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eREVIEWS: Of "Musica, culti e riti nell'Occidente greco"
From <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2015/2015-01-28.html>:

Bryn Mawr Classical Review 2015.01.28

Reviewed by Frederick G. Naerebout, Leiden University (f.g.naerebout@hum.leidenuniv.nl) [Authors and titles are listed at the end of the review.]

Under review is a volume of collected articles, the first in a new series titled ‘Telestes. Studi e ricerche di archeologia musicale nel Mediterraneo’, edited by the indefatigable Angela Bellia. Bellia on her own has done more for the study of music and musical culture in Magna Graecia and Sicily than all other scholars put together, so it comes as no big surprise that this first volume deals with that same part of the Mediterranean world. This multilingual (Italian, English, French, Spanish) publication contains 24 papers and a substantial introduction by Bellia. Some of these papers emanate from a 2013 conference organized at Agrigento by MOISA International Society for the Study of Greek and Roman Music and its Cultural Heritage. Amongst the contributors we find both renowned scholars as Andrew Barker, Claude Calame, Monica de Cesare, Elisa Chiara Portale, Stelios Psaroudakis, and Daniela Castaldo, and also less established names. Altogether the line-up is quite impressive – as also reflected in the superior quality of the book itself: proof-reading, paper, printing, illustrations, it is all excellent. The papers are divided across four sections: one about singer-songwriters, one about musical instruments, one about the iconography, and one about music in context, more specifically as an element in religious ritual. In listing the sections I have changed the order: to have three sections dealing with textual sources,
archaeological artifacts and iconography, followed by a section of a more synthetic nature, seems to make sense and I will discuss the different contributions in that sequence.

Bellia’s introduction offers a conspectus of cultic activity in Magna Graecia and on Sicily, focusing on divinities, most importantly Apollo, Hera, Demeter, Artemis and Dionysos. For each divinity, she lists the most important sanctuaries, for instance Zankle/Messana, Rhegion, Lokroi and Taras in the case of Apollo, and discusses the written and archaeological evidence concerning the cultic activities at each locality. This is quite informative, though when it comes to the music and dance, much appears to be hypothetical. To quote from just three pages (21-23): “non si via esplicito riferimento”, “non può escludersi”, “suggeriscono” and “potrebbero richiamare”, together with a sprinkling of “forse” and “probabilmente” – all of which can be summarized as: “there might have been music and dance but we cannot be sure”. In fact, I think Bellia, however commendable her reticence in the face of the fragmentary evidence, could have been more confident: the available sources for the Greek world, and that includes the Greek West, make more than clear that music and dance were an element of practically every ritual occasion of some importance and scope. It would be the suggestion that this could be different in Magna Graecia and on Sicily that would need explaining, not the suggestion that the Greeks of those areas are as appreciative of music and dance as their relatives in the motherland. Indeed, Bellia stresses, and rightly so, the intimate connections between the performative traditions of the one and the other.

Despite the value of her general overview, there are some issues that Bellia could have addressed here. Bellia refers to some of these, but discusses none of them in any depth: the relationship between motherland, Greek colonies and indigenous communities and what this meant in terms of cultural change (there is a single mention of “acculturazione religiosa”, p. 29); and especially the relationship between the sources and ritual practice. The sources “call to mind”, “may be the reflection of” and so on. In the one instance, this carries conviction – though still the ineluctable gap between the imagery and the real might have been addressed more explicitly – in the other, one may readily doubt. Dionysiac imagery is a case in point; omnipresent and repeated across centuries, how easy is it to link this imagery to actual ritual? With the written sources, too, there are questions to be asked: when Bellia in a single passage (pp. 27-28) builds up her argument with elements culled from the works of Aristoxenos, Theokritos, Probus, Lucian, Pollux, Athenaios and Diomedes, I cannot help noting that there are over seven centuries between the date of the first and the last author, and that four authors date to the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. while their pronouncements are referred to in order to say something about the classical and/or early Hellenistic period(s) (I think: Bellia is not given to precise dating – even when she specifies “in origine” we are never told where on a time-scale these origins are to be situated). Still, these shortcomings may well be overlooked, and I for one would be quite willing to do so, considering the helpfulness of Bellia’s conspectus; and besides, in the study of music and dance, where everyone is confronted by scarce and unruly evidence, there are far worse offenders.

We will turn now to the different sections, which I will largely discuss as a whole because there is no room to review all 24 papers on their own. The singer-songwriter section consists of 5 papers taking up some 50 pages. Over one-third of these pages are claimed by the paper by Calame which is a wide-ranging examination of Greek ‘song-culture’ in the Greek colonies and the mainland, focusing on Stesichoros. The wide range of this contribution may be born of a sense of despair: if Calame’s and the other papers are mostly disappointing, this is not because of the quality of what they have to offer. They are all excellent, but they seem without point or aim because there is so very little evidence to go by. Even if there is something worthwhile here on Stesichoros, Pythagoras, Empedokles and Architas, there is little on the composition and performance of song. Also, here – and at many other instances
throughout the volume, but I will not be repeating it – one may readily ask what actually is specific about the culture of the Western Greeks: so much reference is made to the Greek motherland in order to eke out the meagre sources. The specificity of Magna Graecia and Sicily ought to be a major theme of this collection of papers; however, although it is by no means completely absent, it rarely takes centre-stage.

The instruments section, also consisting of 5 papers, another 50 pages, is, unsurprisingly, the most technical part of the volume. Especially the three papers on archaeologically attested auloi, well-documented and well-illustrated, will make the heart of those who are organologically interested beat a bit faster. All papers here present mostly new evidence, and their importance cannot be doubted – the more casual reader, however, will probably move on quickly to a less technical section and leave this to the specialists. For the non-specialist who wonders about the sound of the ancient instruments, I may refer to the concert-lecture that Stefan Hagel of the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften gave in the context of the Agrigento conference and which is available on YouTube.

The iconography section consists of 8 papers, taking up some 100 pages. Of course, there are a number of papers in the other sections that would have fitted this section too, especially the papers by Terranova and Liveri and part of Bellia’s introduction. The papers in the iconography section are short – not counting the images – and do not delve very deep: one is presented with a handful of dance or music imagery, and that is it. Albertocchi tries to do rather more than that, but with its seven pages her paper too gives only a tantalizing glimpse of what she might have come up with given enough space (she departs from an impressive bibliography and asks interesting questions). For the section as a whole, it is not always clear what contribution the visual material presented here is supposed to make to our general understanding of the musical culture of Magna Graecia. Here again, as was the case with the first section, a relative dearth of relevant sources seems to undermine the authors’ intentions and efforts.

The section of most value to those interested in mousikē as a societal phenomenon, studied in context (and I admit to being one of those), would seem to be the one on “musica e rito”: music in a religious setting (and dance – but that word is lacking from the book’s title too; the individual authors are more careful about their choice of words). In this section there are 6 papers, another 100 pages, and one could add here the general introduction by Bellia. Alas, I found this section again disappointing. There are some papers here that hold promise: De Cesare’s view of music (and probably dance too) as an intercultural lingua franca, Terranova on the development of the tympanon into a symbol of death and afterlife, and Liveri explicitly addressing the issue of western Greek specificity. But it was all quite inconclusive. There are other papers that seem superfluous, out of place or hard to understand. All in all, again every author seems to have struggled with the effort to make something out of very little.

Summing up: we have here a number of valuable contributions –especially the more technical organological papers will undoubtedly find their way to the right audience. Also, despite the criticism voiced above, I want to stress that the whole of this volume is rather more than the sum of the constituent parts. If you read through the whole book and piece it all together, you do know more about the musical life of Greek communities in the West. Therefore nobody interested in that specific musical (and religious) history can afford to disregard this volume; anyone with such an interest should at the very least read Bellia’s introduction and have a closer look at the archaeological material scattered throughout this book. Nevertheless, it remains that this volume seems to be making a lot of song and dance about very meagre sources – leading to attempts to squeeze even the last little drop of information out of small text fragments or equally small assemblages of terracotta statuettes. Even if we
find this procedure at all acceptable, what are we left with? With proof, or with a more or less reliable hypothesis, that music and dance were part of many different cultic events at many sanctuaries across Magna Graecia and Sicily. As I already said: this is unsurprising, and it would be very strange (and quite exciting) if it were otherwise. I would have hazarded to hypothesize as much, or even to make a statement of fact, and that without knowledge of any of the material presented here. This is not likely to be completely satisfactory to anyone. So what do we really want? Bellia is actually quite clear about that: we want to know what kind of music and dance were performed, and how this was related to particular cults, to the history, identity and social structure of individual communities, and to the relationships between those communities (pp.13, 32: “coesione sociale”, “dialogo interetnico”, “l’evolversi storico e politico”, and so on). Yes, we would like that. But, apart from a hint here and there, we do not get it. And we will never get it, on the basis of the ancient evidence – as the present volume clearly illustrates. Still, although some evidential problems will always remain, there is a way out, a way forward, towards answering some of the questions asked by Bellia. That way is comparative research within a social science framework. The anthropology of music and dance can be very helpful: however, not a single such anthropological study is referred to in this volume. 2 So bring out your dead, so neatly laid out here, and have them revived by an infusion of comparative work and social science.

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2. Claude Calame in his paper refers to Victor Turner and Richard Schechner but this is in the context of the rise of ‘performance studies’. Marina Albertocchi refers to publications on ancient dance which do make use of anthropology, such as those by Calame, Lonsdale and Naerebout.

NEWS: Assyrian PTSD
From <http://www.bbc.com/news/health-30957719>:

Post-traumatic stress 'evident in 1300BC'
By James Gallagher

Evidence of post-traumatic stress disorder can be traced back to 1300BC - much earlier than previously thought - say researchers.

The team at Anglia Ruskin University analysed translations from ancient Iraq or Mesopotamia.

Accounts of soldiers being visited by "ghosts they faced in battle" fitted with a modern diagnosis of PTSD.

The condition was likely to be as old as human civilisation, the researchers concluded.

Prof Jamie Hacker Hughes, a former consultant clinical psychologist for the Ministry of Defence, said the first description of PTSD was often accredited to the Greek historian Herodotus.

Referring to the warrior Epizelus during the battle of Marathon in 490BC he wrote: "He suddenly lost sight of both eyes, though nothing had touched him."

But Prof Hughes' report - titled Nothing New Under the Sun - argues there are references in the Assyrian Dynasty in Mesopotamia between 1300BC and 609BC.

Ghosts
In that era men spent a year being toughened up by building roads, bridges and other projects, before spending a year at war and then returning to their families for a year before starting the cycle again.

Prof Hughes told the BBC News website: "The sorts of symptoms after battle were very clearly what we would call now post-traumatic stress symptoms.

"They described hearing and seeing ghosts talking to them, who would be the ghosts of people they'd killed in battle - and that's exactly the experience of modern-day soldiers who've been involved in close hand-to-hand combat."

A diagnosis and understanding of post-traumatic stress disorder emerged after the Vietnam War. It was dismissed as shell shock in World War One.
Prof Hughes said: "As long as there has been civilisation and as long as there has been warfare, there has been post-traumatic symptoms. It's not a 21st Century thing."

CONFERENCES: The Mystery of Ramat Rahel (in Hebrew; TAU, March 12)
From Oded Lipschits [mailto:lipschit@post.tau.ac.il]:
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What is Hidden and What is Revealed: The Mystery of Ramat Rahel Continues to Fascinate

A joint evening symposium with Tel Aviv University and Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi, in honor of the publication of the book:
"What the Stones are Whispering? Ramat Rahel 3000 Years of Forgotten History"

Thursday, March 12, 2015, Tel Aviv University, the Gilman building, lecture hall 223 (All Lectures are in Hebrew)

15:30 – Gathering
16:00-17:30 – First Session: The History of Judah between the First Temple Period and the Second Temple Period: A View from Ramat Rahel

16:00-16:25 – Oded Lipschits: The Age of Empires: Judah under Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Rule: A View from Ramat Rahel
16:50-17:10 – Liora Freud: The End of the Iron Age, the Persian Period, and What Comes in Between: Ceramic Assemblages from Ramat Rahel and Their Significance in Understanding the History of Judah
17:10-17:30 – Dafna Langutt: Luxury, Splendor, and Exoticness: The Persian Royal Garden of Ramat Rahel

17:30-18:00 – Coffee break
18:00-19:45 – Second Session: Ramat Rahel and the System of Stamped Jar Handles in Judah

18:00-18:10 – Oded Lipschits: Introduction: The Uniqueness of the Stamped Jar Handles of Judah
18:10-18:30 – Omer Sergy: Stamped Jar Handles and the Beginning of the Judahite Royal Administration
18:30-18:50 – Ido Koch: The Rosette Stamp Impressions and Their Importance in Understanding the Chronology of Ramat Rahel and the History of Judah at the End of the First Temple Period
18:50-19:10 – Oded Lipschits: The Lion and the Yehud Stamp Impressions: Continuity in the Administrative System of Judah under Babylonian and Persian Rule
19:10-19:30 – Efrat Bocher: The Yrslm Stamp Impressions and the End of the Administrative Stamp Jar System in Judah
19:30-19:45 – Conclusions and Discussion

eARTICLES: Digital resources for research in Near Eastern Studies
At <http://www.nino-leiden.nl/publications.aspx?id=10> can be accessed the following free download Bibliotheca Orientalis:

Articles published in Bibliotheca Orientalis 71 3/4 (2014), Jubilee fascicle on digital resources for research in Near Eastern Studies:


LECTURES: "History, Politics, and Vergil's Aeneid" (NYC, January 30)
From Evan Luke Jewell [mailto:elj2121@columbia.edu]:

The Center for the Ancient Mediterranean (CAM) invites you to attend our next lecture, this coming Friday, January 30, 11am in the Level 5 seminar room of the Italian Academy.

