

aia

New York Society News



THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

On the subject of surveys, and not just the archaeological kind...

Greetings to all our AIA-New York Society Members. This summer has been a busy and interesting one for many members of the New York Society. I had the privilege of lecturing on one of the AIA Tours, exploring the seas around Italy, as well as returning for research to the Bova Marina Archaeological Project in Calabria. Board member *John Yarmick* also participated in excavations in Italy. Various other members of our Society likewise returned to their research projects, and we're hoping they'll share some of their work with us in the coming year.

The winter started with some concerns for our colleagues working in Egypt, including board member *Ellen Morris*, but all were safely evacuated as our spring lectures got underway. Our five winter/spring lectures offered a wide range of topics and were very well attended. This year we now have two new program committee chairs, *Linda Getter* and *Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis*, who together with the rest of the committee have been working diligently to get our 2011-12 lecture schedule settled. We have a preliminary schedule to share with you in this newsletter, but please check out our website <http://aia-nysociety.org/events> to confirm times and venues. This is a good idea in general as things do change, and we don't always have the time to send out a written announcement. That said, our first lecture will be September 26. As usual it is our annual meeting, so come out a half hour earlier at 6:00 pm to hear short reports from your officers and vote for your new board members.

The AIA NY Gala provided a chance for many of our New York members to support the national organization at a lovely event that was

co-organized by one of our new program committee co-chairs, *Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis*. The Friends of the New York Society, under the guidance of *Jeff Lamia* and *Lynn Quigley*, continues to grow, and they offered two wonderful spring activities. If you are interested in joining and having the opportunity to attend small group outings to exhibits or lectures in people's homes, please contact the Friends at

NYfriends@aia-nysociety.org. The society as a whole also continues to grow, and once again in June we were recipients of a golden trowel award. The Archaeological Institute of America's newest project is National Archaeology Day to be held October 22. The goal is for as many local societies as possible to present lectures, activities, or volunteer opportunities on this day to help increase awareness about the past. The New York Society is in the process of working on our contribution to this day, stay tuned for more details.

In my last letter I also mentioned that I hoped to develop a survey to better gauge the needs of our society. We have developed a survey and will send it out to our members either in paper or electronic format. When you receive the survey or the link *please take the time to share your feedback with us*. This will help us tailor our programs to best fit the desires of our AIA chapter members.

As fall approaches there will be interesting exhibits around the city that may be of interest to many of you, check out the Exhibits column on the Events page of the website to see what is available. I wish you all a good start to the fall season and look forward to seeing you.

- *Paula Kay Lazrus*, President Archaeological Institute of America, New York Society

aia New York Society lecture series for Fall 2011

September 26, 6:30 (*AIA-NYS BOARD MEETING AT 6:00*; reception to follow lecture)

“Abri Castanet (Dordogne) France: Archaeological Evidence for the Origins of Art in Europe”

Randall White, New York University

NYU Kriser Room Theater, 25 Waverly Place, First floor

Since Peyrony’s early excavations in 1911-13 and 1924-25, Abri Castanet has been known as one of a half dozen key sites in Eurasia with respect to the Paleolithic origins of European parietal and portable art and personal adornment. Peyrony’s pre-modern excavations, like those of Didon (1910-1912) in the contiguous site of Abri Blanchard, brought to light hundreds of personal ornaments and dozens of paintings and engravings as well as a rich array of bone, antler, and flint artifacts with associated production debris. The Castanet images are the oldest parietal representations so far discovered in Europe. We report here on our excavations since 1994, at Abri Castanet and Abri Blanchard (Dordogne, France), including the 2007 discovery, in perfect archaeological context, of part of the engraved and ocre-stained undersurface of the collapsed Castanet rockshelter ceiling. Extensive occupational surfaces reveal remarkable patterning, with specialized and spatially discrete activities focused around complex fire features. These activities took place beneath a low-hanging and elaborately decorated shelter ceiling and provide a glimpse of the complex societies of early modern humans in Europe.

October 10, 6:30 (reception to follow lecture)

“Maya Apocalypse Soon?”

Anthony Aveni, Colgate University

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

This lecture will explore theories about the widely prophesied end of the world on the December solstice of 2012 by measuring them objectively against the evidence of archaeology, iconography, and epigraphy. Special attention will be given to information from the earth sciences and astronomy about the likelihood of world-wide Armageddon. Finally, the prophesies will be placed in the broader cultural and historical context of how other cultures, ancient and modern, thought about the “end of things” and why cataclysmic events enjoy wide spread appeal in contemporary American pop-culture.

