

# aia

## New York Society News



### THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

*The last letter from Lucille...*

This will be my last letter to you as President of the New York Society. This is my second "round" as President – I was President from 1995 to 1999 and have been President again since 2007. A new president will be elected at the Annual Meeting on September 30th. Please join us and participate in the vote to ensure that our local society continues to thrive. My colleagues on the Board, however, are not letting me get away so fast – I have been persuaded to stay active as an adjunct member of the Program Committee.

And, speaking of the Program Committee, we have an outstanding line-up of speakers for the 2010-2011 season. For the list of speakers, topics, and dates, check the schedule in this newsletter. Many thanks to the Program Committee – *Rachel Kousser, Michelle Hobart, and Linda Getter* – for their hard work. More thanks to *Rachel Kousser*, who also chaired the Nominating Committee. Nominations will be announced at the Annual Meeting. And congratulations to Rachel and her husband on the birth of their first child, Andres, now almost six months old!

Kudos also to New York Society member *Larry Coben*, founder of the Sustainable Preservation Initiative (SPI), which seeks to preserve the world's cultural heritage by providing sustainable economic opportunities to poor communities where endangered archaeological sites are located. SPI believes the best way to preserve cultural heritage is by creating or supporting locally-owned businesses whose success is tied to that preservation. SPI's grants provide a TWO for the price of ONE benefit: they create transformative economic opportunities for the local residents while saving archaeological sites for fu-

ture generations to study and enjoy. SPI was incubated at and is strongly supported by the Archaeological Institute of America and the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA.

And in the same vein, the New York Society congratulates member *Peter Herdrich*, who has been appointed CEO of the Archaeological Institute of America!

Do check out our new web site, where you will find all the information about upcoming events and other events of interest to our members: <http://aia-nysociety.org/>. Many thanks to *Paula Lazrus* for designing the new web site. And many thanks to *Linda Jones Roccas*, who designed and maintained our previous web site and will continue to contribute to the new web site's maintenance.

Finally, please note the *extra insert* included in this newsletter. At our board meeting just before Roger Bagnall's lecture at ISAW on September 30th, we'll be convening to vote on the appointment of new officers and also to ratify changes to our bylaws. While this may not sound riveting, one of these changes would allow our society to function as an independent non-profit organization, such that it could manage its own finances and receive tax-exempt gifts. So, please read, consider, and come vote! See you there!

And, one last word of encouragement: please consider joining the Friends of the AIA-NYS, thereby helping to support our lecture series and enjoying special events. If tempted, contact Jeff Lamia at [jlamia@nyc.rr.com](mailto:jlamia@nyc.rr.com). You won't be sorry!

*-Lucille A. Roussin-*  
Interim President, AIA-NYS

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**aia** New York Society lecture series for Fall 2010

September 30, 6:30 (AIA-NYS BOARD MEETING AT 6:00; reception to follow lecture)

**“Amheida: Excavating a City in the Dakhla Oasis of Egypt”**

**Roger Bagnall, Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, NYU**

Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, 15 East 84th Street

Excavations at Amheida, undertaken in 2004 by Columbia University and now a project of New York University, have begun the study of a large and essentially untouched urban site in the Great Oasis. Its origins go back to the Old Kingdom or earlier, but the surface layers are mainly of the fourth century CE. Finds include a large upper-class house with wall paintings, a multi-room school with Greek poetry on the walls, an Egyptian temple with a long history, and a pyramid.

October 21, 6:30 (reception to follow lecture)

**THE HAUPT LECTURE: “Petra and the Arabian Spice Trade”**

**Andrew M. Smith, George Washington University**

Schermerhorn Hall 612/614, Columbia University (co-sponsored by the Columbia Center for Archaeology)

This paper will examine the role of Bir Madhkur in the ancient spice trade, in particular its function along the famed Incense Road. The lecture draws on new evidence from the lecturer’s excavations at and survey around the ancient site of Bir Madhkur, a Nabataean, Roman, and Byzantine period site in southern Jordan in the hinterland of ancient Petra.

November 3, 6:45 (reception at 6:15)

**“Conversations on Cleopatra”**

**Antonia Lant, New York University**

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

The name of Cleopatra has been resonant for two thousand years. So we should not be surprised that she began to appear on the silver screen almost as soon as cinema was born, one hundred years ago. Professor Lant explores the attraction of this historical figure for mass audiences of the past century, illustrating her lecture with stills and clips from many of the richly decorated films of the silent film era. She chronicles the treatment of Cleopatra’s archetype over the decades in the gender wars, and suggests that Cleopatra’s sexual and political might echoed aspirations of the women’s suffrage movement, but also that it embodied anxieties over this new emergence of female power. In addition, she shows that American films provide surprising evidence of the contentiousness of Cleopatra’s race, pointing to competing claims on Egyptian heritage within modern American communities.

