Ancient Mariners of the Pacific”

Robert Bolt

National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park South (cosponsored with the Archaeology Committee of the National Arts Club)

This lecture discusses the settlement of East Polynesia, which began around 1000 AD, when navigators coming from West Polynesia (Samoa, Tonga, Fiji), set out in canoes and colonized over 100 islands in the Eastern Pacific, islands that had never previously been seen by humans. They reached and settled what is known as the "Polynesian Triangle", which stretches from New Zealand to Hawai'i, and to Easter Island, including all the archipelagoes that fall between (The Society Islands, the Cooks, the Tuamotus, and the Australs). These incredible explorations were done by expert navigators whose only tools were the stars, the winds, the birds, and the waves. It took Europeans a further 500 years to discover these islands for the Western world. The greatest of these explorers was Captain James Cook, who himself found the spread of these closely related populations from one end of the Pacific to the other to be a fascinating topic on which he speculated until his death in Hawai'i. Dr. Bolt will discuss the most recent archaeological evidence of this event, especially his own excavations and discoveries made since 2003 in the Austral Islands (an archipelago that lies about 450 kilometers south of Tahiti).

To view information about lectures and other AIA-NYS matters online, check out our 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 (em129@nyu.edu) or c/o New York Society News, 217 Manhattan Avenue #7A, New York, NY 10025

Spotlight on...

NYU's

Institute for the Study of the Ancient World

The Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University is the newest institution in the New York area devoted to antiquity. With funding from the Leon Levy Foundation, it opened its doors in 2007 and admitted its first doctoral students in 2009. It has by its founding documents an exceptionally ambitious scope, encompassing all of the ancient Old World from late prehistory to the late first millennium CE, and all relevant disciplines. Of course, one has hardly to describe such a program for its difficulties to be apparent. How can a faculty of eight (the initially planned number) possibly cover such a range? That was the question I posed when I first met with the search committee for the directorship three years ago, and it remains the key question today.

The largest part of the answer lies in collaboration, the building of a network. Dozens of other NYU faculty work on aspects of antiquity, especially in literature, philosophy, languages, history, and archaeology. We have enlisted those whose interests are closest to ISAW's as affiliated faculty, and they will work with the graduate students as needed. In addition we are building a network of Senior Fellows, scholars at other universities and museums around the world who will take part in our intellectual life in a variety of ways, including most importantly being accessible to our students. Another way of diversifying the Institute's community is a program of Visiting Research Scholars, who come usually for a year to pursue their own projects but also to participate in our research seminars and give

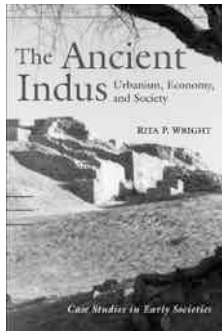
lectures about their work. They are often in areas not represented in the permanent faculty. And we hope that other collaborations will develop over time, as scholars in the region come to see our rapidly developing library as a useful resource and take part in research seminars.

A very different answer to the central question lies in ISAW's program of exhibitions. These are sometimes developed in-house by our associate director for exhibitions, Jennifer Chi, but in some cases a guest curator is involved, bringing expertise in new fields. And collaborations with foreign museums open up new areas as well. The first exhibition in 2008 presented the classical and Hellenistic site of Vani in the republic of Georgia, with its magnificent tomb finds. The second, which opened in November 2009 and runs through April 2010, presents for the first time to an American public the extraordinary ceramics, figurines, and metalwork of "The Lost World of Old Europe"—the Danube basin in the late Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods, with David Anthony as guest curator (*see the back page of this newsletter*). With such exhibitions we aim to reach a broad public, shedding light on aspects of antiquity not often visible.

Finally, other public events—lectures and conferences, but also musical performances and films—will allow us to touch on a still wider range of subjects. These are open to the public and listed on our web site (www.nyu.edu/isaw). They include hosting lectures sponsored by organizations like the AIA and ARCE. We hope that everyone interested in the ancient world who lives in the New York area will come to see ISAW as a common resource, not simply another part of NYU.

