

AIA

NEW YORK SOCIETY NEWS



THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

A Busy Year Ahead! (But Busy in a Good Way)

Where did the summer go? With the flurry of activities we find ourselves once again at the beginning of our fall season. Hopefully the summer season has provided everyone with different activities, new adventures and the energy to face the coming fall and winter. As always, we have been working to put together an exciting program for the coming 2015-16 season. Current information about lectures can be found under the events tab of our website (<http://aia-nysociety.org/events>). Our speakers have busy schedules and occasionally even the best of plans fall through, so be sure to check there before lectures in case of any last-minute changes. Our lectures are free and open to the public, so be sure to bring your friends (and then encourage them to join the AIA-NY Society). Our society is made up of people with a great diversity of backgrounds, so whether we serve refreshments before or after a lecture, please introduce yourself and join in the conversation. If you have questions that you would like to address to board members, do come and find us at these events. We are identifiable by our colorful AIA buttons.

Our spring lectures were varied and well attended, and Jeff Lamia, who leads our Friends of the AIA group, organized several interesting gallery tours and other events. Our Friends have once again shown their generosity and support, permitting us to offer the wide range of lectures that we do. Thank you to all of them. If you are interested in joining the Friends and participating in the smaller and more intimate events that are organized by the Friends Committee please contact us at NYfriends@aia-nysociety.org.

Our opening lecture of this season will be on September 28th. Prior to the lecture we will hold our annual meeting from 6:00-6:25. We look forward to seeing a good number of you at this meeting where we will update you on our finances, programs and vote for a new board member.

This year's upcoming lecture topics range from Wonderwerk Cave in South Africa to Poggio Civitate in Italy, with stops to consider the use of digital technologies in Roman research and new work at Stonehenge. If you ever forget when or where and event is to be held just check the website.

I'll take a moment here to note that without the generosity of these organizations: Institute for Study of the Ancient World, Hunter College, St. John's University, Barnard College, and Columbia who provide venues for our lectures we might not be able to bring you the programs that we do.

Finally, as always, the AIA-New York Society would love to have more people who are actively engaged in our activities. If you are an enterprising and energetic member who wants to volunteer with us, contact a board member at one of the lectures. Graduate students, this might be a great opportunity for you to get involved with the AIA. Please contact us at info@aia.org if you are interested in volunteering.

Wishing everyone a good start to the fall season and I look forward to seeing you soon.

- Paula Kay Lazrus
President, AIA New York Society

AIA NEW YORK SOCIETY LECTURE SERIES FOR FALL 2015

September 28, 6:30 (AIA-NYS ANNUAL MEETING at 6:00-6:25; reception to follow lecture)

Arabia at the crossroads of cultures: The oasis of Tayma

Arnulf Hausleiter, German Archaeological Institute, visiting scholar ISAW

(co-sponsored by the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World)

15 East 84th St., ISAW

Known from Biblical and cuneiform sources as important trading post, the oasis of Tayma, Northwest Arabia, was a major stop of the famous “incense road” used for trading South Arabian aromatics to the Mediterranean, and at the same time part of a larger communication network for caravans all over the peninsula.

It is true that the enigmatic ten years stay of the last Babylonian king Nabonidus (556–539 BC) was a highlight of Tayma’s history, but more than ten years of archaeological excavations by a Saudi-German team revealed that contacts of Tayma go farther back in time, as early as to the 4th millennium BC. Most recent environmental studies shed new light on the emergence of this oasis, which, at the end of the 3rd millennium BC had a substantial wall system, and cultural contacts seem to have been important part of the oasis’ identity ever since.

October 19, 6:30 (CINELLI LECTURE; reception to follow lecture)

Poggio Civitate

Erik Nielsen, President Emeritus, Franklin University Switzerland

(co-sponsored by the Etruscan Foundation)

Casa Italiana, NYU, 24 West 12th Street

The site of Poggio Civitate, near the city of Siena, was the home to an elite stratum of Etruscan nobles who clearly controlled the area from their strategic position on the top of this dominant hill. The excavations carried out there over the past 49 years by a cadre of international scholars and students, both graduate and undergraduate, have brought to light the substantial remains of a monumental structure, ca. 60m × 60m dating to the 6th century BCE. Mysteriously, the building was systematically destroyed and its decorative elements buried in deep pits scattered about the site. The foundations were covered and the site was abandoned toward the last quarter of the 6th century. Who destroyed it and why remain unanswered at present.

