

AIA

New York Society News



THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

A New Year, new talks, and new plans afoot...

Hard as it is to believe, the new year is upon us! Our lecture programs will pick up again at the end of January with a talk by Yelena Rakic and go on through May, ending with a talk by Severin Fowles (*author of the Spotlight feature in this issue*). The fall has been busy, and we've had three wonderful lectures so far this season. Brian Rose started us off with a splash filling the space at ISAW to overflowing and setting the stage for wonderful lectures by Rachel Kousser and Kim Shelton. We held our annual meeting in October, renewing two board members and welcoming one new addition to our board. Additionally, Ogden Goelet was approved for a full term as one of our VPs (*see our website for a full list of board members*).

I'd like to take a moment here to say a special thank you to the organizations who work with us to help present our lectures to you free of charge. Without the generosity of the institutions who host our lectures, finding venues to present our speakers to you all would be much more complicated. We are most grateful to New York University's Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (ISAW) and the American Academy in Rome (NY office) for providing space for us this fall and to Columbia University and the Columbia Center for Archaeology for hosting our National Archaeology Day event.

This year our National Archaeology Day activity was a wonderful symposium called the Next Generation Speaks Up, and we hope this will become an annual event. It gives experience to young scholars in sharing their work with the wider public, and it is a terrific opportunity for all of our members to hear about cutting edge work in archaeology. Five graduate students from New York Schools (NYU, CUNY and SUNY Buffalo),

spoke with great passion on a wide range of topics. These touched on archaeological web based data bases, international community collaborations in research projects, reinterpretations of local NY iconography, and provocative museum exhibits. We are planning to publish an additional newsletter this year that will contain summaries of these presentations just as soon as we work out all the details! Look for it later this spring.

The Friends of the New York Society have also been busy this fall, and we thank each and every person who has chosen to join. Without that support we would be hampered in our efforts to offer six events beyond the three annual lectures we receive from the National office or to implement new ideas such as publishing summaries of the student papers. The Friends are crucial to helping us offer as wide a program as we can. Thank you all! So far this year, members of the Friends have enjoyed a private tour of the wonderful Echoes of the Past. The Buddhist Cave Temples of Xiangtangshan exhibit at ISAW and a private talk by Andrew Moore at the home of one of our board members—both successful events. Consider joining the friends to further assist us in our activities.

As you will see in the following pages, we have a great line up of lectures for the winter and spring and on April 24th AIA's Annual Gala will be held at Tribeca Rooftop. This year's Banelier Award will be presented to Malcolm H. Wiener, so mark your calendars! Lastly, don't forget to check in with us on line at [Http://AIA-NYSociety.org](http://AIA-NYSociety.org). We look forward to seeing you soon.

- Paula Kay Lazrus
President, AIA New York Society

aia New York Society lecture series for Winter 2013

January 30, 6:30 (reception to follow lecture)

“Matching a Cylinder Seal with its Ancient Impression”

Yelena Rakic, Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Hunter College, Chanin Center, HW B126, Please enter through the main lobby (Lexington Ave & 68th Street)

Ancient Near Eastern stamp and cylinder seals and cuneiform tablets were already part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection when it opened its doors on Fifth Avenue in 1880. Between 1886 and 1899 the Museum acquired a large group of seals and tablets from the Reverend William Hayes Ward. This talk will explore the role of Ward—who is a fascinating but largely forgotten figure—and present the exciting discovery of a match between one of the Ward seals currently in the Morgan Library and an impression on one of the Ward tablets in the Metropolitan's collection—a rare instance where both the seal and its ancient impression are known.

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

THE HAUPT LECTURE: “Lake Dwelling Fever: 150 Years of Exploring Neolithic and Bronze Age Switzerland”

Bettina Arnold, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

NYU Department of Anthropology, Kriser Room theater, 25 Waverly Place (NW corner of Waverly & Greene Streets)

The largely unsystematic retrieval of thousands of objects from wetland sites in Switzerland between the 1850s and the beginning of the First World War was accompanied by the sale and exchange of a significant percentage of this archaeological patrimony, much of which ended up in museums and collections outside Switzerland. The mid-19th century discovery of amazingly well-preserved organic material in Neolithic Lake Dwelling sites in Switzerland set off a feeding frenzy among museums worldwide, all of which were interested in obtaining specimens for their own collections. This talk will present the story of the Robenhausen diaspora as a proxy for a period in US museum collecting during which ties to Europe were still strong, interest in European prehistory was high and World War I was on the distant horizon.