-Roger S. Bagnall
Director of ISAW

LOCAL NEWS...



A new book from Rita Wright...

Former AIA-NYS President, Rita Wright, has a new book, *The Ancient Indus. Urbanism, Economy, and Society*, coming out in 2010 with Cambridge University Press. Utilizing a comparative framework, Wright draws on

the rich material culture left behind by the Indus people to address such topics as the instability of the climate to which Indus populations responded, the beginnings of agriculture, the establishment of trade networks with distant lands, and the diversified and specialized agro-pastoral and craft producing economies that leave their legacies even in the present. Additionally, Wright addresses the cultural construction of space, memory and Indus religious ideologies.

AIA-NYS is on Facebook. Join now!



With the new "AIA New York Society" group on facebook it is easier than ever to stay up-to-date on the lectures and events that AIA-NYS is sponsoring. As the site is about fostering community, we invite you to post

notices of events or to start discussions of archaeological interest in which you think other AIA-NYS members would like to participate.

[And speaking of events and community, we give many, many thanks to our "Friends"](#)

Elie M. Abemayor, Elizabeth Bartman, John H. Biggs, Louis Blumengarten, Paula Botstein, Diane Carol Brandt, Myrna Coffino. Robert M. Costa, Linda Getter, Ira Haupt, II, Brian J. Heidtke, Michelle M. Hobart, Caroline H. Hyman, Whitney & Fred Keen, Jeffrey A. Lamia, Paula Kay Lazrus, Peter C. Lincoln, James H. Oltaway, Jr., Marina Papa-Sokal, William Verdone, Lynn P. Quigley, Karen S. Rubinson, Ava Seave, Mr. James H. Sibal, Susan F. Springer, Anna M. & Robert Taggart, and John J. Yarmick

The Friends of the NY Society are a group of archaeological enthusiasts who enjoy special Friends-only events and the knowledge that their tax-deductible support aids the outreach mission of the AIA-NY Society. For more information please e-mail to: Jeff Lamia at jlamia@nyc.rr.com.

[Check out *To Live Forever: Art and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt* at the Brooklyn Museum from February 12-May 2, 2010!](#)

Encompassing more than 100 objects drawn



from the Brooklyn Museum's holdings of ancient Egyptian art, including some of the greatest masterworks of their genre, *To Live Forever* explores the Egyptians' beliefs about life, death, and the afterlife; the process of mummification;

the conduct of a funeral; and the different types of tombs. This exhibit has traveled and will travel again, so see it while you've got the chance! Also, don't miss the curator, Edward Bleiberg, speaking on "Living Forever in Ancient Egypt," Feb. 17 at an AIA-NYS & ISAW sponsored talk (*see the calendar above*).

Don't miss THE LOST WORLD OF OLD EUROPE at ISAW through April 25, 2010!!



The Lost World of Old Europe: The Danube Valley, 5000-3500 BC brings to the United States for the first time more than 160 objects recovered by archaeologists from the graves, towns, and villages of Old Europe, a cycle of related cultures that achieved a precocious peak of sophistication and creativity in

what is now southeastern Europe between 5000 and 4000 BC, and then mysteriously collapsed by 3500 BC. Long before Egypt or Mesopotamia rose to an equivalent level of achievement, Old Europe was among the most sophisticated places that humans inhabited. Some of its towns grew to city-like sizes. Potters developed striking designs, and the ubiquitous goddess figurines found in houses and shrines have triggered intense debates about women's roles in Old European society.

The exhibition, arranged through loan agreements with

20 museums in three countries (Romania, The Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Moldova), brings the exuberant art, enigmatic goddess cults, and precocious metal ornaments and weapons of Old Europe to American audiences.

Admission is free, and this is a great excuse to come visit the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (ISAW), co-sponsor of two upcoming AIA-NYS lectures.

For details and directions, visit the exhibit website:

<http://www.nyu.edu/isaw/exhibitions.htm>

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