As remarkable as the building was, it was not the first structure on the site. Beneath its foundations lay the remains of an earlier decorated complex consisting of a residence, a large workshop and a formally laid out building which may have served a religious function. The artifacts associated with this complex include elaborately carved figures in bone, antler and ivory, personal ornaments in silver, gold and amber as well as finely crafted bronzes. Imported luxury goods from Greece, Egypt and the Levant were present and give evidence to trade and lively exchange with neighbors throughout the entire Mediterranean basin and even cultures to the north. This talk will introduce the audience to the richness of the site and its architecture and give consideration to how the complex functioned.

November 11, 6:30 (HAUPT LECTURE; refreshments to precede lecture at 6:00)

Wonderwerk Cave: Archaeology at the Edge of the Kalahari

Michael Chazen, Professor, St. George Campus and Director, Archaeology Center,
University of Toronto

Chanin Language Center Screening Room (B126 HW), Hunter College, Lexington & 69th Street

The town of Kuruman or Ga-Sagonyana is at the edge of the Kalahari in the Northern Cape Province. The archaeology of this region is an extraordinarily rich record of human presence over a period of two million years. The lecturer will present the experience of working in this fascinating part of the world and the results of research at the site of Wonderwerk Cave where he co-directs a project that has documented the earliest known evidence of cave occupation by human ancestors. This talk will give a sense of what it is like to do archaeology in a society experiencing dramatic social change, as South Africa experiences the transformation from apartheid. At the same time the current state of research—what we have learned and what we are still struggling to understand—will be presented for Wonderwerk and also for the neighboring sites of Kathu Pan and Canteen Kopje.



Spotlight on...

Mapping Mesopotamian Monuments

As a means of countering the erasure of history through the continuous destruction of monuments in the region, Professor Zainab Bahrani of Columbia University established a project called *Mapping Mesopotamian Monuments*. She directs a team that has conducted on site fieldwork recording standing monuments and architecture across Iraqi Kurdistan in Dohuk, Erbil and Suleymaniye, and in South-Eastern Turkey in the region of Diyarbakir and Mardin. The project hopes to continue this work in the rest of Iraq, into the south. The survey is focused specifically on monuments and architecture, and purposefully has no historical, cultural or religious boundaries. The documentation is inclusive because the project aims to record the diversity and multiculturalism of the region and its history, a diversity of peoples and religions that is being deliberately and violently erased.

The second season of fieldwork conducted in May–June 2015, focused on documenting rock reliefs, historical mosques and monasteries in South-Eastern Anatolia. The first field season took place in 2013 in Iraq when Professor Bahrani and her team documented ancient Mesopotamian monuments

and rock reliefs, early Islamic and early Christian architecture, mosques and madrasas, churches and monasteries, Yezidi temples, bridges and aqueducts, Ottoman era buildings and early twentieth century buildings. The team uses a range of technologies including photogrammetry, perspectival stills, and 360° immersive panoramic records while mapping things geo-spatially. For each work the team assesses the condition and state of preservation, and provides detailed descriptions. *Mapping Mesopotamian Monuments* has to date an archive of thousands of images that the Columbia team has made on site. They are currently curated in a closed archive. The work is funded and supported by a multi-year grant from Columbia University, awarded in 2012. The significance of the project, which is a long-term work, has been unfortunately borne out by the appalling recent events in Iraq and Syria. Heritage sites, historical architecture and monuments are in grave danger throughout the region. As they continue to be destroyed as a means of erasing the presence of diverse communities and their history, we come to realise that the project has both archaeological-historical value and aspects that are directly linked to human rights.

-Zainab Babrani

Edith Porada Professor of Art History and
Archaeology, Columbia University

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKSHOP AT OUR SISTER SOCIETY

Staten Island Museum Event: Archaeology and Museums

Friday Nov 6, 2015 from 10:00AM-3:00PM

This event will be a workshop day for the local Staten Island community at the Staten Island Museum, sponsored in part by the Staten Island Society of the Archaeological Institute of America. Students from local High Schools in particular will spend the day working with archaeologists, curators, and museum professionals to learn about how archaeologists and museum cooperate to preserve world heritage. The event is also open to teachers and other community members interested in learning about archaeology and museums. The day will include talks by Diane Matyas, Vice President of Exhibitions and Programs and Curator Robert Bunkin about the museum and its collections. There will also be talks and workshops offered by Dr. Celia Bergoffen, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Art History, Fashion Institute of Technology and Dr. Sarah J. Scott, Associate Professor of Art History, Wagner College on artifact processing and cultural heritage. Participants will be able to handle actual artifacts from New York City archaeological excavations and design their own museum display. Contact Sarah Scott for more information or to sign up!