March 6, 6:30 (reception to follow lecture)

“Recent Developments in Eurasian Bronze Metallurgy with Special Reference to Prehistoric Thailand”

Vincent Pigott, Research Associate at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World

ISAW, 15 East 84th St., First Floor (co-sponsored by the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World)

Recent remarkable discoveries of ancient tin sources in the Near East and Inner Asia are shedding new light on an old question, namely, "Where's the tin?" This research will be addressed in the broader context of Eurasian developments in bronze metallurgy, and the discussion will conclude with an overview of the massive evidence for copper production now well documented in prehistoric Thailand.

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

<http://aia-nysociety.org> and click on the “events” tab.

April 25, 6:30 (reception to follow lecture)

THE BRUSH LECTURE: “Quen Santo, Huehuetenago, Guatemala: Using 19th Century Scholarship on a 21st Century Archaeology Project”

James Brady, California State University, L.A.

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

Four very impressive Maya cave studies appeared at the end of the 19th century. A restudy of the caves conducted by a California State University, Los Angeles field project allows archaeologists to integrate Seler's spectacular finds in the 19th century with the most recent advances in Maya cave investigation. This included ethnographic studies of Maya pilgrimages to the caves that continue to this day. The result is a wholly new appreciation of the tremendous importance of caves as sacred sites in ancient Maya cosmology.

May 2, 6:30 (reception to follow lecture)

“An Archaeology of Comanche Imperialism in Colonial New Mexico”

Severin Fowles, Barnard College, Columbia University

Barnard College, 202 Altschul (in Lehman Auditorium), opposite the new Diana Center (co-sponsored by the Barnard Department of Anthropology)

The first mention of the Comanche tribe in European colonial documents was in 1706, when the residents of Taos, NM wrote to Spanish colonial authorities in Santa Fe, begging for protection against an imminent attack by equestrian warriors riding down from the north. Half a century later the Comanches were an economic and political powerhouse based on the South Plains—lords of a landscape they had violently taken from Apachean tribes. Throughout most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Comanches dictated trade patterns and intervened militarily across a tremendous swath of the American West, from Canada deep into Mexico. Until recently, this story of Comanche imperialism had remained invisible to archaeologists. In this talk, however, I present the results of recent research in northern New Mexico that is beginning to reveal the material remnants of the tribe's eighteenth century expansionist campaigns.

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.

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 (emorris@barnard.edu)
snail mail: c/o New York Society News, 217 Manhattan Avenue #7A, New York, NY 10025

Spotlight on...

Barnard's field program in New Mexico

Since 2007, Barnard College has supported an archaeological field program in northern New Mexico. Under the direction of Professor Severin Fowles, the program draws ten to fifteen undergraduate and graduate students from Barnard and Columbia into the field each summer to conduct regional surveys and excavations designed to address a range of research questions regarding the pre-Columbian and colonial histories of the region.

One of the most fascinating and unexpected discoveries made during these investigations concerned the early eighteenth century entrance of the Comanches into northern New Mexico to raid, trade with, and assert dominance over local Pueblo and Spanish communities. Recent revisionist histories of the American West have argued that the Comanches emerged during the eighteenth century as a potent imperial force with an equestrian military that determined the political fortunes of European and Native American groups across much of the continent. Until recently, however, the material evidence of "Comanche imperialism" had entirely escaped archaeological detection.