Professor Stephen Harrison (Oxford) will deliver a lecture entitled, "History, Politics, and Vergil's Aeneid".

This talk considers Vergil's Aeneid against the background of contemporary Roman history and politics (a lively period indeed in the history of Rome with the demise of the republic and the establishment of the principate). It looks at allusions to historical characters, especially through symbolism and analogy: how far can Aeneas be a version of Augustus, or Dido a version of Cleopatra? It also considers the range of political views to be found in the Aeneid: is the poem supportive of Augustus, and how does it deal with the painful topic of civil war?

A short reception will follow. All are welcome!

eTUBES: Simulation of the Mount Vesuvius eruption
At <https://www.youtube.com/embed/dY_3ggKg0Bc> is a Melbourne Museum recreation of one day (August 24, 79 BC) that changed Pompeii forever.
CALLS FOR PAPERS: "Impacts on Transportation - costs, politics, and archaeological evidence" (Bonn, April 17-18)

From A.-B. Binder, T. Gutmann & J. Weidemüller [mailto:impactsontransportation@gmail.com]:
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Workshop: Impacts on Transportation - costs, politics, and archaeological evidence, 17.-18.04.2015, Bonn, Germany.

Call for papers

Since prehistory commodities were carried from one place to another as part of commercial exchange, or in means of raw material supply for the community. The way in which they were brought to their destination was dependent upon several issues.

Three aspects of transport shall be discussed in greater detail to further our understanding of influential factors and to enlighten the transfer of immaterial goods that might accompany exchanged commodities.

Main aspects dealt with in the workshop are: Cost estimation These charges play a decisive role in the analysis of economic networks. They are relevant to determining location factors of production facilities and to estimating the value of commodities for a society. It is supposed that costs of transport are dependent on at least five factors: distance, topography, surface consistency (water, wood land, swampland, desert etc.), the type and form of goods to (e.g. weight, size, fragility), and the mode of transport available.

Political influence
The objective of the second session is to motivate an interdisciplinary discussion on the effects of political changes on transport in Europe. The main focus will be on the transport of large-scale commodities, such as wood, and whether its organisational structure changes according to political shifts. This includes topics such as what rearrangements result in local, regional, and supra-regional trade, and if there are any variations in the generated costs. Or does everything remain unchanged? Additional papers may also concern the impact of large-scale construction projects and restrictions on the flow of these goods.

Immaterial goods
The last session engages with the transfer of knowledge in terms of technologies, customs, and ideologies. Knowledge can be transmitted from one place to another in a limited period or be handed down through time. Likewise, some phenomena seem to occur independently from one another at different places at the same time or at the same places in different periods. What factors cause the adaptation of knowledge? For discussing this purpose, case studies are welcome that illustrate one or more circumstances leading to the same result and vice versa.

The general aim of the workshop is to highlight different aspects of transportation and parameters that have impact on it. At the same time it aims to address what immaterial commodities are – deliberately intended or not – transferred and why.
The organizing committee invites young researchers, doctoral and master candidates to participate in the workshop to be held in Bonn. The committee is formed by doctoral candidates of the DFG research training groups “Archaeology of Pre-Modern Economies” and “Value and Equivalence”.

Please send abstracts from any archaeologically related discipline in English (about 200 words) and a short CV to the organizing committee by 31.01.2015. We wish for active involvement in the discussions following the papers at the end of each session. The organizers encourage alternative presentation modes (e.g. 6-minutes-talk / pecha-kucha presentations); standard papers of max. 20 minutes length are also accepted.

No fees are required for participation.

Contact: ImpactsOnTransportation@gmail.com Anne-Birte Binder (Value and Equivalence, Frankfurt) Tobias Gutmann (Archaeology of Pre-Modern Economies, Bonn) Julia Weidemüller (Archaeology of Pre-Modern Economies, Bonn)

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eBOOKS & BOOKS: Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies. An introduction

From [http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/handbook.html](http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/handbook.html): [Go there for free download]

Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies. An introduction, Alessandro Bausi (General editor), Pier Giorgio Borbone, Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet, Paola Buzi, Jost Gippert, Caroline Macé, Marilena Maniaci, Zisis Melissakis, Laura E. Parodi, Witold Witakowski (éd.), Hamburg, Tredition, 2015, 677 pages


Table of contents: [http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/HandbookTOC.pdf](http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/HandbookTOC.pdf)

The present volume is the main achievement of the Research Networking Programme 'Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies', funded by the European Science Foundation in the years 2009-2014. It is the first attempt to introduce a wide audience to the entirety of the manuscript cultures of the Mediterranean East.

The chapters reflect the state of the art in such fields as codicology, palaeography, textual criticism and text editing, cataloguing, and manuscript conservation as applied to a wide array of language traditions including Arabic, Armenian, Avestan, Caucasian Albanian, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Coptic, Ethiopian, Georgian, Greek, Hebrew, Persian, Slavonic, Syriac, and Turkish.

Seventy-seven scholars from twenty-one countries joined their efforts to produce the handbook. The resulting reference work can be recommended both to scholars and students of classical and oriental studies and to all those involved in manuscript research, digital humanities, and preservation of cultural heritage.
The volume includes maps, illustrations, indexes, and an extensive bibliography.

NEWS: More on damage to Tutankhamen’s Burial Mask
From <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/24/world/middleeast/archaeologists-want-egyptian-officials-charged-for-damage-to-tutankhamens-burial-mask.html>:

Archaeologists Want Egyptian Officials Charged for Damage to Tutankhamen’s Burial Mask JAN. 23, 2015

A tourist visiting the Egyptian Museum in Cairo last August snapped an image of two workers who appeared to be doing impromptu repair work on the ancient burial mask of Tutankhamen.

By ROBERT MACKEY

Outraged over what appears to be serious damage to one of Egypt’s ancient treasures — scratches and a layer of glue on the golden burial mask of Tutankhamen — a group of Egyptian archaeologists said on Friday that they planned to file charges against officials at the state-run Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

Monica Hanna, an archaeologist with the group, Egypt’s Heritage Task Force, confirmed the damage during a visit to the museum on Friday and told Agence France-Presse that officials must be held responsible.

Three of the museum’s conservators confirmed to The Associated Press this week that workers had been ordered to do impromptu repair work on the mask some months ago, after the boy king’s blue and gold braided beard came loose as workers replaced a light bulb in its case, and a hasty decision was made to glue it back on using epoxy, which might be impossible to remove.

“The mask should have been taken to the conservation lab,” the conservator said, “but they were in a rush to get it displayed quickly again and used this quick-drying, irreversible material.”

A conservator who witnessed the repair work said that the scratches on the mask were made by a colleague who used a spatula to pry off excess epoxy splattered on the chin during the process.

Jackie Rodriguez, a tourist who visited the museum last Aug. 12, provided The A.P. with what she said was a photograph of two men carrying out the repair work while the gallery was open. “The whole job did look slapstick,” she said. “It was disconcerting given the procedure occurred in front of a large crowd and seemingly without the proper tools.”

The director of the museum, Mahmoud el-Helwagy, dismissed reports last year that the mask had been damaged, but said to the BBC on Friday that an error in the application of the adhesive material might have been made during restoration work on the 3,300-year-old relic.

Ms. Hanna, who studies the preservation of mural paintings in the Theban Necropolis, drew attention to the damage on Twitter this week, sharing what she said was a recent image of the mask in which the epoxy was plainly visible.
Discussing the challenge of preserving Egypt’s heritage in 2013, Ms. Hanna suggested that the government of former President Hosni Mubarak was to blame for alienating the public. “The main bulwark to protect the monuments should be the Egyptian people themselves and not the laws, but the problem is that Egyptians do not feel a relationship with their monuments,” she said.

“For more than 30 years, especially in the recent 10 years under Zahi Hawas, Egyptians were kept away from their heritage,” she added, referring to the former antiquities minister. “He used to order all museums and tourist attractions to be closed during feasts and public holidays to protect the monuments from being vandalized by Egyptians. During his time, the general public started to firmly believe that the monuments belong to the government and foreign tourists, but not to them. They started to believe that Egyptology is a foreign science they see on National Geographic, not a local one.”

Egypt’s current minister of antiquities, Mamdouh el-Damaty, also denied reports in the local news media late last year that the mask had been damaged.

Ms. Hanna suggested on Twitter that the minister was aware of the damage at the time and had moved to cover it up.

On social networks, Egyptian bloggers mocked the repair work and the government, sharing images of the golden-headed pharaoh asking for his beard to be shaved off, so as not to be confused for an Islamist. Bloggers also made a joke of the restoration work as it might appear in a conservation manual.

The Cairene blogger who writes as Zeinobia, however, suggested that the incident might undermine efforts for the return of Egyptian artifacts held in museums in other countries.

“I do not know what to say, but what happened to King Tut’s mask is just a symbol what is happening to Egypt now,” she said. “They claim that they are fixing whereas they are damaging it permanently. I feel more than sad.”

**FEATURES: Whose tomb at Amphipolis?**


Whose Tomb? Greece Wonders
Alexander the Great's Legacy Stirred Up by Excavation By RACHEL DONADIO

Call it "CSI: Alexander." For months, the excavations at a large ancient tomb in northern Greece have gripped the country. First, a marble slab wall was unearthed. Then, through announcements and leaks from the Greek Culture Ministry meted out with the pacing of a good mystery series, headless sphinxes and other statues were found. Finally, bones! But whose?

Is it possible - as culture officials implied with a wink and a nod but never actually stated - that the tomb could be for the family of Alexander the Great?

Archaeologists say it's highly unlikely. But that's hardly the point. By the time the Culture Ministry announced this week that the bones of five people, not one, had been found in the tomb, it was the
latest episode in an archaeological reality show that has entertained and distracted Greeks from their economic troubles.

The show has also starred Prime Minister Antonis Samaras. Even before he found himself fighting for political survival in national elections to be held this Sunday, Mr. Samaras used the excavation in Amphipolis, in the Greek region of Macedonia, to tap into national pride. He made a televised visit to the tomb in August - widely seen as an evocation of Alexander's legacy - and later showed Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany artifacts found at the site. This week, Mr. Samaras, whose conservative New Democracy party was trailing the leftist Syriza Party in a close race, mentioned Amphipolis in a campaign speech, calling Macedonia "the eternal bastion of Greece."

"It's a kind of positing of national pride, but also nationalist connotations and feelings," said Yannis Hamilakis, a professor of archaeology at the University of Southampton, in England, and the author of "The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece." Conjuring up Alexander the Great - "his assumed civilizing campaigns, his conquest of the Orient" - emphasizes his place in "the Western imagination as a whole," Mr. Hamilakis said.

While acknowledging that the tomb is a significant find that deserves public enthusiasm, Mr. Hamilakis and other archaeologists argue that the dig has been conducted hastily and in a way that places popular appeal over serious scholarship. The Greek news media have thrived on the story - a rare bright spot in a cycle dominated by austerity and unemployment. Archaeology buffs have taken to the blogosphere, floating their own theories. Last year, "Amphipolis" was the most popular search term on Google in Greece.

Busloads of tourists have flocked to the site but can view it only from afar because the Culture Ministry has blocked access. The ministry also declined to allow Aikaterini Peristeri, the lead archaeologist on the dig, to be interviewed. (As elections neared, a recent cartoon in the Greek press shows Mr. Samaras lifting up Ms. Peristeri, whose last name means dove in Greek, as if she were a peace offering.)

The mound where the tomb was discovered lies in the ancient city of Amphipolis, about 200 miles north of Athens. Archaeologists began excavating the site in the 1960s. After a new dig started in 2012, archaeologists unearthed a 9-foot-high marble slab that would later prove to be part of a large wall with a nearly 500-meter perimeter enclosing the tomb. The Culture Ministry dates the wall to the fourth century B.C.

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But the dig really picked up in June, and archaeologists eventually discovered two headless sphinxes at the tomb's entrance, "an impressive and unique feature not previously encountered in Macedonian tombs," Anna Panagiotarea, a spokeswoman for the Culture Ministry, wrote in response to questions. This "understandably generated great interest, excitement, enthusiasm and expectations among scientists, the media and the public alike," she added.

The Alexander factor emerged in August, when Mr. Samaras visited the site and his culture and sports minister, Konstantinos Tasoulas, made elliptical comments about how Greece had been waiting 2,300 years for the tomb to be discovered - an implicit reference to the era of Alexander the Great, who in the fourth century B.C. was tutored by Aristotle and built up a vast empire before dying in Babylon.
Last fall, archaeologists said they had found three vaulted chambers behind the facade decorated with the sphinxes, as well as a mosaic depicting the abduction of Persephone by Hades and two female statues known as caryatids, each 7 feet tall.