This event will be held at the Snug Harbor Location of the Staten Island Museum. Advance registration is suggested. A \$10.00 donation will be appreciated at the door.

For more information write: The Archaeology Society of Staten Island P.O. Box 140504, Staten Island, NY 10314-0504

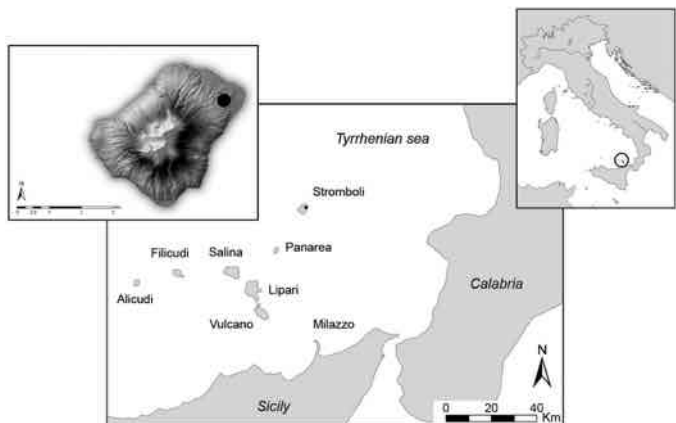


FEATURE - TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ARCHAEOLOGISTS

4,000 Years Under The Volcano: Archaeological Excavation at Stromboli

The Aeolian Islands are a volcanic archipelago located in the Southern Tyrrhenian Sea between Sicily and Calabria. Valued for their visual control over sea-lanes, these islands were occupied since the Neolithic Age (6th millennium BCE) and closely interconnected as attested by archaeological finds on Lipari and the other six islands.

Our comprehension of the Aeolian Islands has been developed through a series of archaeological endeavors, beginning with excavations by Luigi Bernabò Brea and Madeleine Cavalier in 1950, which have been the most important to understanding their key cultural sequence for the whole central Mediterranean. The largest and central island, Lipari, was an important source of high quality obsidian, which can be found not only on the other islands, but also throughout the Northern



The Aeolian Archipelago in Southern Italy and the location of San Vincenzo site in the NE of Stromboli (drawn A. Di Renzoni)

Tyrrhenian, indicating trade relations between these areas.

Current excavations at Stromboli seek to clarify and add to the understanding of cultures on the Aeolian Islands from the periphery of the archipelago. This excavation has built upon and expanded the information of a previous project in the area conducted in 1980 by Cavalier. Stromboli, located furthest northeast in the archipelago, is an active stratovolcano that rises 924 meters above sea level. The soil presents several challenges to archaeological investigation: the acid in the soil does not preserve organic materials well, and the shifting of the sand affects the other artifacts. The site of the ongoing excavations is located on the northeastern portion of the island close to San Vincenzo church on a natural plateau that grants a commanding view of the Strait of Messina, making it a strategically valuable location.

Since 2009, the project has been directed by the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia together with Soprintendenza di Messina, the museum at Lipari, and CNR-ISMA (Roma) and deals primarily with a Bronze Age village. Forty ¹⁴C dates from the village layers show continuous habitation from the 21st to the 15th century BCE (Italian Early to Middle Bronze Age I-II). This phase in the region was named Capo Graziano after the first discoveries at Filicudi of typical cultural traits including distinctive pottery decoration. In Stromboli, the main excavated area shows a complex pattern of oval huts (huts 2, 3, and 5) and terrace walls which partition the settlement. Some atypical square-shaped structures (structures P and S-T-U) were also discovered and have raised questions about their function. In the huts, hearths of varying shapes and sizes have been found; a cast of one is on display in the new installment in the museum at Lipari. Neolithic and Chalcolithic pottery has been found, but no structures from these phases, which perhaps indicates that inhabitants of the other islands may have come to Stromboli on a seasonal basis.