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*To view information about lectures and other AIA-NYS matters online, check out our snazzy new website:*

<http://aia-nysociety.org/events/>

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**See the Winter Newsletter**

**for abstracts and detailed information about the following upcoming talks:**

January 24: **“Achaemenid/Classical Archaeology in Armenia.”** Lori Khatchadourian, Cornell University. 612/614 Schermerhorn Hall at 6:30, reception to follow. (Co-sponsored by the Columbia Center for Archaeology).

February 2: **“Kamikaze: Discovering Kublai Khan’s Lost Fleet.”** James Delgado, Institute for Nautical Archaeology, Texas A & M. National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park South. Lecture & reception times TBA. (Co-sponsored by the Archaeology Committee of the National Arts Club).

March 10: THE BRUSH LECTURE: **“The Archaeology of Beer.”** Christine Hastorf, University of California, Berkeley. Jurow Lecture Hall, New York University, 100 Washington Square East (enter at 32 Waverly Place). Lecture at 6:30, reception to follow. (Co-Sponsored by the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World).

April (date TBA, week of 15-30): THE BLUMGARTEN LECTURE: **“Beneath these Mean Streets: Reconstructions of Buried Landscapes in the Vicinity of the Five Points Area of Lower Manhattan.”** Joe Schulderein, Geoarchaeology Research Associates, NYC. 612/614 Schermerhorn Hall at 6:30, reception to follow. (Co-sponsored by the Columbia Center for Archaeology).

May 7: Emanuele Papi, Dipartimento di Archeologia e Storia delle Arti, U. di Siena, will speak at the Brooklyn Museum (details TBA) on his excavations at **Dionysias**.

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The AIA-New York Society has a new webpage <http://aia-nysociety.org>! This site provides information about upcoming lectures and other events (on the Events page) as well as links to exhibits in the New York area that may be of interest. Want to know more about member’s projects, or investigate some aspect of the past in great detail? Check out the links on our Resources and Projects page. Consider joining us on Facebook and becoming a regular member or joining the Friends of the New York Society. Becoming a member gives you a variety of discounts on AIA merchandise and publications, as well as discounts on museum admission and in shops at selected museums around the country. You can also receive emailed announcements of archaeology lectures in the NYC area that aren’t sponsored by the AIA-NYS. Interested in more personal and in depth discussions on a variety of topics? Consider joining the Friends of the New York Society. Your additional contribution will not only help us maintain our wonderful lecture schedule, but it will also give you the opportunity to join fellow enthusiasts for private exhibition tours and intimate discussions, often held in someone’s home. Looking to have a more concrete involvement in the society? We are looking for volunteers to help us on lecture days. If you are interested in any of these opportunities, check out the new website and click on the appropriate links provided. We look forward to seeing you online, and in person. - *Paula Kay Lazrus*, Vice President of the AIA-NYS

**Also... 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 ([emr120@nyu.edu](mailto:emr120@nyu.edu))  
snail mail: c/o New York Society News, 217 Manhattan Avenue #7A, New York, NY 10025

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## *Spotlight on...*

### *Regional Survey at Aphrodisias*

Aphrodisias is one of the most important archaeological sites of the Greek and Roman periods in Turkey, famous in antiquity for its sanctuary of Aphrodite and its virtuoso sculptors. Excavations carried out by New York University since 1961 have revealed an unusually well preserved and picturesque ancient town, which makes an indelible impression on visitors and brings the civic culture of the Graeco-Roman world vividly to life.

In addition to ongoing research at Aphrodisias itself, directed by R.R.R. Smith of Oxford University with the assistance since 2010 of Esen Ögüş of NYU, a regional survey of the surrounding territory (begun by the writer with the financial support of the Leon Levy Foundation in 2005) has shed new light on the relationship between the city-site and its environs in all periods. Approximately 670 archaeological points of interest have been documented and entered into a Geographical Information System. Tumulus tombs sprinkled across the landscape attest the social organization and Anatolian cultural identity of the local populace before the establishment of the Greek city. Symbolic of the growth of the city and its territorial infrastructure was the construction of an aqueduct that brought water to Aphrodisias from sources over 20 km away through tunnels up to 2 km long and 50 m deep, and over bridges up to 30 m high. The transformations of the later Roman and Medieval periods were enacted through the construction of numerous churches both on the outskirts of Aphrodisias and throughout the surrounding countryside.

Fieldwork for the survey was completed in 2009, and our team is now working on the analysis and publication of the results. A volume of special studies is in the works (with chapters on the geology, the marble quarries, the aqueducts, the tumuli, the Roman tombs, the sarcophagi, the evidence for ancient olive

oil production, the churches, the inscriptions, and the results of an intensive survey of the immediate environs of Aphrodisias), and it will be published simultaneously with an electronic edition of all our photographs and databases. The former will appear in the Aphrodisias Final Report series, the latter in the University of Michigan's "Deep Blue" digital archive. The University of Michigan's Spatial Analysis and Visualization Lab will also host an online version of our GIS.