On Monday, months after announcing that bones had been found in the tomb, the Culture Ministry said the fragments belonged to at least five bodies - two men ages 35 to 45, a woman over the age of 60, an infant and a fifth body whose bone fragments showed signs of cremation. One of the men's bones had cut marks, possibly indicating wounds by a sharp object. The ministry said it would conduct DNA exams to see if there are family links between the bodies.

Though the official news release said nothing about Alexander the Great, a report on Monday in the Athens daily Kathimerini cited vague sources at the Culture Ministry saying that the female skeleton might be Olympias, Alexander's mother, who was murdered after his death. The article first appeared under the headline "Amphipolis Scientists Point to Olympias," but was later revised to read "Skeletons Pose Many Questions."

Archaeologists have said it's more likely that Olympias was buried alone, and they cite multiple inscriptions that place her burial site in the city of Pydna, in northern Greece. They also say there's no evidence that the tomb was that of Alexander the Great or his family. "No, we don't believe it is," said Olga Sakali, the president of the Association of Greek Archaeologists. "All the historical sources that we have until now don't give us such a clue."

The association filed a formal complaint to the Culture Ministry protesting about the timing and methodology of the dig, which the association says bypassed normal methods. They were aghast that mechanical earth-moving equipment was used, instead of more delicate means. "It was an excavation for the media," Ms. Sakali said.

In a statement, the Culture Ministry said that the earth-moving equipment was "restricted to the early stages of the excavation," at which point "expert staff" took over and "followed all established scientific methodologies, protocols and etiquette to the fullest." The ministry said the dig had not been "hasty, archaeologically 'unorthodox' or scientifically improper." Regardless of the debate, many have just enjoyed the ride. "It's great material," said Antonis Kanakis, the host of Radio Arvyla, a comedy program on Greek television, who "interviewed" a skeleton in a popular sketch last fall. Mr. Kanakis quoted one of his subject's answers: "O.K., you're very proud of your ancestors, but have you asked your ancestors if they're proud of you?"

Menelaos Tzafalias contributed reporting from Athens.

eREVIEWS: Of "Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt"

From <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2015/2015-01-29.html>:

Bryn Mawr Classical Review 2015.01.29

Reviewed by Paul Johstono, The Citadel (paul.johstono@citadel.edu)
One would scarcely have imagined a decade ago that the first volume in a Cambridge series titled Armies of the Ancient World (edited by Nick Sekunda) would be devoted to the Ptolemies. But so this is, and is most welcome since it has been more than a century since the last major work devoted to the army of Ptolemaic Egypt, and is the first in English. Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt, developed from Fischer-Bovet’s dissertation of the same title (Stanford 2008, advised by J. G. Manning), is evidence of renewed interest in the Ptolemaic kingdom and a significant contribution to its historiography. Recent works, with their more extensive use of demotic evidence, have emphasized the negotiated, multicultural elements within Ptolemaic institutions and have demonstrated continuities with the Late Period and Roman eras, thereby reconfiguring the popular narrative of Ptolemaic decline to highlight Egyptian agency and acculturation. Fischer-Bovet’s work advances these historiographical trends through an institutional and social history of the Ptolemaic army in Hellenistic Egypt. An "era of crisis" from 220-160 BC provoked meaningful institutional reforms. These lessened the coercive and increased the interactive functions of the Ptolemaic army, turning it in the late period (160-30 BC) into "an engine of socio-economic and cultural integration" for Greeks and Egyptians.

The work is divided into three parts, with an introduction, eight main chapters, and a conclusion. Part I is preceded by the introduction and a chapter ("The army in Late Period Egypt, 664-332 BC") that emphasizes Hellenistic continuities with Saite and Persian Egypt, including the provision of military allotments to some soldiers, the presence and significance of Greek soldiers in the Late Period, and the continued role of Libyan and Egyptian soldiers into the Ptolemaic period. Rather than discarding existing institutions to start from scratch, the Ptolemies adapted them to their own purposes and personnel.

Part I, "On the Structure and Role of the Army," comprises three topical chapters, the first devoted to the political, military, and structural challenges to the army, the next to the organization of the army, and the last to the changing ethnic composition of, and significance of ethnic identity within, the army. Each chapter covers early, crisis-era, and late developments in Egypt. Chapter 3, "Military challenges faced by the Ptolemies: power, money, crisis, and reform" (49-115), provides an analytical overview of Ptolemaic military history and calculates the cost of the Ptolemaic army and navy. Chapter 4, "Military organization and hierarchy" (116-59), and Chapter 5, "Military recruitment and ethnic composition" (160-95), address Ptolemaic military institutions and personnel, and their change over time. In these sections, Fischer-Bovet’s use of documentary evidence, engagement with historiography, and analytical discussion are consistently stronger in the latter eras of Ptolemaic history.

Chapter 3 is significant for laying out the first of the book’s two big arguments. Fischer-Bovet posits that military demobilization explains the advent of the era of crisis. She begins with "the paradox of impossible demobilization" (67); that is, demobilization was financially necessary for Hellenistic states, but impossible because warfare was endemic, as kings pursued legitimizing victories and budget-balancing plunder. Ptolemy III found demobilization suddenly possible after the Third Syrian War, as he, victorious, left the Seleucids beset by rebellion and infighting. He devoted much of his reign to expanding the cleruchy, a class of soldiers settled on large allotments in Egypt. When the Seleucids recovered, the cleruchic system failed to provide well-trained soldiers (45, 81-3), compelling Ptolemy IV’s advisors to take the radical move of arming Egyptians as heavy infantry. Although Ptolemy won the ensuing war, he gained little in the way of plunder or prestige. When the army was demobilized at war’s end, a spiral of military mutiny and popular unrest ensued that imperiled the Ptolemaic dynasty.

This argument has many moving pieces, but several elements merit attention. Were demobilization and the cleruchy exceptional? Fischer-Bovet follows Aperghis in describing a robust Seleucid standing army, although Aperghis’ position has been criticized and ignores the more complete evidence from
Macedonia, which demonstrates that, aside from guard contingents, most non-mercenaries were mobilized and demobilized between campaigns. It is not clear that any significant portion of the cleruchs were settled under Ptolemy III, nor that the Ptolemaic soldier was "less well trained" (86) compared to the Seleucid. The Ptolemaic soldier was "less well trained" (86) compared to the Seleucid. The Ptolemies were, after all, victorious at Raphia. Military training receives little attention in the text aside from repeated assertions that soldiers were poorly trained: kleroi may have distracted from military readiness (199); gymnasia may have played a role in training (283). Finally, while suggestions of "praetorianism" and sedition after Raphia (89-91) rest on inconclusive evidence, Fischer-Bovet is surely correct in concluding that "deterioration in [officers' and soldiers'] situation"—whether from demobilization or other factors—"opened the way to collaboration and alliance with the lower strata of the population" in contesting the distribution of lands, rights, and privileges in Egypt during the era of crisis (92).

In Part II, Fischer-Bovet discusses the economic status and social networks of Ptolemaic military personnel. Chapter 6, "Settling soldiers" (199-237), functions to situate the soldiering population within Egypt as a local elite, who maintained, even at lower ranks, an enviable socioeconomic position. What has traditionally been seen as the deterioration and demilitarization of the cleruchy in the late eras, Fischer-Bovet describes as "leveling" that produced shared experiences between descendants of immigrants and locally-recruited soldiers while preserving the desirability of military service (215-221, Table 6.3). Fischer-Bovet's cogent analysis of the social history of the altered settlement system skirts the military implications: if most cavalrymen received halved allotments, and many infantry and police were added to the settler cavalry, was the cavalry massively enlarged, the burden of military service substantially lightened, or the amount of cleruchic land substantially reduced? Chapter 7, "Soldiers and officers in the Egyptian countryside" (238-300) depicts military institutions, particularly through the actions of late era social networks, as avenues for social mobility and means to amplify individual agency. Intermarriage became increasingly common (247-50), while demographic realities and military priorities encouraged the recruitment of Africans. Military service provided opportunities for Egyptians, Libyans, and Nubians to avail themselves of a flexible form of Hellenization, evident in the abundance of dual Greek and Egyptian names. Fischer-Bovet argues convincingly that Hellenizing Egyptians and Graeco-Egyptians participated in gymnasia and other soldiers' associations (280-90) in an army marked by "interaction" and "hybridization" (279).

Part III complements Part II by investigating military interactions with Egyptian priesthoods and temples, which appear regularly as themes in earlier chapters. Chapter 8, "Priests in the army: a politico-ideological explanation" (303-328), tracks the elevated number and status of officer-priests in the late era. These men, coming from predominantly Egyptian backgrounds, are particularly representative of the local elites incorporated into the Hellenizing military milieu during the second century. In chapter 9, "The army and Egyptian temple-building" (329-361), Fischer-Bovet argues that military euergetism toward temples both reflected and furthered the integrative mission of the late Ptolemaic army. The evidence for patronage of temples by soldiers' associations, officers, and units is, from the era of crisis on, considerable, particularly in the Thebaid. Soldiers often occupied Egyptian sacred spaces, but the benefactions directed toward temples by the military shifted the interaction from coercive occupation to collaborative social investment (333-335). The work ends with a short conclusion and two appendices that compile examples of soldier euergetism toward temples and all known officer-priests.

Parts II and III advance the book's second major argument: that army life in the late era forged an inclusive, multicultural elite committed to and capable of securing Egypt for Ptolemaic rule. Drawing from Peter Turchin's theories of elites' roles in population ecology, Fischer-Bovet argues that the incorporation of elite Egyptian families in the military milieu placed "a more diverse portion of the
population at the core of the state" (236) which not only figured prominently in the pacification of unrest, but also galvanized social and cultural interventions by the military aristocracy, enhancing the legitimacy and stability of Ptolemaic authority.

In summary, Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt offers a wide-ranging analysis of Ptolemaic military institutions, particularly as a social vehicle for stability and integrative activity. It features a comprehensive bibliography, numerous sources in translation, several helpful maps, charts, and diagrams, and thorough indices. In these pages Fischer-Bovet has undertaken thoughtful interventions in dozens of smaller historiographical and papyrological debates, many of which contribute to her interpretation of Ptolemaic history from the era of crisis on. As one might surmise from the title, Fischer-Bovet is not particularly concerned with traditional military history. Her work demonstrates a conviction that the Ptolemaic military is particularly remarkable for its role in stimulating interaction between Greeks and Egyptians. Readers looking for a discussion of traditional military historical topics—campaigns, tactics, training, logistics, engineering, and the like—may be disappointed. Ultimately, this work should function as a significant reference for historians and papyrologists. Her argument for the social significance of the later Ptolemaic army, suggesting that in the military milieu acculturation progressed further and faster than generally recognized, should stimulate further work and new ways of interpreting military institutions, not only in Egypt but in other parts of the ancient world as well.

Notes:

1. Other books have dealt with aspects of the Ptolemaic military, e.g., J. Lesquier Les Institutions Militaires de l'Égypte sous les Lagides (Paris 1911), F. Uebel, Die Kleruchen Ägyptens unter den ersten sechs Ptolemäern (Berlin 1968), E. Van't Dack Ptolemaica selecta: études sur l'armée et l'administration lagides (Leiden 1988), N. Sekunda Hellenistic Infantry Reforms (Lodz 2001), and very recently, S. Scheuble-Reiter Die katöken-reiter im ptolemäischen Ägypten (Munich 2013).
2. e.g., W. Huss, Ägypten in hellenistischer Zeit 332-30 v. Chr (Munich 2001); J.G. Manning, The Last Pharaohs (Princeton 2010); A. Monson, From the Ptolemies to the Romans (Cambridge 2012).
3. Figure 3-1 on p.50 helpfully illustrates this situation. This phase of the argument owes much to M. M. Austin, "Hellenistic Kings, War, and the Economy" CQ 36.2 (1986) 450-66, and A. M. Eckstein, Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate Warfare, and the Rise of Rome (Berkeley 2006). The argument for the financial desirability of, or imperative for, demobilization relies on fiscal calculations developed from those in G. Aperghis, The Seleukid Royal Economy (Cambridge 2004).
4. The model employed for soldier unrest is the Mercenary War at Carthage following defeat in the First Punic War (91-2).
5. Aperghis' view (see n.3) was criticized by Ma in his review in Hermathena 182 (2007) 182-8. L. Capdetrey, in Le pouvoir séleucide (Rennes 2007), suggests a complex model with elements resembling Achaemenid and Macedonian recruitment institutions. For the Macedonian model, see M. Hatzopoulos, L'organization de l'armée macédonienne sous les Antigonides (Athens 2001).

NEWS: Red marking at the Coliseum
From <http://news.discovery.com/history/archaeology/red-seat-numbers-found-on-romes-colosseum-150123.htm>:
[Go there for Video and pict.]
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Red Seat Numbers Found on Rome's Colosseum

Traces of red painted numbers have been found on the arches of Rome's Colosseum during the ongoing $33 million restoration work aimed at repairing damage suffered by the 2,000-year-old monument since the Middle Ages.

Similar to today's stadium seating systems, the numbers - written according to the system used in ancient Rome, using letters of the Latin alphabet such as X, L, V, I - stood on the entrance gate arches, allowing an easier access to the seats.

First carved in the travertine stones, the numbers were then painted in red, so that people could easily see them from a distance.