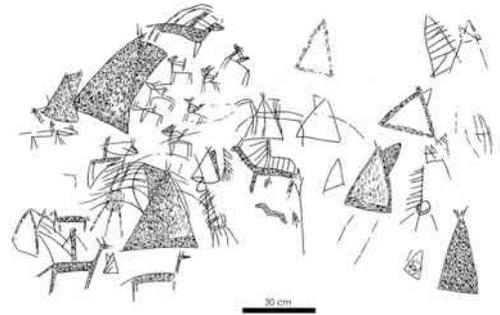
All that changed in 2008. While surveying in the Rio Grande Gorge, just west of Taos, Barnard field crews stumbled upon the location of a large base camp occupied by Plains warriors roughly three hundred years ago. The Vista Verde Site is composed of the remains of a large circular tipi compound with two-dozen tipi rings discernible on the surface and a number of additional tipi clearings just beneath the surface (the latter located using geophysical techniques). Here, in this hidden and highly defensible location along the Rio Grande, was where a group of tipi-dwelling nomads once set up shop an easy day's horse ride from Taos and Picuris Pueblos, as well as from a number of small Spanish communities.

What exactly these tipi dwellers from the Plains were doing in New Mexico is made abundantly clear by the rock art panels they scratched

on the boulders surrounding their camp. Indeed, for the past four years, Barnard and Columbia students have been meticulously documenting hundreds of faintly scratched panels that reveal an elaborate Plains lifestyle filled with equestrian battles, tipi camps, sacred bundles, strange shamanic figures, and horse raids. Most remarkable, perhaps, is the presence of dozens of panels that appear to depict episodes of counting coup, the well-known Plains tradition in which warriors built prestige by documenting their military honors before the community at large. In fact, the Vista Verde Site may represent the earliest evidence of coup-counting anywhere in North America, thereby providing an important window onto the origins of what later evolved into the famous ledger art tradition of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

While it remains a possibility that other native groups may also be affiliated with the site, consultations with the Comanche tribe have highlighted many iconographic elements that are distinctively "Comanche," and this interpretation accords well with evidence in Spanish colonial documents of intense Comanche raiding in northern New Mexico commencing in 1706. The research, however, continues apace, and a fresh crop of Barnard students will be out in the field this coming summer, seeking to shed additional light on this important chapter in the history of the American West.

- *Severin Fowles*
Assistant Professor of Anthropology,
Barnard College



Comanche rock art panel, Rio Grande gorge

CUTTING EDGE DOCTORAL RESEARCH FROM GOTHAM'S FINEST

Penitente Petroglyphs in New Mexico*Darryl Wilkinson of Columbia University rocks out.*

When considering the spread of Old World religions like Christianity across the Americas, it is very easy to get drawn into thinking in terms of sharp divides and contrasts. Histories of the colonial era often direct our attention to the antagonistic clashes between the new faith and the established practices of Native peoples. And of course, sometimes that is exactly how it went. Yet, the rise of Christianity in the Americas is a centuries-long story of negotiations and transformations – and one that is still unfolding. My research in northern New Mexico focuses on one of those spaces where a complex interweaving of Native and Roman Catholic sacred landscapes has been occurring since the beginning of the colonial era. Specifically, the Rio Grande region near Taos has a rich tradition of Catholic rock art, and so conducting a study of this form of religious material culture has been an ongoing research interest during the past four field seasons.

The Catholic rock art in the region generally takes the form of petroglyphs (stone or metal-pecked images on basalt boulders). Catholic pictographs (made using pigments) are not unknown in the region but are much less common. The kinds of rock art we have been finding occur in a wide variety of different locations; some quite close to settlements and others more remote. There are Catholic icons dating from more-or-less the beginning of the colonial era right up to the present-day in northern New Mexico, but probably most were produced during the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Of course, the interest in Catholic rock art is not only about the study of religious iconography itself (although that remains a significant area of interest) but is also a window onto past interactions with sacred landscapes more broadly. In that sense, the petroglyph study also entails mapping other landscape features that

were associated with the rock art. One major example of this is the phenomenon of the Penitentes *moradas* that are one of the most distinctive expressions of Hispano spirituality and piety in the American Southwest. The Penitentes are a lay fraternity of Catholics that have deep historical roots in New Mexico and the *moradas* were simple (often adobe) structures that served as chapterhouses for the brotherhood, especially during their ceremonies that took place around Holy Week.