November 15, 6:30 (reception to follow lecture)

THE HAUPT LECTURE: “Beautiful Bangladesh”

Monica Smith, UCLA

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

Ancient Bangladesh was known as “Sonar Bangla”: Golden Bengal. The fertile lands of the Ganges Delta were a cradle of empire and a meeting-point between China, India, Burma and other Southeast Asian countries. In this talk we will explore the archaeology of this fascinating and little-known country, including the site of Mahasthangarh which is one of the earliest cities in this part of the world. The archaeology of Bangladesh also includes Buddhist, Hindu, and Islamic settlements that are UNESCO World Heritage sites, signaling their importance to the global stage. Equally importantly, those heritage sites are a source of local pride, and provide leisure and educational facilities to a growing Bangladeshi middle class.

See the Winter Newsletter

For abstracts and detailed information about the following upcoming talks:

January 26, 6:30 (reception to follow): JOUKOWSKY LECTURE: **“All Roads Lead to Rome’: The Roman Highway System in Global Perspective.”** Richard Talbert, UNC Chapel Hill. 15 East 84th St., First Floor, ISAW. (co-sponsored by the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World)

February (date & time TBA): **“Popular Imagery and Reactions to Spanish Missionization from San Augustine to San Francisco.”** David Hurst Thomas, American Museum of Natural History. Location TBA.

March 21, 6:30 (reception to follow): **“The House of Discord: Public and Private Churches in the Age of Constantine.”** Kim Bowes, University of Pennsylvania. Schermerhorn Hall 612/614, Columbia University (co-sponsored by the Columbia Center for Archaeology)

April 11, 6:30 (reception to follow): THE BRUSH LECTURE: **“Nasca Lines as Sacred Places.”** Christina Conlee, Texas State University. Location TBA.

May (date & time TBA): THE BLUMGARTEN LECTURE: **“Jewish Temples in the Late Roman World.”** Karen Stern, Brooklyn College (CUNY). Location TBA.



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

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



Interested in joining the *Friends of the New York Society*? Your additional contribution will not only help us maintain our stimulating lecture schedule, but it will also give you the opportunity to join fellow enthusiasts for private exhibition tours and intimate discussions, often held in a board member’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 (<http://aia-nysociety.org>) and click on the appropriate links provided. We look forward to seeing you online, and in person.

- Paula Kay Lazrus, 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 (emr20@nyu.edu)
snail mail: c/o New York Society News, 217 Manhattan Avenue #7A, New York, NY 10025

Spotlight on...

Excavations at Seneca Village

This summer, the Institute for the Exploration of Seneca Village History conducted archaeological excavations at Seneca Village, the 19th century community located in today's Central Park. Founded in the 1820s by African Americans, by 1855 the village was a thriving community, with a population of over 260, three churches, and a school. Approximately two-thirds of those who lived there were of African descent, mostly middle class, while the remainder were Europeans, mostly Irish. In the 1850s, the City decided to construct Central Park in an area that included Seneca Village; it took the land through the right of eminent domain, evicted the residents, and razed their homes for the creation of the Park. Although landowners were compensated for their loss, many felt the compensation was inadequate, and renters of course received nothing at all.

This project was a long time in the making. Preliminary research on the site began over a decade ago. A study of historical maps (which showed us where village houses had been located), a soil study (conducted by geoarchaeologist Suanna Selby and which identified areas where 19th century soils were still intact), and a GPR study (conducted by geophysicist Lawrence Conyers) allowed us to pinpoint locations where it seemed possible that archaeological traces of the village might have survived. All in all, there were six such areas. Once we had gathered this information, it took us more than five years to get permission to excavate, a negotiation which was ultimately successful only because of the skills and dedication of some of our Advisory Board members.

When we began fieldwork, our research questions focused on several different levels of inquiry. We wanted to 'ground truth' the radar and see the extent to which the GPR had been successful in identifying archaeological remains. If in fact we found archaeological remains related to Seneca Village, we were interested in

determining their extent and excavating a sample of them so we could explore the material lives of the people who lived there. Finally, assuming we recovered enough material, we were interested in exploring what it meant to be a member of the black middle-class in New York in the 19th century. We looked forward to comparing our finds with those from other contemporary middle-class African American communities throughout the United States as well as with middle-class Euro-American sites in New York. We received an REU grant from the National Science Foundation (#1062796), which supported the interns who worked with us throughout the field and preliminary laboratory phases of the project. We also received support from National Geographic, the Durst Foundation, the Cornell Edwards Seneca Village Fund, and the Gilder Foundation.