There were 76 public numbered entrances, plus four special un-numbered gates. Two were reserved to the emperor, senators, magistrates, wealthy patricians, and the Vestal Virgins, priestesses responsible for maintaining the sacred fire within the Temple of Vesta. A gate was used for the dead - gladiators and wild beasts - while another was used by gladiators parading prior to the beginning of the combats.

The numbered entrance gates were the first step of a complex crowd control system which allowed tens of thousands of spectators to smoothly enter the amphitheater and quickly find their seat.

"The 50,000 spectators had a ticket that said which numbered gate arch they were supposed to enter. Inside the arena, there were other numbers to help people access their seats, which were assigned according to social class," the monument director Rossella Rea said.

Although entrance was free for all, a strict plan regulated where one could seat on the amphitheater's four levels of seating.

The best seat belonged to the emperor who sat in the first tier in the Emperor's Box; the first level was also reserved to senator, magistrates and Vestal Virgins. On the second tier sat the upper class, on the third the ordinary Roman citizens, while women and the poor stood or sat on wooden benches in the fourth, top tier.

The traces of red painted numbers represent an "exceptional finding," according to Rea.

"It was believed the paint would not have survived at all," Rea said.

Deriving from iron oxide and clay minerals, the red color could be used without any binding material.

"As the color could withstand two-three years, it had to be periodically applied on the carved numbers," restorer Cinzia Conti, said.

Commissioned by the Emperor Vespasian in A.D. 72, the Colosseum was opened by his son Titus in A.D. 80 with 100 days of gladiatorial bouts, beast battles and public executions.

It was the largest building in Rome, covering a little over half an acre and standing 164 feet high against the Roman skyline.
It continued to provide the ancient Romans "panem et circenses" - bread and circuses - until shows were banned in the fifth century, about 40 years before the fall of the Roman Empire.

Rea's team expects to find other traces of colored numbers inside the monument as the restoration proceeds.

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**eREVIEWS: SBL Review of Biblical Literature 23 January 2015**

From Review of Biblical Literature [mailto:revbiblit@sbl-site.org]:

The Review of Biblical Literature is a publication of the Society of Biblical Literature. The following new reviews have been added to the Review of Biblical Literature and listed on the RBL blog (http://rblnewsletter.blogspot.com/):

Pauline Allen
John Chrysostom, Homilies on Paul's Letter to the Philippians
http://www.bookreviews.org/bookdetail.asp?TitleId=9386
Reviewed by Julien M. Ogereau

Richard S. Ascough, Philip A. Harland, and John S. Kloppenborg Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook
http://www.bookreviews.org/bookdetail.asp?TitleId=9049
Reviewed by Steve Walton

Robert L. Cavin
New Existence and Righteous Living: Colossians and 1 Peter in Conversation with 4QInstruction and the Hodayot
http://www.bookreviews.org/bookdetail.asp?TitleId=9518
Reviewed by Roy R. Jeal

Musa W. Dube, Andrew M. Mbuvi, and Dora R. Mbuwayesango, eds.
Postcolonial Perspectives in African Biblical Interpretations
http://www.bookreviews.org/bookdetail.asp?TitleId=8848
Reviewed by Peter Claver Ajer

Anne Marie Kitz
Cursed Are You! The Phenomenology of Cursing in Cuneiform and Hebrew Texts
http://www.bookreviews.org/bookdetail.asp?TitleId=9742
Reviewed by Stephen C. Russell

Antti Laato
Who Is the Servant of the Lord? Jewish and Christian Interpretations on Isaiah 53 from Antiquity to the Middle Ages
http://www.bookreviews.org/bookdetail.asp?TitleId=9552
Reviewed by Alphonso Groenewald

Jack R. Lundbom
This book provides a fresh study of leprosy in the medieval world. Its primary focus is on Byzantium, which has commonly been neglected by medical historians, partly because of the lack of modern critical editions and/or translations of Byzantine works. The study also offers numerous comparisons with cases from the medieval West, which sometimes help the reader to contextualise primary sources and associate parallel events in the two regions. However, the book’s title might be considered somewhat misleading, given that the authors do not provide significant new evidence from the West, allowing their Byzantine-centred perspective to prevail instead. Furthermore, they make no attempt to frame their comparative approach against the backdrop of current theoretical discussions, and, more importantly, to define the parameters of their methodological approach. For example, evidence from the fifth century is compared with evidence from the fourteenth century in relation to very different societies and geographical regions. In fact, it might have been more helpful if the authors had followed a strictly comparative approach in each chapter, concentrating on various contemporaneous features of interest rather than discussing Byzantine and Western evidence separately. This might also have avoided numerous repetitions.

The book is divided into seven chapters. Chapters Two, Three, and Four concentrate on Byzantium, while the medieval West is treated in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven.
The authors provide a short, but informative introduction to the study of leprosy and how it was understood from a medical point of view. Information on the latter is supplemented by a useful discussion of the discovery of the causative agent of the disease, Mycobacterium leprae, by Gerhard Armuaer Hansen in 1873, and the modern effective treatment, which has resulted in a remarkable decrease in cases since the early 1960s. With reference to the title of the book (2, 195), the authors note that ‘Byzantine preachers sometimes called its victims ‘walking corpses’’. However, the expression “κινούμενα λείψανα” features only once in Byzantine sources (ps.-Martyrios, Oratio funebris in laudem Iohannis Chrysostomi, 62.3). It thus gives readers a misleading impression.

Chapter One provides a preliminary discussion of references to the disease in ancient texts from a variety of genres. The longest and most interesting account was written by the Greek medical author Aretaeus, who is said to have “hinted at the possibility of disease seeds” (15), although the original text refers only to the air or an external factor which may play a role in the propagation of the disease (Aretaeus, De causis et signis diuturnorum morborum, 2.13, ed. Hude, 88.4-5). Arguably Chapter Two constitutes the study’s most original contribution. The authors collect and discuss references from various non-medical Byzantine sources on the disease, such as sermons by early Church Fathers (Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzos, and John Chrysostom), who emphasised the importance of caring for lepers. In interpreting such texts the authors conclude that “vivid accounts of the large numbers of people driven from their homes […] suggest that the numbers of lepers had been increasing in Asia Minor” (30). The most interesting part of the chapter deals with cases after 1204. The authors have managed to locate two references in early fourteenth-century Byzantine sources. One of them, which survives in a poem by Manuel Philes, refers to a man whose health was restored by divine intervention, although he was at an advanced stage of the disease. Such cases show the diachronic presence of what was perceived as miraculous healing during the Byzantine period. There is a noticeable attempt at making some comparisons with the West throughout the chapter. However, in some cases, such as episodes involving Basil of Caesarea and Francis of Assisi kissing lepers, there is no attempt by the authors to bridge the significant gap of nine centuries or the different socio-cultural attitudes affecting the two events.

The third chapter discusses evidence from Byzantine medical sources. There are also special parts devoted to Byzantine divorce law on leprosy and the connection of leprosy with lust. The last part of the chapter focuses on the connection between Byzantine medical treatises and “leprosariums”, and discusses the various references in Greek and Byzantine authors to the connection between elephantiasis and sexual desire, first mentioned by Rufus of Ephesus. The interpretation suffers from small, but irritating and repeated, examples of the use of inappropriate terms, e.g., referring to anonymous Byzantine collections of medical advice as antidotaria. The authors rightly identify a case demonstrating the contagious nature of the disease found in the medical encyclopaedia of the sixth-century author Aetios of Amida, which remains partly unpublished. They unquestioningly accept the attribution of this passage to Archigenes (as given in the early Latin printed translation), despite the fact that his name does not appear in all the manuscripts.

What is more, Byzantine medical literature should for the most part be treated as material derived from compilations of earlier sources and not as necessarily reflecting contemporary medical practice. There are a number of problems: (1) The authors fail to mention or explain why in Alexander of Tralles’ practical medical handbook, written in the sixth century and providing numerous original contributions on dietetics and pharmacology, there is only one brief mention of the disease (Therapeutica, 12, ed. Puschmann, II.543.19). (2) Direct connections between Aretaeus and the late Byzantine vernacular
Iatrosophion by John Archiatros are not as explicit as they are made out to be (55). (3) The authors correctly observe that Ibn-Sīnā’s treatment of the disease refers to its contagious nature and presents some similarities with the passage found in Aetios (58). However, they present the derivation of Ibn-Sīnā’s text from the supposed text of Archigenes through Aetios as a fact, while the evidence for an Arabic translation of Aetios’ text is at the very least inconclusive. (4) The authors state that “Galen never mentioned an increase in sexual desire” (61), but Galen refers once to unnatural extensions of the pudenda at the onset of the disease (De tumoribus, 14, ed. Kühn, VII.728.4-6). (5) Taddeo degli Alderotti’s reference to concupiscence as a symptom of the disease should not necessarily be assumed to constitute a direct textual link with Aretaeus’ text (64). In the conclusion of the book (157), the authors appear to speculate whether Taddeo knew Greek or had studied in Byzantium without presenting any relevant evidence. (6) In interpreting early mentions of institutions for lepers by the Church Fathers, the authors refer to ‘doctors and assistants who spent their whole lives treating lepers’ (68), although there is no confirmed evidence of such a medicalised institution in Byzantium.

In Chapter Four the authors argue for the continuous functioning of specialised institutions for treating lepers in Byzantium from 400 to 1300. Although there are some confirmed cases throughout the Byzantine period of institutions that hosted lepers among other needy people, the evidence for function of specialist leper asylums is scanty. For example, in the case of the institution in fourth-century Sebasteia (74), the primary source clearly refers to a “πτωχοτροφεῖον” (poor house) hosting (κατὰ φιλοξενίαν) poor people (ἀδύνάτους) as well as those suffering from leprosy (λελωβημένους) (Epiphanius, Panarion, 75.1, ed. Holl, III.333.24-6). Also, it is problematic to argue for continuous function of the Zotikos foundation in Constantinople from the fifth to the thirteenth century and to call it a ‘leper hospital’ (88), since the main primary sources for the early period are hagiographical accounts and none of them can be dated before the tenth or eleventh century. In most cases the sources refer to a home for the elderly (γηροκομεῖον) and there is nothing to suggest the provision of constant medical care or any sort of medicalisation of the institution. This is one of the many cases of overstretching evidence from primary sources, which do not correspond to the authors’ assertions.

The next three chapters mainly summarise earlier secondary bibliography on leprosy in the medieval West by focusing on literary accounts on leprosy (Chapter Five), “leprosariums” (Chapter Six), and the Knights of Lazarus (Chapter Seven). The omission of Guy de Chauliac’s long account, and, in particular, the idea that the disease might be an inherited condition, macula generationis, is regrettable.6 Furthermore, recent important palaeopathological studies which sometimes elucidate the primary evidence a great deal have not been included.7 Large chronological leaps and an idealised homogenous treatment of the medieval Western world are quite common. For example, evidence from a sermon of Pope Gregory I from around 600 is discussed side by side with a sermon written around 1220 by Jacques de Vitry (105). Later on, when the authors compare a case of isolation of a leper asylum in France, they ‘state definitively’ that in Byzantium there is no textual evidence for the intentional isolation of lepers (113), although it seems likely that the Zotikos foundation was located outside of the urban centre of Constantinople. On the other hand, the authors make a very good point in bringing to our attention the sole example of a woman in the Greek-speaking world who appears to act as a representative of the lepers on Venetian Crete in 1411, and in comparing her with two cases from fourteenth-century France where certain women seem to have had a major role in the supervision of “leprosariums” (135-8).

The study is substantiated by three appendices, which provide generally good translations of Aretaeus’ text and two early Byzantine sermons. These are extremely useful for the modern reader, although the authors do not explain in what way their translations differ from earlier ones.
There are several misspellings in references to primary sources: e.g., “arataba” for “artaba” (82), “Notkar” for “Notker” (105), “Koutoumousiou” for “Koutloumousiou” (187), “Tétrabiblon” for “Tétrabiblon” (202), and “Kletotologion” for “Kletorologion” (228). Furthermore, there are many cases of inconsistent transliteration of the long vowels and breathings in Greek publications cited in the bibliography: e.g. “euagē idrymata” on p. 230, but “euage hidrymata” on p. 232.

The book will certainly stimulate further discussion on the history of leprosy in Byzantium and the medieval West. All in all, it provides a new survey of leprosy in the medieval world, which could be of use for scholars from a variety of disciplines.

Notes:
2. In another instance of imprecision in relation to primary evidence, the authors cite a secondary source rather than the primary source in referring to a case of leprosy described in an Egyptian magical papyrus (13). In fact, the transmission of the aforementioned papyrus text (PGM XXIIa.15) is controversial, since part of the line referring to elephantiasis is based on the editor’s conjecture in the absence of any extant parallel passages. K. Preisendanz et al (eds.), Papyri Graece Magicae. Leipzig 1974, II.147.
3. These texts are often highly rhetorical and the recurrent appearance of references to lepers does not necessarily point to a factual increase in the numbers of contemporary leprosy cases.
4. This term more properly denotes Western examples of long lists of composite drugs, but not the so-called Byzantine iatrosophia, which – apart from pharmacological recipes – also usually contain substantial sections giving details on diagnosis and prognosis, sometimes intermixed with remedies of a magical or religious nature. Furthermore, when referring to the Greek physician Archigenes, the authors invariably call him a pneumatist, although it is widely debated whether he should be considered a pneumatist, a methodist, an empiricist, or simply an eclectic. See A. Mavroudis, Ἀρχιγένης Φιλίππου Ἀπαμεύς. Ὁ Βίος καὶ τὰ Ἔργα ἐνὸς Ἑλλην Ἑλέημα στὴν Αὐτοκρατορικὴ Ῥώμη. Athens 2000, 23-35.
5. See, for example, Parisinus gr. 2194 (s. XV), ff. 339r-340r, which contains the full text of Aetios.