One of these *moradas*, disused since the 1940s, is located in the small town of Pilar and is surrounded by a very complex assemblage of petroglyphs, old pathways, and cemeteries. Our studies of this landscape have revealed some of the complex ways in which past communities expressed their spiritual lives through engagements with the land and its more ancient elements, including Native shrines. The petroglyphs around the Pilar *morada* are clearly interacting with older, pre-colonial sites of spiritual significance in a way that suggests the Catholic inhabitants of the region were very familiar with the local Native spiritual topography and that much of their ceremonial activities were consciously referencing it. Through this research, my aim is to contribute to the making of local histories which detail the complex ways in which peoples' spiritual lives were materialized, and to make such knowledge available to the communities that still live in the area, allowing them to connect with their pasts in new ways through archaeological research.

- Darryl Wilkinson.
Columbia University
Ph.D. Candidate in Archaeology

- Darryl Wilkinson.
Columbia University
Ph.D. Candidate in Archaeology

*19th Century
Catholic rock art.
in the Rio
Grande Gorge
near Taos, New
Mexico*



 PETTY'S RUN: COLONIAL STEEL, IRON, AND WATERPOWER IN DOWNTOWN TRENTON

When you read this newsletter, work will have begun on the permanent preservation and display of the foundations of dramatic 18th and 19th century industrial structures located adjacent to the New Jersey State House in Trenton, New Jersey. Uncovered and documented in 2008-2010, these remains graphically demonstrate the ability of urban archaeology to contribute both to the study of the past and to the cultural assets of urban places.



The Site looking east. Linear feature is the Petty's Run culvert, wheel pit is center right (Hunter Research, Inc.)

The story begins with a plan to greatly enhance the surroundings of the State House with a newly designed park. Research since 1986 had shown that the area immediately east of the State House was crossed by a now-underground, culverted stream, Petty's Run. This stream had provided waterpower for two early Colonial industrial enterprises. The first, established in the early 1730's, was a mechanized iron forge with a heavy "trip" hammer that was used to beat bar iron into a wide range of tools and containers that were then sold in Philadelphia. The second, and technologically much more significant, enterprise was a steel furnace, one of the first in the American Colonies, built in the mid 1740's.

In the 19th century the Run continued to power industry: firstly a cotton mill and subsequently a paper mill. Around 1876 the whole area was developed for row-housing, which remained in place only until 1914, when the area was infilled and landscaped.

The State of New Jersey saw that this historic landscape could form part of the interest of the new park, and included provision for archaeological excavation in early phases of the park design. Wallace Roberts and Todd of Philadelphia, the winners of the design competition, engaged Hunter Research, Inc. of Trenton to carry out the archaeology. The work involved the removal of up to 18 feet of 20th and late 19th century fill materials over more than 15,000 square feet (over a third of an acre), as well as the dissection of six major phases of occupation and use at the site.

We take the ubiquity of steel for granted today: it is a compound of iron and carbon that has qualities of flexibility, durability, and strength that iron itself does not possess. Until the mid-19th century, however, steel was difficult and expensive to make. The processes involved were not fully understood, and so there were many failures. In Colonial America, steel was increasingly needed, not just for the cutting edges of hand tools like axes and knives, but also for more mechanical applications, like watches, clocks, surveying instruments, and firearms. Most steel in America was imported from England, but a handful of individuals, like Benjamin Yard of Trenton, decided to break the British near-monopoly by making it themselves.

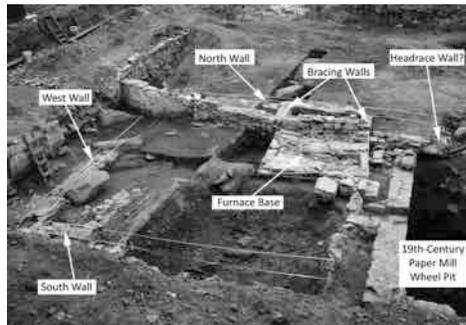
America's Only Excavated Colonial Steel Furnace

Despite the overlying layers of occupation, the steel furnace survived as an archaeological feature. It is the only example of a colonial steel furnace to have been excavated in the United States and is of international importance. The key component on the site is the base of the furnace itself. This is a rectangular stone and brick foundation, 10.5 by 9.5 feet. Although much truncated, just enough of it remains for us to understand it.