Our eight week field program started in early June. We proceeded systematically, from area to area, and evaluated whether the features that the GPR had identified were relevant to the history of Seneca Village. The excavations were extremely successful. Although as expected some of the features pinpointed did not relate to the Village, we discovered two features that were very important. One was the foundation walls and cellar deposits of the home of William Godfrey Wilson, a porter and sexton of one of the village churches, and his wife, Charlotte, and their eight children. These deposits contain both architectural and domestic materials which will allow us to explore the lives of the Wilson family. Particularly evocative finds included a child's shoe, a roasting pan, and a tea kettle. The other feature was made up of the deposits from a buried ground surface behind two houses in another part of the village. We are looking forward to using the data from this feature to reconstruct the environment in this part of the site as well as the ways of life of the people who lived there. Thus, we expect to address all of our research issues.

Diana diZerega Wall
Nan A. Rothschild
The Institute for the Exploration of Seneca
Village History

NEW FEATURE: CUTTING EDGE DOCTORAL RESEARCH FROM GOTHAM'S FINEST

Excavations at New Buffalo

*Kaet Heupel of Columbia University
digs 1960's counter culture*



My dissertation research centers on a former commune in Northern New Mexico, called New Buffalo.

This “back-to-the-land” commune was founded in 1967 by a group of counter-culturalists, hippies, and mainstream drop-outs, with the intention of creating a community to provide for all their needs. In my research I am focusing on the archaeological and oral historical narratives of former New Buffalo residents, in an effort to understand the role of New Buffalo, and other such rural communes, in re-shaping what constitutes “Americanness,” much less “American counterculture.”

To date, my research has included archaeological excavations at New Buffalo, individual and group oral histories about New Buffalo, artifact-oriented narratives of New Buffalo and historical research into the events of New Buffalo and its surrounding communities. The questions driving my research include: How can one materially distinguish between an American counter-culture and its contemporaneous majority culture, if even possible? What can this comparison do to challenge our notions, perceptions and stereotypes of what is counter-culture, as well as culture? How have certain ways of narrating, reporting and commodifying the 1960s counter-culture amplified the legendary and mystical histories of Hippiedom?

In order to ascertain the impacts, influence and importance of the communal movement of the 1960s, I have used artifacts of hippie life at New Buffalo to address the banal and every-day experiences of ‘the hippies/los hippies’ at the commune. From the sherd with “love” incised on it, unused prophylactics, a plethora of automotive and industrial metal objects, a puzzling excess of plastics, handfuls of bullet casings, tattered articles of clothing, a drawing compass, travel chess pieces, marbles, pennies and a 2cm pencil, the materiality of the commune has proved quite bountiful, diverse and thought-provoking. In my own analysis of the artifacts, it has become apparent that the place Hippiedom holds in American history is more nuanced, complicated and instructive than existing narratives and analyses suggest. In post-excavation artifact orienting oral history sessions, the artifacts have fruitfully and interestingly at times challenged and at times affirmed the stories and memories of former residents and people associated with the commune, resulting in different and new narratives, and as always, more questions. Future and ongoing research will continue to follow-up on and develop these new and different narratives of, and questions about ‘the hippies/los hippies’ in America in the late 1960s/early 1970s.

Katherine Heupel
Columbia University
Department of Anthropology
PhD Candidate



*The famous
“love sherd,”
excavated at
New Buffalo*

*Coming soon by snail mail or in your inbox:
an AIA-NYS survey. We want your feedback,
so please take time to answer!*

Come visit **EDGE OF EMPIRES: Pagans, Jews, and Christians at Roman Dura-Europos**



Dura-Europos was a Syrian city founded by one of the Macedonian generals who succeeded Alexander the Great, ca. 300 BCE. Until its destruction by Sassanian Persians in 256 CE, the city played host to Greeks, Syrians, Parthians, Romans, as well as to the great multicultural

spectrum of soldiers, traders, and travelers that populated the Near East in Late Antiquity.

Its pluralistic character is well illustrated by the artifacts on display, which demonstrate the apparently peaceful co-existence of polytheistic, Jewish, and Christian believers at the site as well as the variety of languages spoken and the role of the strategically located town as a critical military stronghold on the Roman frontier. Among other contexts, artifacts come from the world's best preserved ancient syna-

gogue, a Christian house-church and several pagan temples.

The Exhibit, organized by the Yale University Art Gallery and the McMullen Museum, is on view from

September 23rd to January 8th.

Institute for the Study of the Ancient World
15 E. 84th Street

Open every day but Monday from 11-6; and on Fridays 11-8
Admission is free.

For more info see:

<http://isaw.nyu.edu/exhibitions/edge-of-empires>

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