BOOKS: Toledot Yeshu -- The Life Story of Jesus
From Victor Sasson [mailto:victor7sasson@gmail.com]:
==================================================================

Title: The Second Coming
An Apocalyptic Retrial of Jesus of Nazareth Based on Biblical and Extra-Biblical Texts
Author: Victor Sasson
Paperback, 5x8; $13.95
EBook, $3.99
This is a Print-on-Demand (POD) historical novel.

From the back cover of the book:
"The Second Coming is a trial of Jesus of Nazareth conducted in the Heavenly Sphere and backed by Adonai Elohim. A fast-moving courtroom drama, it will appeal to both biblical scholars and laymen alike."

The paperback can be ordered through Amazon, B&N, Foyles, and other online stores, worldwide. Reviews of the book on Amazon, in scholarly journals, and in the press are welcome.

The author (who is also the publisher via the printing company iUniverse) may be contacted at victor7sasson@gmail.com.

All inquiries are welcome.

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eREVIEWS: Of "The Devil: A New Biography"
From <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=42421>:


Reviewed by Gary K. Waite (Department of History, University of New Brunswick) Published on H-Albion (January, 2015) Commissioned by Jeffrey R. Wigelsworth

Even today, popular culture revels in the supernatural, especially its dark sides. While supernatural beings, such as angels and demons, are now excluded in scientific discourse, they are explicit in Christian scriptures and dominated European debates over the nature of the cosmos well into the Enlightenment.[1] It was, as Philip C. Almond notes in this new biography of the devil, impossible for Christians to imagine a cosmos without the devil until the late seventeenth century, or even later. Belief in, and fear of, these usually invisible, spiritual creatures motivated some of the most heinous crimes against other humans, especially Jews, heretics, and alleged witches. Of course the ostensible death of the devil did not end human atrocities in the West, but in explaining these we need to consider the lingering effects of the centuries-long demonizing of particular outsider groups, such as the Jews. It is therefore critical that we give the devil his historical due.

Almond's biography carves out of the mass of works related to the diabolical a carefully delineated history that is both scholarly and accessible and that contributes to the intertwined fields of Christian theology, magic, witchcraft, and demonology. Almond, a prolific scholar who has published books on English witch trials and demonic possession cases, on the witch skeptic Reginald Scot, and on the histories of Adam and Eve and of heaven and hell, among other subjects, describes his new volume as a "secular history" of the idea of the devil.[2] It is deeply immersed in the Christian tradition yet treats the subject with scholarly detachment and objectivity. Almond details the birth (chapter 1), fall from heaven (chapter 2), role in Christian theology (chapter 3), long and varied life (chapters 4 through 7), and "death" (chapters 8 and 9) of this mythical creature. That the devil died in the Enlightenment may be moot, but certainly his role in Western civilization has diminished greatly.

Almond reveals just how diverse ancient Hebrew and Christian stories were about the devil's origins. Particularly influential was The First Book of Enoch (ca. 300-100 BCE), a noncanonical Jewish work that established a belief in a fall of angelic beings who interacted with humans. Also important was the Genesis 6 story of the "sons of God" who married the "daughters of men" to produce giants, or
Nephilim. By the century before Christ, various Hebrew versions of a tempter (Satan) or agent of punishment to keep Yahweh at arm’s length from doing the necessary dirty work had come together in a vague notion of a devil. In the church's first centuries, there was a vigorous debate over whether Lucifer fell before or after the creation of Adam and Eve, whether or not the serpent was the devil in disguise, or if the Nephilim were in fact demons.

Almond necessarily deals with the essential contradiction in Hebrew and Christian thought with respect to God: If he is perfect, why is there evil? If he is sovereign, how can an agent of evil exert so much power against the children of God? In the church's first millennium, most theologians held to the ransom theory of atonement, that Christ's sacrifice was made to pay off the devil as a "ransom" for humanity's sin. Tricked into thinking that he would have the son of God and humankind in his clutches, the devil discovered instead that he was utterly defeated with Jesus's resurrection. Yet, if defeated and chained in hell, how could Satan still rule the earth? These and many other questions continued to vex Christian writers, and the variety of responses through the medieval period proves a fascinating read.

The High and Late Middle Ages saw a rise in the fear of demonic activity, coalescing mostly around new heretical groups and the growing interest in ritual magic among the clergy (chapters 4 and 5). Almond focuses on four factors in the growing interest in the devil: the rise of the Cathars; the development of "academic angelology" and demonology; the arrival of the Arabic occult sciences; and a new emphasis on apocalyptic thought, especially through the works of Joachim of Fiore (p. 70). These were indeed factors in the elaboration of the demonic witch conspiracy theory by ca. 1400. Almond emphasizes the Cathars because their theology of two gods, one good who ruled the spiritual realm and the other evil who dominated the material, raised the debate over the devil to new heights. He however pays little attention to the church's efforts to suppress another heretical group, the Waldensians, whom scholars have also identified as critical in this development, especially since the witch sect was initially called the Vauderie, or Waldensians.[3]

Almond’s focus is, however, on how the devil became so intimately involved in magic. Utilizing his expertise in English witchcraft cases, he neatly describes in chapters 6 and 7 the varying positions maintained by witchcraft writers and natural philosophers on the devil's responsibility in human affairs. Did he and his minions actually have sexual congress with humans, and if so, how? What did that say, then, about the respective natures of spirit and matter? Historian Stuart Clark has revealed that these queries were central to the Scientific Revolution as natural philosophers debated the devil’s nature, form of corporeality, and place in the cosmos. Almond’s close reading of the primary sources reinforces Clark’s conclusions, highlighting the array of opinions among Catholics and Protestants, although the vast bulk of his sources are from the English scene. By the late seventeenth century, philosophers, such as Thomas Hobbes, Baruch Spinoza, and the Dutch Cartesian Balthasar Bekker, were disputing the reality of demons. Bekker’s book The Bewitched World (1691) set off a storm of controversy in the 1690s with its declaration that demons did not exist except as the evil inclinations within humans. Almond traces that particular notion back to the English gentleman skeptic Reginald Scot and his The Discoverie of Witchcraft of 1584. Almond seems unaware of an even earlier tradition for this belief in the writings of the Dutch spiritualist David Joris (ca. 1501-56) whose posture that the devil existed only in an individual’s mind was widely known and condemned, while Bekker’s opponents included Joris’s name alongside Hobbes and Spinoza as sources for Bekker.[4]

Almond’s overview of the various origin stories of the devil may seem arcane, but it is extremely valuable for early modern historians. In their quest for non-scholastic interpretations of scripture, Renaissance humanists and Protestant Reformers turned to the early church fathers, discovering some
of the older demonological traditions. Almond, however, does not pursue this point, and neglects the more radical dissident streams, whose proponents especially latched onto some of these alternative notions, such as the aforementioned Joris who also taught that the devil was created only after the fall of Adam and Eve, a position that now, thanks to Almond, seems less puzzling, since Joris had humanist friends acquainted with ancient Christian sources.[5]

The Devil: A New Biography contains a number of black-and-white images that Almond uses well to illuminate his arguments. There is a good bibliography and an index, although I found the latter incomplete. There are also a number of important recent secondary works not cited. I also think that Almond does not adequately explore the propagandistic role of either demonizing rhetoric or exorcism, both of which played huge roles in the Reformation.[6] Some comparison with medieval Jewish and Islamic demonologies would have been helpful, too. That said, Almond's study offers a fascinating tour through the maze of thinking about the devil in the Latin Christian world. Since he focuses on learned traditions, Almond rightly affirms the devil's demise in scientific debate by the mid-eighteenth century, although his epilogue acknowledges the revival of interest in matters diabolical since then. Instead, Almond's careful overview of the Western perspective on the devil provides a valuable and highly readable explanation for one of the most bizarre and devastating ideas in Western history.

Notes


[6]. See, for example, Gary K. Waite, Eradicating the Devil’s Minions: Anabaptists and Witches in Reformation Europe, 1535-1600 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

eARTICLES: 3 JSIJ articles
From Leib Moscovitz [mailto:JSIJ@listserv.biu.ac.il]:

We are pleased to announce the publication of three new articles.

All of the articles can be accessed at http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/fa.htm. URLs of the relevant PDF files are given below, and abstracts of the articles are appended to this email.

1. Yonatan Feintuch, "The Story of the Encounter Between Resh Lakish and Rabbah bar bar Hannah (bYoma 9b) in its Broader Talmudic Context" (Heb.) - http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/12-2013/Feintuch.pdf


Abstracts

1. Yonatan Feintuch, "The Story of the Encounter Between Resh Lakish and Rabbah bar bar Hannah (bYoma 9b) in its Broader Talmudic Context"

This article analyzes a brief aggadic passage in Bavli Yoma 9b, which relates the story of a grim encounter between two prominent rabbis of Palestinian and Babylonian origin respectively, Resh Lakish and Rabbah bar bar Hannah. Both rabbis were disciples of R. Yohanan. In the body of the story Resh Lakish declares his hostility toward Babylonian Jewry, accusing it of responsibility for the frailty of the second Temple, and possibly for its destruction. We compare this story to a parallel tradition found in a Palestinian midrashic text, Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah. Special attention is given to the wider literary contexts of both texts. We claim that reading the Babylonian story in its wider literary context ultimately reverses the theme of the parallel Palestinian tradition.


It is well known that the text of the biblical citations found in the Mishnah is not always identical to the Masoretic text. This article analyzes the biblical citations in MS Cambridge of the Mishnah (ed. Lowe), a fifteenth-century Byzantine manuscript, meticulously comparing the readings in this MS with the versions found in the two main families of medieval biblical manuscripts, Sephardic and and Ashkenazic, and to the traditions found in early witnesses to the biblical text such as the Samaritan Pentateuch. These variants were also checked against other complete manuscripts of the Mishnah, such as MSS Kaufmann and Parma A. This analysis addresses a wide range of linguistic phenomena: defective and plene orthography; addition or deletion of vav consecutive and the definite article; and exchanges of
letters, prepositions, and words. Three categories of variants were identified: variants supported by
medieval biblical manuscripts, mainly Ashkenazic; variants with parallels in early manuscripts of the
Mishnah, but not in biblical manuscripts; and a small number of variants unique to MS Cambridge.

Several conclusions emerged from this study. First, while MS Cambridge dates from a time when
alignment with the MT eliminated differences between biblical manuscripts, the text of the biblical
verses found in MS Cambridge helped preserve a relatively early biblical tradition, some of whose
variants also appear in ancient witnesses. Second, the Byzantine tradition reflected by MS Cambridge
was found to have the closest affinities to medieval Ashkenazic biblical manuscripts, which provides
additional support for the affinity between Byzantium and the early Ashkenazic tradition. Finally, while
the biblical text tradition found in MS Cambridge displays strong affinities to that of MS Kaufmann, it
ultimately represents an independent biblical text-tradition with some unique features.

3. Ilana Sasson, "Masorah And Grammar as Revealed in Tenth Century Karaite Exegesis"

Medieval masorites and grammarians did not distinguish between the two disciplines of Masorah and
grammar, but rather intertwined the two in their works. This article presents elements of both Masorah
and grammar as found in the Bible commentaries of the Karaite Yefet ben 'Elī. Some of the masoretic
elements are marked on the margins and are visibly noticeable. Others are included in the content of his
commentary. Some elements were added to the manuscripts by later copyists while others were
penned by Yefet himself. Yefet’s masoretic preferences links him with the Karaite Zionistic doctrine of
return to the Land of Israel, and with the Karaite ideological supremacy given to the Tiberian oral
recitation tradition of Scripture. Yefet’s discussions of grammatical problems in the biblical text draw
upon the early Karaite grammatical tradition. His terminology betrays a thorough knowledge of this
tradition, yet his solutions to grammatical conundrums include both old strategies and innovative
approaches.

CALLS FOR PAPERS: Theoretical and Anthropological Approaches to the Near East (ASOR 2015)
From Leann C. Pace [mailto:leannpace@gmail.com]:
===================================================================
"Theoretical and Anthropological Approaches to the Near East"
American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) Annual Meeting Atlanta, GA, November 18-21, 2015

This session welcomes papers that deal explicitly with theoretical and anthropological approaches to art
and archaeology in the ancient Near East and eastern Mediterranean. Previous sessions have included
papers from a broad array of times and places including but by no means limited to: Egyptian
mummification processes, east Mediterranean maritime symbolism, approaches to urbanization in a
variety of contexts, socio-economic reconstructions, and explorations of identity formation via tomb
construction and contents. They also have included diverse analytical schemes and experimental
techniques, ranging from very methodological considerations (e.g., considerations of the applicability of
schema theory to city maps) to more “hands-on” subjects (sharing results of an experimental
archaeology project).
The deadline for submission of abstracts is February 15, 2015. Presenters can submit an abstract of 250 words or less via ASOR's Online Abstract Submission Site.

http://www.asor.org/am/2015/call-2.html

Membership in ASOR and registration for the Annual Meeting is required in advance for participants. For more information on the rules and regulations, please visit http://www.asor.org/am/2015/call-1.html.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the session co-chairs Emily Miller Bonney (ebonney@exchange.fullerton.edu) and Leann Pace (pacelc@wfu.edu).