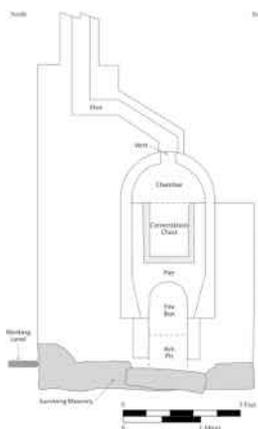
Most steel in the 18th century was made using the "cementation" process. This involved bedding bars of iron in charcoal inside a stone or brick chest. The chest lay within a furnace chamber which was heated by a fire from below. The chest was "baked" for a week or more at which time the iron had absorbed carbon and turned into bubbly surfaced "blister" steel.

What we have in Trenton is almost certainly a single-chest furnace of this type. Although it seems small, similarly sized contemporary examples are known from England. The diagram shows how it may have worked, based on an example drawn in Sheffield in 1765-6 and from other written accounts.

The furnace was set inside a rectangular Furnace House, about 31 feet wide and at least 36 feet long. In here the iron and fuel was probably stored, and a forge was probably also located here to fold the bar over into “Shear Steel”. At the end of the furnace’s life in the mid 1780’s it was converted for use as a redware pottery kiln: debris from this operation were found amidst the demolition rubble.



Above: the remains of the furnace base and house. View facing north. Below: a hypothetical reconstruction of the 18th century cementation furnace in profile (Hunter Research Inc.)



Other Features of the Site

The 1730’s iron forge (called a plating mill because it beat bar iron into flat “plates”) was badly preserved. It had been demolished by the Continental Army in 1777, when it was feared that the British might re-take Trenton. Only parts of its massive west and south foundation walls were found.

A short-lived cotton mill became incorporated into a much more successful paper mill, which operated from about 1827 to 1876. The main surviving feature of this was a spectacular wheel pit, nine feet wide, over 22 feet long and 12 feet deep. This contained the well-preserved water-box for the turbines that replaced a traditional water wheel in the 1860’s (see below courtesy of Hunter Research Inc.).



The mill was partly incorporated into row houses built in the mid 1870’s. These were very poorly built, and at least two suffered from

terrible water problems inherited from the mill.

Dominating the displayed site will be Petty’s Run itself. This once-busy stream is now little more than a storm drain, but a roof section will be removed so that visitors can see down to the exposed bedrock. The interior of the culvert is dramatic: the water falls over a series of bedrock ledges, and in several places there are structures in the floor and side walls that reflect the harnessing of the water power for early industry. For more information go to www.pettysrun.org.

- Ian Burrow, Vice President Hunter Research Inc.



Interior of the Petty’s Run culvert looking downstream. The arched brick roof dates to 1876 or earlier (Hunter Research Inc.)

Don't know much about the art and archaeology of ancient Malta? Remedy that this spring at ISAW!

Temple and Tomb: Prehistoric Malta

March 21 - June 30, 2013

Institute for Study of the Ancient World
at New York University
15 East 84th Street
admission is free

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

This exhibition, organized by ISAW in collaboration with Heritage Malta, showcases artifacts fashioned by the ancient inhabitants of the Maltese archipelago between c. 3600-2500 BCE. The culture is known for great

stone temples and for a wide array of human figurines in clay and stone. Deriving from cult and funerary contexts, the figurines depict males, females, and individuals whose sexual identity is decidedly ambiguous. While these artifacts are fashioned in a locally distinctive style, they bear fascinating parallels to nearly contemporary figurines in the European and Mediterranean worlds.



*Head from a Standing Figure. Temple Period, 3600-2500 BCE, Tarxien Temple (Malta)
National Museum of Archaeology: 9529*

*Schematic Figure, wearing a headband and skirt. Temple Period, 3600-2500 BCE
Xaghra Circle (Gozo)
Gozo Museum of Archaeology: 32193*



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