The excavations at Aphrodisias have made significant contributions to the history of the ancient Mediterranean city. Regional survey has extended our knowledge of the site in both time and space – providing new information about Aphrodisias and environs before and after the heyday of the city, and illuminating the interaction between town and countryside in numerous ways. It has been a privilege to work on this project with a great group of students from both NYU and the University of Michigan. Last but not least, like all archaeologists working in foreign lands, our team owes a great debt of thanks both to the local authorities, in this case the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and to the local population for their invaluable hospitality and assistance.

- Christopher Ratté,  
University of Michigan



Aqueduct  
at  
Aphro-  
disias

## CLEOPATRA IN CINEMA, TRADE AND EXCHANGE, AND CULTURAL INTERACTION...

**Reflec-  
tions on  
the  
Queen  
of the  
Nile**

Dating from her guise in a horror film in the late 1890's, the representation of Cleopatra in the cinema is among the oldest and most popular archaeological/ancient history topics filmed. As of 2010, there have been almost 80 feature films and an almost equal number of made-for-TV movies. The examples range from drama, to animation, to comedy and of course, pornography. Numerous countries have entered the field, including Japan.

The Cleopatra myth ensnared some of the most highly regarded English writers—Shakespeare, Dryden and Shaw—so perhaps we should not be surprised. A respectable documentary about her was eventually filmed in 1999, a century after her earliest celluloid appearance as a ghoul. Over the intervening decades, this Queen on film has shifted dramatically from being either a reigning theatrical diva (Helen Gardner 1912, Theda Bara 1917, Dorothy Revier 1928 [in color], Colbert 1934, Vivian Leigh 1945, Sophia Loren 1956, & Elizabeth Taylor 1963) OR sexual vampire (Theda was the best, of course), to being more accurately portrayed as the consummate politician she was.

Why has this taken so long? One could argue that a fuller view of Cleopatra was greatly aided by the 1988 show at the Brooklyn Museum with its useful catalogue, As well as by the 2001 British Museum exhibition (with its equally readable catalogue), but why has the Roman propaganda of a sensual Oriental despot lived on?

Come to Antonia Lant's (Cinema Studies, NYU) lecture, triple sponsored by the AIA-NYC, Archaeology Magazine and The National Arts Club, featuring rare film clips and a discussion on November 3rd to find out. And read the Program Notes to discover more about Cleopatra in the cinema than

you ever thought you might need. Few topics reveal more about our ambivalent relations to reality and myth, historical accuracy and art, sexuality and women and the continuing cultural politics of antiquity, than the ultimate Queen of the Nile.

*J. H. Sibal, AIA-NYC Film Program*

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*A new book co-edited by AIA-NYS member Alexander Bauer*



**Social Archaeologies  
of Trade and Ex-  
change Exploring Re-  
lationships among  
People, Places, and  
Things**

This volume focuses on the anthropological concept of trade as a fundamentally social activity concerned not only with the movement of goods, but also with the social context and consequences of that exchange. The contributors discuss trade on a range of scales and address themes such as exchange as a communicative act, the ways in which exchange transforms the relationship between people and things, the significance of agency and power in contexts of trade, and how sites of consumption and discard speak to processes of exchange.

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*And as for upcoming lectures of note...*

Rita Wright informs us that October 25th...  
Prof. Daniel Potts (University of Sydney)  
will be lecturing on...

“Prehistoric and Bronze Age Cultural Interaction -  
The Persian Gulf and Western Indian Ocean.” from  
5-6:30 at the Dept. of Anthropology, NYU,  
Kriser Room (first floor).  
All are welcome!

AIA-NYS welcomes you to **From Cyprus with Love: Tales of Romance on Aphrodite's Island**



NYU's own *Joan Connelly* is lecturing at a very special AIA-sponsored event this September...

[www.archaeological.org/events/1304](http://www.archaeological.org/events/1304)

Discover the archaeological sites, cuisine, wine, music, and dance of the island of Cyprus at a special lecture and reception with Joan Breton Connelly, Professor of Classics and Art History, New York University; Director, Yeronisos Island Excavations; and winner of the 2009 AIA James R. Wiseman Book Award for *Portrait of a Priestess*.

Join us for a tour of Cyprus and its major cities and sanctuaries through an exploration of the great love stories from myth and history that are set on the island.

Joan will be introduced by AIA President C. Brian Rose.

*And...* in addition to the lecture there will be a special performance by the **Pancyprrian Dance Group** and a reception featuring Cypriot specialties!



The event will take place  
**Thursday, September 23**  
**at 6:30**

**The Times Center**  
**242 West 41st Street**

tickets \$25 AIA members/\$35 reg  
for tickets call 617-353-9361

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