**BOOKS: Madaba Plains Project, 6**
From Larry Herr [mailto:lherr@cauc.ca]:

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Please see <http://www.universitypress.andrews.edu/catalog.php?query=madaba+plains+project+6&Search.x=0&Search.y=0>:

**EVENTS: "Ideology, Power and Religious Change in Antiquity" (Göttingen, 20–24 July)**
From Gösta Ingvar Gabriel [mailto:Goesta.Gabriel@phil.uni-goettingen.de]:

CALL FOR PAPERS

Göttingen SPIRIT Summer School:
Ideology, Power and Religious Change in Antiquity, 3000 BC – AD 600 Göttingen, Germany, 20–24 July 2015

This international summer school focuses on ideological messages communicated by leaders in the ancient world (Ancient Near East, Greece and Rome, c. 3000 BC – AD 600) during periods of religious change. The latter can be understood as periods in which new religions, specific religious factions, sects or cults rose, expanded or gained a position of dominance, thereby causing changes in or threatening existing social, religious and/or power structures. Which messages were communicated by central and local authorities as well as specific religious authorities in these epochs? What do these messages tell us about the nature of power exercised by leaders?
The summer school is specifically targeted at doctoral candidates and early postdocs. Each day will commence with a keynote lecture delivered by renowned scholars and ample opportunities for discussion afterwards. Keynote speakers are Paola Ceccarelli (Cambridge), Eckart Frahm (Yale), Olivier Hekster (Nijmegen), Carlos Noreña (Berkeley), and Piotr Steinkeller (Harvard). The afternoons will be dedicated to short presentations by participants based on papers circulated in advance. Selected papers will be published.

Anyone interested in participating is kindly requested to apply with a CV, list of publications (if available), and an abstract of 500 words at maximum until 15 March 2015. Please use our portal to upload your application (https://s-lotus.gwdg.de/uni/uxgw/gsgg_ss_2015.nsf/application).

Accommodation is free for all participants. Reimbursement for travel costs is predictably available for a limited number of applicants. In case of further questions, do not hesitate to contact the organizers, Gösta Gabriel and Erika Manders, via iprca2015@uni-goettingen.de.

For more information, see also http://www.uni-goettingen.de/iprca2015.

Gösta Gabriel and Erika Manders
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
Graduate School of Humanities
Friedländer Weg 2
37085 Göttingen
+49 551 3921126

NEWS: Irreversibly damaged King Tut's mask?
From <http://io9.com/king-tuts-burial-mask-has-been-irreversibly-damaged-1681085211>: 
=================================================================

King Tut's Burial Mask Has Been "Irreversibly Damaged"
George Dvorsky

The most famous archaeological relic in the world has been damaged during a botched cleaning attempt. After being knocked off, the blue and gold braided beard on King Tut's burial mask was "hastily" glued back on with an inappropriate adhesive, damaging the item even further.

Brace yourselves, folks. This story is all kinds of messed up. As The Associated Press is reporting, it appears that the beard was quickly glued back on by curators at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo with epoxy, an "irreversible material" that's completely unsuitable for a restoration effort of this importance. Conservators at the museum revealed the incident yesterday.

Frustratingly, the story isn't entirely clear because three of the museum's curators are offering conflicting accounts. It's not known when the incident happened, or whether the iconic beard was accidentally knocked off or removed because it was loose. What we do know, however, is that the curators were "ordered" from above to fix it quickly and that epoxy was used. All three curators refused to give their names for fear of professional reprisals. From the AP report:
"The mask should have been taken to the conservation lab but they were in a rush to get it displayed quickly again and used this quick drying, irreversible material," the conservator added.

The conservator said that the mask now shows a gap between the face and the beard, whereas before it was directly attached: "Now you can see a layer of transparent yellow."

But the story gets worse. It appears that the curators inadvertently got some of the epoxy on the face of the mask - and they used a spatula in an effort to get it off, damaging the relic even further:

Another museum conservator, who was present at the time of the repair, said that epoxy had dried on the face of the boy king's mask and that a colleague used a spatula to remove it, leaving scratches. The first conservator, who inspects the artifact regularly, confirmed the scratches and said it was clear that they had been made by a tool used to scrape off the epoxy.

Egypt's Antiquities Ministry and the museum administration are not responding to media requests, but one of the conservators said an investigation is currently underway.

**JOURNALS: Intellectual Heritage of the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East, 1(2014)**

From Kai Metzler [mailto:metzler@ugarit-verlag.de]:

The first volume of the new series Intellectual Heritage of the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East has just been published.

Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, Ilkka Lindstedt, Robert Rollinger und Raija Mattila (Hgg.):
Case Studies in Transmission

This collection of articles entitled Case Studies in Transmission is the first publication in the series The Intellectual Heritage of the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East (IHAMNE). The series has its origins in the research project The Intellectual Heritage of the Ancient Near East (IHANE). It studies cultural transmission within the Near East as well as between the Near East and Europe, especially in the framework of ancient Mesopotamia, Greece, and the medieval Arab-Islamic culture. IHANE has organized several workshops, mainly in Helsinki, but occasionally also in Innsbruck. These workshops have brought together not only the project members but also colleagues invited to join the discussion in these workshops. The present volume is the result of these workshops and earlier forms of the majority of the papers have been presented and discussed in them.

Content
- Epistle 48 of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ and Their Ismā’īlī Commitment (Carmela Baffioni)

- Die Erfindung eines Kontinents, oder die vier Säulen Europas (Sebastian Fink)
CALLS FOR PAPERS: Sacred Places, Sacred Spaces ... (Glasgow, Sept 2-5)

From Yasemin Özarslan [mailto:yozarslan@ku.edu.tr]:

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CALL FOR PAPERS:

European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) 2015 Meeting, Glasgow, 2-5 September 2015 Session Theme: Legacies & Visions

Sacred Places, Sacred Spaces: Landscape Transformation and Inheritance


Organisers:
Caron Newman, Newcastle University, caron.newman@newcastle.ac.uk Vicky Manolopoulou, Newcastle University, v.manolopoulou@newcastle.ac.uk Yasemin Özarslan, Koç University, yozarslan@ku.edu.tr

Much recent archaeological research has been concerned with religious transformative processes and their legacy in the present-day landscape. The structure of the modern environment is often anchored in the networks and spaces that evolved in response to religious practices and economic and cultural support systems. Throughout Europe and beyond, the cultural inheritance of religious orders and groupings has structured and influenced much of the modern landscape. The artefacts of religion and beliefs are represented as still-functioning institutions, relict features and as more subtle influences on property boundaries and settlement formation, for example. Religious institutions, buildings and features have had a significant impact on the development of the wider landscape and have played a key role in the way people engage with their environment, creating a sense of place and helping to shape people’s cultural identity. This session invites papers on all aspects of the landscape legacy of sacred places and spaces across periods and disciplines.

The call for abstracts is now open until the 16th February 2015. Abstracts can be submitted through the EAA website at: <http://eaaglasgow2015.com/call-for-papers/>.
Was oldest gospel really found in a mummy mask?
By Joel Baden and Candida Moss, special to CNN

(CNN) Media outlets have been abuzz this week with the news that the oldest fragment of a New Testament gospel -- and thus the earliest witness of Jesus' life and ministry -- had been discovered hidden inside an Egyptian mummy mask and was going to be published.

The announcement of the papyrus' discovery and impending publication was made by Craig Evans, professor of New Testament at Acadia Divinity College in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Evans described the papyrus as a fragment of the Gospel of Mark.

He added that a combination of handwriting analysis (paleography) and carbon dating led him and his team of researchers to conclude that the fragment was written before 90 A.D. This would make it at least a decade older than other early fragments of the New Testament and, thus, an invaluable resource for biblical scholars and object of considerable interest for Christians the world over.

The fragment, according to Evans, was discovered when an Egyptian mummy mask -- known as cartonnage -- was dismantled in a hunt for ancient documents. Mummy masks were an important part of ancient Egyptian burial practice, but only the very wealthy could afford examples made of gold.

The majority of mummy masks were made from scraps of linen and papyrus, which were glued together into a kind of ancient papier-maché. Dismantling these masks yields a trove of ancient documents. Evans claims that in addition to Christian texts, hundreds of classical Greek texts, records of business transactions, and personal letters have been acquired. In the process, the mask itself is destroyed.

Though it may be making headlines now, the claim that the "oldest known gospel" has been discovered is not new.

News of the fragment first came to light in 2012 when its existence was (perhaps inadvertently) announced by Daniel Wallace, founder of the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts at Dallas Theological Seminary.

No one saw the text then, and no one has seen it now; though it has been mentioned repeatedly by a select group of people who evidently have been given access to it, its planned date of publication has been consistently pushed back, from an original plan of 2013 to 2015 and now, just this week, all the way to 2017.

Despite the seemingly explosive quality of the news, therefore, it is important to take a step back and consider what is actually being revealed here.
Some people are saying they have this really old and important thing, and they will show it to all the rest of us in a few years. (Essentially, this papyrus is the scholarly equivalent of "my girlfriend who lives in Canada.")

It is unclear why anyone would start talking about a text like this, a year, indeed now at least two years, in advance. The most important established fact about this papyrus, at this point, is that it has not yet been published—which is to say, only a small handful of individuals have seen the text and are able to say anything at all about it.

As Roberta Mazza, an ancient historian and papyrologist from the University of Manchester in England, told us, the academic community has not "been given access to firm information and images on the basis of which could eventually say something."

In other words, this sort of notice really serves mostly to remind us of just how little we know about this purported discovery. Here, for example, are five key, unanswered questions.

1. What is the actual text on the papyrus?

   We are told that it is from Mark, but, after all, no one has seen it. Which part of Mark?

2. Is the handwriting consistent with the supposed dating?

   Brice Jones, a papyrologist at Concordia University, told us that dating a text by handwriting, or paleography, "is not a precise science, and I know of no papyrologist who would date a literary papryus to within a decade on the basis of paleography alone."

3. Is the ink or papyrus itself consistent with the supposed dating?

   According to Jones, if paleography is inexact, "radiocarbon dating is equally (and perhaps more) problematic, since one must allow for a time gap of a century or more."

   They say that these lab tests have all been done, but as no one has actually seen the reports, they are less than confirmatory.

4. Who owns the papyrus, or the mask from which it was taken, and from whom was it purchased, and when?

   The time and place of a text's discovery, known as its provenance, are crucial for verifying its authenticity, especially in a period of extensive looting of archaeological sites and museum theft.

   According to international law, if the mask was taken out of Egypt after 1970, it is officially "unprovenanced," and is effectively prohibited from being sold or published. Evans told us "I do not know the specifics" about the provenance of this mask.

5. Who has seen the text, who has verified it, and who has studied it?
Evans is not a trained papyrologist, but is rather a scholar of the New Testament. To this point, none of the papyrologists, text critics or other highly specialized experts, who must have worked on this text before these claims could be made about it, have been identified or spoken publicly about it.

These questions are not necessarily challenges to the authenticity of the text. They are, rather, a recognition that, until the scholarly world has been granted access to this papyrus, the public statements made about it are no more revelatory than if we announced that we had found Moses' private copy of Genesis in a hummus container, and we'll show it to you later.

There is, however, one bit of information about this text and its discovery that can be discussed now, without having even seen it: the fact that it was uncovered by destroying an ancient Egyptian mummy mask.

Evans said the cartonnage destruction was acceptable because "we're not talking about the destruction of any museum-quality piece."

We are, however, talking about the destruction of 2,000-year-old Egyptian antiquities: funeral masks, painted with representations of people who lived and died and were commemorated by their families.

We might wonder, at the very least, who it is that gets to determine which masks are worth preserving and which aren't. Evans told us that such decisions "are based on expert opinion," but as to who exactly makes that determination, he said, "I do not know specifically."

Evans has said, "We dug underneath somebody's face, and there it was."

He has since clarified that he was not personally involved in the destruction of the mask. But it is unclear precisely which individuals did the dirty work.

Evans' language of "digging" makes the dissolving of mummy masks sound like archaeology, but some would characterize it, and some have, as cultural vandalism.

There is an implicit sense that the discovery of a rare Christian piece outweighs the preservation of a relatively common Egyptian artifact. And this may be so, but surely the optics would be better if this were announced by someone from, say, the Egyptian Ministry of State for Antiquities.

"The destruction of mummy masks, though legal, falls into an ethically gray area right now because of the difficult choices scientists have to make in the lab when working with them," said Douglas Boin, a professor of history at St. Louis University.

"We have to ask ourselves, do we value the cultural heritage of Egypt as something worth preserving in itself, or do we see it simply as vehicle for harvesting Christian texts?"

Even if one agrees that these masks can be taken apart - archaeology is, by its very nature, a destructive process - it should be remembered that the process is a crapshoot: If a mask contains no texts, then the equation changes, and even a relatively unimportant cultural piece has been destroyed for nothing.