A large program of archaeometrical analysis of sherds connected them to their source materials on the other islands, Sicily, and Calabria. This work shows that a vibrant system of trade and connectivity existed within the Southern Tyrrhenian Sea in-

volving utilitarian objects: a situation quite unusual for the Italian protohistory. Contact with cultures further afield is illustrated by Mycenaean pottery, including several Vaphiò cups, and beads imported from the Peloponnese and dated to the Late Helladic I-II (17th–15th century BCE). The interaction with the Aegean in the Aeolian Islands affirms the first appearance of this phenomenon in the Central Mediterranean and our finds underline the strategic position of the site of San Vincenzo.

There is a gap in the archaeological record on San Vincenzo from the end of the 15th century BCE to the Roman period, which could possibly be connected to the change in the eruption pattern of the volcano to the current explosive “Strombolian” activity during the first millennium CE. A Hellenistic cemetery, only partially excavated, is located far from the site, close to the beach of Fico Grande. In the course of excavations in the Bronze Age village at San Vincenzo, three Roman graves dated to the 4th century CE were also discovered.

In the current season, we opened small trenches to the north of the previously excavated area. Preliminary evidence of a partially uncovered building and coins indicate, for the first time, the presence of a Norman occupation at the beginning of the 2nd millennium CE.

A complex occupation pattern of this small and harsh island is revealed with the archeological investigation at San Vincenzo, where cultural choices are interconnected with the natural choices, which are deeply influenced by an active volcano. Different professions are necessary in order to view as much data as possible, and subsequently gain a fuller understanding of the site; the interdisciplinary professions on site include: archaeologists, volcanologists, geologists, and biological anthropologists among others. The discovery of the past of Stromboli is also piquing the interest of the local population and tourists, who visit the site often; a notable recent visitor includes the Italian President Giorgio Napolitano.

Students at the project come from a diverse and international background; this year, they come from all over Italy, France, the United States, Czech Republic, and Iran. They are involved in all aspects of the project, from the fieldwork to the lab. Semi-

nars are held to instruct them on topics ranging from the technical, such as the role of GIS on the project, to ideological ideas such as the role of amber production and the stratification of society. The researchers are always willing to answer questions from the students and provide more information on topics of interest. This provides an environment which better educates students, from the experience of dealing with Stromboli's difficult stratigraphic layers, to classify pottery, to processing technical and ideological nuances. In addition, the exposure to the other students, their cultures and their viewpoints, is an educational experience in itself.

- Sara T. Levi

University of Modena and Reggio Emilia and
Hunter College, CUNY

Where to Open a Trench?

One objective of the 2015 excavation has been to investigate a new area of the plateau. This excavation was my first field experience as a fledgling archaeologist, who has only had classroom experience with the subject until now. By a stroke of luck, I was privileged to experience how excavations work, from start to finish, as will be outlined briefly in the following paragraphs.

A geophysical survey was performed on the area, which indicated where possible structures could exist. At this point, we had to decide where to dig the small (2x2m) test trenches in order to understand the stratigraphic layers and how the landscape affected them. Other factors used in deciding where to dig included a visual inspection of the terrain, as well as past notes made by Madeline Cavalier.

With the test trenches completed, the surface was cleared away of disturbed layers by means of a machine. We divided the land into quadrants measured 1x1m: this way all the artifacts could easily be located by the quadrant and Stratigraphic Units.

The excavation then truly begins. Based on notes and test pits, we were digging in hopes of unearthing Roman graves. To our surprise, a medieval building was found testifying for the first time re-

mains of this period at Stromboli. Each day, we go to the site with the excitement of finding something new.

At the end of this excavation session, everything must be covered. It is important to get as much information recorded, and as much material extracted for further study before the closing of this excavation season. This experience was extremely valuable as an introduction into the way a dig can be conducted, from start to finish.

- Sabina Slade

Hunter College, CUNY

Closeup of a Bronze Age Hearth

The importance of fieldwork for archaeology students is also attested when dealing with the practical understanding of stratigraphy. The San Vincenzo site, located on the slope of the volcano, presents a particular type of stratigraphy consisting of sandy layers which lack clear contours. In such cases, the cumulative section method proved to be quite an effective way for recording the stratigraphic relationship between the artifacts, features, and layers, as in the example of the hearth from hut 3. The steps involved in collecting the artifacts from the hearth enabled me to gain a better understanding of the stratigraphic complexity of the sand, the layers of which initially were quite difficult for me to follow. The process includes photographic documentation, scale drawings and subsequently the careful collection of each artifact with an assigned number. Two different phases of stratigraphic units were established not only based on the close observations during the excavation, but also based on the joints of sherds, 3-D rendering of the photographs (by AutoCAD and total station), scale drawings, and other analysis. Preliminary reports reveal the evidence of a later phase, rebuilding the structure of the earlier phase. We also believe that a gravel layer, and fragmented stones may have been deliberately placed to stabilize the stone slab of the later period. The reuse of the hearth seems to be a favorable assumption.

Therefore, if the layers are not easily observed, it is crucial that the excavator refers to the cross section while excavating, since knowing when one lay-

er ends and a new one begins might not be as straightforward in sandy soil with subtle color differences. It is the excavator's responsibility to demonstrate vigilance, not only for uncovering artifacts but also for determining the formation process of the layers.

- *Vlora Gerguri*
Hunter College, CUNY

Sifting

Sifting, in an archaeological context, is running excavated soil through a fine mesh to separate small artifacts from the rest of the detritus. Identifying pottery, lithics, and other artifacts from the background soil and rocks is not always easy and can be even more challenging when dealing with the small fragments in the sifting box. But it is an important task, especially on sites like Stromboli where the soil composition does not preserve artifacts well.

There is a wide range of material, from rough pottery to painted Mycenaean ware and grinding stones to obsidian in the Bronze Age, while the Roman and Middle Age contexts also include additional pottery types, bones, metal, coins, and glass. The sifter may also find the first signs of artifacts that can give the excavator important information, such as finding tiny tooth or bone fragments that can indicate they may be approaching a tomb and should take extra care. Keeping your sifting organized, so that all remains are placed into their correct squares and layers, is vital to keeping the artifacts in their proper context in order that they provide accurate data. It is also great for developing identification speed, as there is always more soil coming in.

My first archaeological dig was on Stromboli; working on the sifting table early in the season provided a large volume of practical identification experience, which extends into many other tasks involved in the project. Whether excavating in the field or sorting finds in the lab, the ability to determine

and classify artifacts is a core skill set that serves an archaeologist well. The time I spent in this role provided a solid foundation to carry into other functions.

- *Brian Edwards*
Hunter College, CUNY

Putting all the Pieces Together

In addition to excavation, students are given the opportunity to work in the laboratory. Daily tasks include washing, labeling, and recording pottery and other items found in the field. These activities allow students to have a closer look at what was found on previous days; when pottery sherds are clean, students are able to see elements such as decorations better. After the pottery is washed and dried, it is then given a label using paraloid and ink. Once all pottery is labeled, students, with the help of staff, choose the most important sherds such as those that have identifiable decorations or vessel shape. These first choice sherds are given artifact numbers and will be then illustrated and examined more closely. The remaining sherds are categorized as second and third choices and are weighed and recorded altogether.

After working all summer excavating in structure P, I spent a week in the lab with all the pottery found there. I examined every piece, sometimes using a microscope, in order to determine whether or not the sherds were locally made or imported, based on inclusions found in the ceramic paste. When that was completed, I tried to find joints amongst the sherds but there were very few; the lack of joints helps with the interpretation that this was more likely to have been a dumping ground than a dwelling. This experience gave me a practical idea of the interpretation process in the archaeological investigation.

- *Valerie Long*
Hunter College, CUNY

Further information on the excavations at Stromboli can be found at the project's website:
<http://www.dscg.unimore.it/site/home/ricerca/aree-di-ricerca/archeologia/articolog99021029.html>



*Hunter College students hard at work at Stromboli, Italy.
Clockwise from upper left: Sabina Slade opening the new trench 8; Vlora Gerguri excavating the hearth of hut 3;
Valerie Long labeling first choice sherds; and Brian Edwards sifting the layers of the western area.
Read their accounts in this issue.*

M. Whitney Keen, Secretary
AIA New York Society
64 Oak Avenue
Tenafly, NJ 07670

Addressee Name
4321 First Street
Anytown, State 54321