Mazza also reminded us that "you do not need to completely destroy masks for getting out texts if you use methods developed and improved by papyrologists since 1980."
If a mask is to be destroyed, surely that process should be documented thoroughly, with constant photography and annotation, rather than undertaken as a classroom project with undergraduates using a bottle of Palmolive and a little elbow grease.

It is possible that the earliest text of the Gospel of Mark has been discovered. But until the world is given access to the papyrus through its publication, there is no story here, except that ancient Egyptian mummy masks are being destroyed in the ongoing search for Christian relics.

Joel Baden is professor of Hebrew Bible at Yale University. Candida Moss is professor of New Testament and early Christianity at the University of Notre Dame. The opinions in this column belong to them.

From Quinten Vervecken* <Quinten.Vervecken@brepols.net>:
================================
Semitica et Classica, International Journal of Oriental and Mediterranean Studies, is led by specialists in Eastern Mediterranean studies, philologists, archaeologists, epigraphists, philosophers, historians and linguists and is directed to researchers with a particular interest in these areas of learning.

The journal publishes work related to the interaction between the classical and Oriental worlds from the second century B.C.E. to the early centuries of Islam. The cultural area covered by the journal stretches from the western Mediterranean to the Middle East and includes Europe, Africa, and Asia up to and including the Arabian peninsula.

NOW AVAILABLE

Semitica et Classica, vol. 7 (2014),
ISBN: 978-2-503-54699-5,
Price: € 70 excl. taxes

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CALLS FOR PAPERS: Ancient Inscriptions Session (ASOR 2015)
From Michael Langlois <dida@mlanglois.com>:
========================================
Please consider submitting a paper to the ASOR session: Ancient Inscriptions: Recent Discoveries, New Editions, New Readings.

ASOR 2015 will be in Atlanta, Georgia. Submission deadline is February 15. Abstracts should be submitted on the ASOR website: <http://www.asor.org/am/2015/call-2.html/>.

The focus of this session is epigraphic material from Syria Palestine, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Anatolia. Paper proposals that consist of new readings (of previously published inscriptions) or constitute preliminary presentations of new epigraphic discoveries are of special interest.

Best,

Heather Dana Davis Parker, Johns Hopkins University, heatherddparker@gmail.com

Michael Langlois, Strasbourg/University of France, dida@mlanglois.com

eARTICLES: several, at the Cuneiform Digital Library website
From Klaus Wagensonner <klaus.wagensonner@orinst.ox.ac.uk>: wrote:
===========================================
We are pleased to announce the publication of several new contributions to the Cuneiform Digital Library Notes (CDLN) (http://cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdln/php/index.php):

CDLN 2015:001
Klaus Wagensonner, On an alternative way of capturing RTI images with the camera dome (http://cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdln/php/single.php?id=000054)

CDLN 2015:002

CDLN 2015:003
Klaus Wagensonner, Turning the Laws of Ur-Namma
We would like to take this opportunity to thank all contributors to CDLN for their support and would like to encourage scholars to contribute to the Notes in future as well.

References and bibliographies:
As of now all bibliographical information is drawn directly from a MySQL database. It is therefore not necessary anymore to send fully formatted bibliographies along with submitted contributions. For all references that are included among the latest available bibliographies on KeiBi Online (<http://vergil.uni-tuebingen.de/keibi/>) it is possible to save references and export them into the BibTeX format and send this document along. A full bibliography was added on CDLN (<http://cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdln/php/bibliography.php>), which contains all references used in the various contributions. Clicking on a year leads to the respective contribution(s), where the chosen reference is used. Vice versa, each reference list links back to the full bibliography.

As a test run the “Abbreviations for Assyriology” maintained by CDLI:wiki (<http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=abbreviations_for_assyriology>) have been imported into the database as well. By hovering over abbreviations in the bibliographies the full form and additional information is given. Further features such as indices of texts mentioned are in preparation.

We do hope that these changes will increase the efficiency of CDLN and are therefore happy to receive contributions for the next publication of Notes on April 1, 2015.

Submitted contributions are preferably made available as text files or in the RTF format. If the contribution contains tables, word or pages documents may be submitted as well. Please note that in order to aid the editing process, please be so kind to provide all images in separate files and not embedded in the submitted documents.

The CDLN, together with its sister publications Cuneiform Digital Library Bulletin (CDLB; <http://cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdlb.html>) and Cuneiform Digital Library Journal (CDLJ; <http://cdli.ucla.edu/pubs/cdlj.html>), are peer-reviewed publications that offer a persistent web presence under the auspices of the University of California system. As e-journals, the delay between submission and publication is well below that of academic print journals, while the interaction with cuneiform artifacts documented in the CDLI database offers obvious strengths for an interactive discourse. Authors should expect a two to four month interval between submission of a draft text with illustrations and its publication for substantive contributions to the CDLJ, at most two months for those made to the Bulletin, and approximately two weeks for the Notes that are conceived as an online venue for NABU-style communications that can include short philological or lexicographical contributions as well as regular updates of a more substantial nature describing the background or progress of, in particular, web-based research efforts. For submission guidelines including technicalities regarding bibliographical citations etc. please consult the information at <http://cdli.ucla.edu/?q=about-cdln>.

New submissions will appear in preprint status four times a year (January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1; notices of new submissions will be made to this list) and are clearly marked as such. During the preprint period, authors will be able to make small, non-substantive changes (e.g., typographical errors) to their submissions. After two weeks, these submissions are then archived.
Scholars are encouraged to send contributions to the CDLN at <klaus.wagensonner@orinst.ox.ac.uk>.

On behalf of the CDLI

Jacob L. Dahl and Klaus Wagensonner
University of Oxford

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eTEXTS: Lamentation on the Destruction of Ur
Traductions de textes sumériens online :

A l'adresse http://www.arch.unibe.ch/attinger > Übersetzungen, la partition et une traduction commentée de La lamentation sur Ur peut être téléchargée.

Bilgamesh, Enkidu et le monde infernal a été actualisé; les changements concernent avant tout le commentaire, qui a été profondément remanié à la suite de la parution de l'édition d'A. Gadotti.

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CALLS FOR APPLICATIONS: New editor-in-chief for Arabian Archaeology & Epigraphy
From Daniel Thomas Potts [mailto:daniel.potts@nyu.edu]:
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New Editor-in-Chief for Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy

Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy is seeking a new Editor-in-Chief to replace founding Editor-in-Chief Daniel Potts. The successful candidate will join an editorial team which includes Associate Editor Peter Stein, a Board of Advisors and an Editorial Board. The term of office is three years, from 1st July 2015 in the first instance, with an option for a further three. The post carries an annual honorarium.

Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy, which has just celebrated its 25th anniversary, is a forum for the publication of studies in the archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics, and early history of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. It publishes original articles and short communications in English, French, and German.

Specific qualities sought from candidates include the following:

• Significant scholarly contributions in the area of Arabian studies. Candidates need not have training in both archaeology and epigraphy but must have the capacity to evaluate fairly submissions on a wide range of topics including papers with both an archaeological and an epigraphic focus. Archaeological expertise would be particularly welcome as the Associate Editor has a more epigraphic focus.
• The ability to assess submissions in English is essential whilst the ability to assess submissions in French and German is preferred but not essential.
• A keen eye for detail and the patience to work with authors through detailed revisions of a manuscript.
• Extensive experience as a reviewer for journals in the subject area.
• Demonstrated administrative skills, capacity to handle a demanding workload and to meet deadlines.
• Must also be able to work constructively with authors, reviewers and the editorial team.

Interviews will be held in late March/early April 2015 in the UK. (Skype/Video-conference will be considered for non-UK based candidates.)

To discuss, informally, the nature of the editorial tasks please contact Daniel Potts, Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology and History, Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University, 15 E. 84th St., New York NY 10028. Email: daniel.potts@nyu.edu

Closing date: Friday, 19th February 2015 (16.00 GMT) Candidates will hear whether they have been selected for interview by Friday, 12th March 2015.

If you wish to apply for this post please email a covering letter to Felicity Clark (fclark@wiley.com). This letter should state why you would like to apply, and the skills and qualities you can bring to the post along with a CV that focuses on your publishing, reviewing and editorial experience.

CALLS FOR PAPERS: "Pigments, Paints and Polychromies in the ANE" (ASOR 2015)
From Shiyanthi Thavapalan [mailto:shiyanthi.thavapalan@yale.edu]:

Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research; 18.11.2015-21.11.2015, Atlanta (Georgia)
Deadline: 15.02.2015

Organizers: Shiyanthi Thavapalan (Yale University), Alex Nagel (Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History, Washington DC)

With the arrival of more sophisticated technologies and balanced approaches, scholars and scientists have begun to understand and experience aspects of ancient Near Eastern sculptural and architectural polychromy at a new level. Advanced imaging techniques, experimental photography, and pigment analysis have prompted modern reconstructions, thus deepening our understanding of the technical aspects of ancient craft production. How have these new developments changed our perception of the ancient Near Eastern built environment and material culture? What do we know about the application of colorants and the craftsmen involved in the process? Which measures were taken to preserve polychrome surfaces and decoration by past generations and how have modern generations experienced or reconstructed the colorful environments of the Near East? An intersection between the sciences and cultural studies including archival and historiographical approaches, this workshop will bring together professionals from various disciplines including conservation science, museum studies, architecture, archaeology and history working on aspects of the experience and reconstruction of color in the ancient Near East.

Interested speakers will need to submit a title and abstract (max. 200 words) at the link provided <http://www.asor.org/am/2015/call-for-papers.html> by February 15, 2015.
BOOKS: Reading Deuteronomy
From <http://www.helwys.com/sh-books/reading-deuteronomy/>:
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Reading Deuteronomy
A Literary and Theological Commentary
Stephen L. Cook
Paperback | 286 pages
978-1-57312-757-8
Regular Price: 22.00
Online Price: 17.60

Book Description

A lost treasure for large segments of the modern world, the book of Deuteronomy powerfully repays
contemporary readers' attention. It represents Scripture pulsing with immediacy, offering gripping
discourses that yank readers out of the doldrums and back to Mount Horeb and an encounter with
divine Word issuing forth from blazing fire. God's presence and Word in Deuteronomy stir deep longing
for God and move readers to a place of intimacy with divine otherness, holism, and will for person-
centered community. The consistently theological interpretation reveals the centrality of Deuteronomy
for faith and powerfully counters critical accusations about violence, intolerance, and polytheism in the
book.

About the Author

Stephen L. Cook serves as the Catherine N. McBurney Professor of Old Testament Language and
Literature at Virginia Theological Seminary. He did his doctoral training in Old Testament at Yale after
having earning the M.Div. degree at Yale's Divinity School. Stephen has served in several capacities as an
officer of the Society of Biblical Literature and is currently chair of the executive committee, the Catholic
Biblical Association, Baltimore-Washington Region.

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Jack M. Sasson
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN 37212
<jack.m.sasson@vanderbilt.edu>

CALLS FOR PAPERS: "Quo vadis biblical archaeology?" (Jerusalem, June 17-19)
From Katja Soennecken [mailto:soennecken@bai-wuppertal.de]:
Call for Papers
Workshop: Quo Vadis Biblical Archaeology?
Jerusalem
Wednesday 17th – Friday 19th of June 2015

The 50th anniversary of the German-Israeli diplomatic relations in 2015 provides an unique opportunity to reflect the German and German-Israeli Biblical Archaeology in Israel. Where are we coming from? Where are we now? And where are we heading?

The German Protestant Institute of Archaeology and the Hebrew University are hosting an interdisciplinary German-Israeli conference dedicated to graduate students working on various subjects in several disciplines that are connected to Ancient Near East – including Ancient History, Archaeology, Prehistory, Anthropology, Theology (Old and New Testament Studies), Jewish, Islamic or general religious studies and Social Science.

The aim is not only an interdisciplinary exchange of scientific knowledge between different fields, but also to increase and encourage contact and discussion between young German and Israeli researchers working on different regional specific aspects. The conference is designed to enable young scholars to present and discuss their work with colleagues on a high academic level without pressure.

We are looking forward to your proposals for the following themes (300 word abstract):

- German-Israeli Joint Ventures in the Past, Present and Future
- Sites after excavation – Restoration, Conservation and Presentation
- With Bible and Trowel? Biblical Archaeology today and future perspectives
- Archaeology and its Methods in Dialogue with other Sciences

The conference will be held in the Old City of Jerusalem in the middle-age refectory adjacent to Church of the Redeemer and will last for three days. The official language will be English.

Presentations should take 20 minutes. Additionally to the presentations, workshops are planned to allow a more intense discussion between scholars working in similar or adjacent fields (e.g. about common problems, new methods that could be applied, similar research questions).

This workshop is free of charge, but we kindly request your registration in advance.

The workshop is a “Preconference” to the international conference “Ancient Cultures in the Lands of the Bible” (Archaeology 2015).

For further information see https://www.archaeologyisrael.com/

Please submit your abstracts before 10/02/2015 to: soennecken@deiahl.de For further questions or registration please contact: soennecken@deiahl.de or sekretariat@deiahl.de

Assistant Director
JOBS: "History of the Jews in the Modern Islamic Diaspora ... "(Tel Aviv Univ.)

Via Scott Ury [mailto:scottury@hotmail.com]:

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Academic Position in the History of the Jews in the Modern Islamic Diaspora

The Department of Jewish History at Tel-Aviv University, Israel, invites applications for a tenured or tenure-track position in the History of the Jews in the Modern Islamic Diaspora (including the Ottoman Empire) and in the State of Israel. The position requires academic and didactic excellence, teaching in Hebrew, ability to conduct independent historical research in the relevant period, and suitability to work in an academic framework.

The position will be effective from the academic year of 2016/17.

Candidates must hold a PhD, or receive a PhD before filling the position.

Salary and conditions will conform to Israeli university regulations. Appointment procedures will be carried out according to the rules and regulations of Tel-Aviv University and are subject to the approval of the University authorities.

Candidates should send their applications to:

Professor David Assaf
Chair, Department of Jewish History
Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv 6997801, Israel
Or by email: ruthiv@post.tau.ac.il

Applications should include a CV and selected publications. Three letters of recommendation from senior scholars are to be sent directly by the referees to the above address.
Final date for submission is March 31, 2015.

The position is open to all candidates. The appointment will be based on the candidate's qualifications and department needs. The department, faculty or Tel-Aviv University are not obligated to appoint any of the candidates who apply for the position.

**JOURNALS: Intellectual Heritage of the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East, 1(2014)**

From Kai Metzler [mailto:metzler@ugarit-verlag.de]:

The first volume of the new series Intellectual Heritage of the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East has just been published.

Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, Ilkka Lindstedt, Robert Rollinger und Raija Mattila (Hgg.):

Case Studies in Transmission


This collection of articles entitled Case Studies in Transmission is the first publication in the series The Intellectual Heritage of the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East (IHAMNE). The series has its origins in the research project The Intellectual Heritage of the Ancient Near East (IHANE). It studies cultural transmission within the Near East as well as between the Near East and Europe, especially in the framework of ancient Mesopotamia, Greece, and the medieval Arab-Islamic culture. IHANE has organized several workshops, mainly in Helsinki, but occasionally also in Innsbruck. These workshops have brought together not only the project members but also colleagues invited to join the discussion in these workshops. The present volume is the result of these workshops and earlier forms of the majority of the papers have been presented and discussed in them.

Content

- Epistle 48 of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ and Their Ismāʿīli Commitment (Carmela Baffioni)

- Die Erfindung eines Kontinents, oder die vier Säulen Europas (Sebastian Fink)

- Assyro-Arabica: Mesopotamian Literary Influence on the Arabs (Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila)

- Coining Continuity? Hellenistic Legacy in the Coinage of Arsakid Iran and the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom (ca. 250 to First Century BCE) (Matthias Hoernes)

- Al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla and the Death of Ibrāhīm al-Imām (Ilkka Lindstedt)

- Homer and the Ancient Near East: Some Considerations on Intercultural Affairs (Robert Rollinger)

- Cultural Encounters between Rome and the East: The Role of Trade (Kai Ruffing)
NEWS: Irreversibly damaged King Tut's mask?

From <http://io9.com/king-tuts-burial-mask-has-been-irreversibly-damaged-1681085211>:

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King Tut's Burial Mask Has Been "Irreversibly Damaged"
George Dvorsky

The most famous archaeological relic in the world has been damaged during a botched cleaning attempt. After being knocked off, the blue and gold braided beard on King Tut's burial mask was "hastily" glued back on with an inappropriate adhesive, damaging the item even further.

Brace yourselves, folks. This story is all kinds of messed up. As The Associated Press is reporting, it appears that the beard was quickly glued back on by curators at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo with epoxy, an "irreversible material" that's completely unsuitable for a restoration effort of this importance. Conservators at the museum revealed the incident yesterday.

Frustratingly, the story isn't entirely clear because three of the museum's curators are offering conflicting accounts. It's not known when the incident happened, or whether the iconic beard was accidentally knocked off or removed because it was loose. What we do know, however, is that the curators were "ordered" from above to fix it quickly and that epoxy was used. All three curators refused to give their names for fear of professional reprisals. From the AP report:

"The mask should have been taken to the conservation lab but they were in a rush to get it displayed quickly again and used this quick drying, irreversible material," the conservator added.

The conservator said that the mask now shows a gap between the face and the beard, whereas before it was directly attached: "Now you can see a layer of transparent yellow."

But the story gets worse. It appears that the curators inadvertently got some of the epoxy on the face of the mask - and they used a spatula in an effort to get it off, damaging the relic even further:

Another museum conservator, who was present at the time of the repair, said that epoxy had dried on the face of the boy king's mask and that a colleague used a spatula to remove it, leaving scratches. The first conservator, who inspects the artifact regularly, confirmed the scratches and said it was clear that they had been made by a tool used to scrape off the epoxy.

Egypt's Antiquities Ministry and the museum administration are not responding to media requests, but one of the conservators said an investigation is currently underway.
EVENTS: "Ideology, Power and Religious Change in Antiquity" (Göttingen, 20–24 July)

From Gösta Ingvar Gabriel [mailto:Goesta.Gabriel@phil.uni-goettingen.de]:
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CALL FOR PAPERS

Göttingen SPIRIT Summer School:
Ideology, Power and Religious Change in Antiquity, 3000 BC – AD 600 Göttingen, Germany, 20–24 July 2015

This international summer school focuses on ideological messages communicated by leaders in the ancient world (Ancient Near East, Greece and Rome, c. 3000 BC – AD 600) during periods of religious change. The latter can be understood as periods in which new religions, specific religious factions, sects or cults rose, expanded or gained a position of dominance, thereby causing changes in or threatening existing social, religious and/or power structures. Which messages were communicated by central and local authorities as well as specific religious authorities in these epochs? What do these messages tell us about the nature of power exercised by leaders?

The summer school is specifically targeted at doctoral candidates and early postdocs. Each day will commence with a keynote lecture delivered by renowned scholars and ample opportunities for discussion afterwards. Keynote speakers are Paola Ceccarelli (Cambridge), Eckart Frahm (Yale), Olivier Hekster (Nijmegen), Carlos Noreña (Berkeley), and Piotr Steinkeller (Harvard). The afternoons will be dedicated to short presentations by participants based on papers circulated in advance. Selected papers will be published.

Anyone interested in participating is kindly requested to apply with a CV, list of publications (if available), and an abstract of 500 words at maximum until 15 March 2015. Please use our portal to upload your application (https://s-lotus.gwdg.de/uni/uxgw/gsgg_ss_2015.nsf/application).

Accommodation is free for all participants. Reimbursement for travel costs is predictably available for a limited number of applicants. In case of further questions, do not hesitate to contact the organizers, Gösta Gabriel and Erika Manders, via iprca2015@uni-goettingen.de.

For more information, see also http://www.uni-goettingen.de/iprca2015.

Gösta Gabriel and Erika Manders
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
Graduate School of Humanities
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
Friedländer Weg 2
37085 Göttingen
+49 551 3921126
JOURNALS & CALLS FOR PAPERS: Origini 36 and 37
From Lucia Mori [mailto:lucia.mori@uniroma1.it]:

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ORIGINI

Storia del Vicino Oriente antico
Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità, Sapienza Università di Roma Via dei Volsci, 122, stanza 309, 00185 ROME - ITALY
+39 06 49697091 (int. 37091)
lucia.mori@uniroma1.it

ORIGINI
Journal of Prehistory and Protohistory of Ancient Civilizations Presentation of Vol. 36-2014

Call for Papers for vol. 37-2015: Deadline: 30 March 2015

We are pleased to inform that Volume XXXVI-2014 is in press and will come out soon. The table of contents is included below.

In view of the preparation of the new 2015 XXXVII number, we would like to remind contributors to submit papers by 30 March, 2015.

About our Journal
ORIGINI is an international peer-reviewed journal, dealing with the Prehistory and Protohistory of Ancient Civilizations in various cultural regions in the world.
The Editor in Chief is Marcella Frangipane, supported by a team of Associated editors and an international Scientific Board.
Papers presenting new archaeological data in an interpretative framework of historical and anthropological reconstruction, as well as papers debating theoretical and methodological matters, are welcome.

The papers should not exceed 80.000 characters (with spaces included) and 15 full pages of illustrations (the number of text and illustration pages can be modified within the above mentioned total limits: one page of text is considered to be of 3000 characters, with spaces included).
Guidelines with more precise indications for the editing of the articles will be sent to the authors who will communicate us a paper proposal.

The articles should be sent in a digital version, either on a CD or by email, with an attached pdf version, to the following address:
Redazione Rivista Origini,
Sapienza Università di Roma, Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità – Museo delle Origini, P.le Aldo Moro 5, 00185 Roma.
e-mail: origini@uniroma1.it or marcella.frangipane@uniroma1.it.
Looking forward to receiving positive answers and sure that your contribution will contribute to the success of the journal Marcella Frangipane

ORIGINI 36 – 2014 (in press)

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Recensioni / Reviews

WEBS: Ma’agarim - The Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language

From Gary Rendsburg [mailto:grends@rci.rutgers.edu]:

Ma’agarim (The Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language) now has a new website, plus the database now may be accessed free-of-charge:

<http://daf.hebrew-academy.org.il/new-site/>

Go there for introduction, instructional video, etc.

Or one can proceed immediately to the main site:

<http://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il/Pages/PMain.aspx>

Previously Ma’agarim was optimized to work in IE only, plus there was a $50/year annual subscription. It now appears to work well in all browsers (IE, Firefox, Chrome), in addition to the bonus of free access.
Moreover, the database now has been expanded to include materials as recent as the 20th century.

**FEATURES: Exodus appeal**


**Biblical migrations: Re-telling the Story of Exodus**

Migration is a central theme in the Biblical story of Exodus. Quite apart from the debated historicity of the account of the departure of Hebrews from Egypt, the story of the Exodus has played an important role in the popular perception of 'Ancient Egypt'.

For many people who were aware of Pharaonic history in the 18th and 19th Centuries, much of their information derived from the Bible. This is a major reason why the Manchester Museum has such an important collection of archaeologically-sourced objects from Egypt. In 1882, an organisation called the Egypt Exploration Fund was set up to preserve the remains of Egypt's ancient past through archaeological recording. The first site chosen for the Fund's work was Tell el Maskhuta, in the eastern Nile Delta - believed to be a store-city mentioned in Exodus. An account of findings from the site was published in 1885, under the title 'The Store-City of Pithom and the Route to Exodus.' The newly-formed Fund tapped into widespread popular interest in the supposed route of the Hebrews, and received donations specifically to investigate Biblical sites. The Fund's founder, the redoubtable Miss Amelia B. Edwards, even wanted to give early subscribers the chance to own a genuine mudbrick, 'made without straw, by an Isrealite in bondage'.

Thus, several monumental pieces of granite from the Delta sites came to Manchester as a result of the Egypt Exploration Fund's focus on the area of putative Biblical events; perhaps unsurprisingly the Museum's major Egyptological benefactor, Jesse Haworth, was a keen churchman.

The appeal of the Exodus narrative continues today; the latest cinematic adaptation by Ridley Scott - Exodus: Gods and Kings - cost an estimated $140 million to produce. The presentation of 'Ancient Egypt', the backdrop to most of the film, is a fantastical conflation of surviving archaeological evidence and different degrees of misinterpretation of that evidence. Other commentators have elsewhere addressed the question of why ancient Egypt is so misrepresented, and which aspects of a film like 'Exodus' might have been improved.

For me, one particularly problematic cliché that the film perpetuates is of the ancient Egyptians as one-sided, whip-cracking slave drivers. Although most would scoff at the idea aliens built the pyramids - and, incongruously, there seem to be several pyramids under construction at once in the new Exodus film - it is still difficult for the modern Western mind to conceive of a large group of people accomplishing monumental feats such as building pyramids without cruel coercion.

The Manchester Museum preserves a world-class collection of objects that challenge the notion that 'slaves built the pyramids'. These come from a town of specialist craftsmen who were paid, and well
looked after, for their task of preparing the king's tomb. This is one of many reasons why museums are so important. Hollywood presents a skewed version of reality, but one that has - as it is so fond of telling us - a basis in real places, amongst real people.

Museums preserve and present the artefactual evidence of living people who inhabited ancient Egypt, without the cinematic gloss (although not always without bias). One of a number of research projects currently at work on our Museum's collection of 18,000 objects from ancient Egypt and Sudan attempts to chart the migration of people and cultural motifs from around the ancient Mediterranean into Egypt. This work is as meticulous as it is fascinating, using the latest advances in analytical scientific techniques to understand the lives of people in the past.

Perhaps one day, someone will make a film about the remarkable commonplace discoveries in museums that, among other things, help us understand the movement of people around the ancient Mediterranean - rather than repeating a lazy, monolithic vision of 'Ancient Egypt' that has been around for at least 200 years.

I suspect our stories would be a lot more interesting.

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**eREVIEWS: "A Linguistic History of Ancient Cyprus..."**


**Bryn Mawr Classical Review 2015.01.24**


Reviewed by Vassilis Petrakis, National Hellenic Research Foundation (vpetrakisrm@yahoo.gr)

Table of Contents: [http://assets.cambridge.org/97811070/42865/toc/9781107042865_toc.pdf](http://assets.cambridge.org/97811070/42865/toc/9781107042865_toc.pdf)

The volume under review, based on Steele’s doctoral dissertation, offers a rich and comprehensive account of the (certainly or probably) non-Greek languages used in Cyprus from the Late Bronze Age up to the Ptolemaic conquest. Quite pioneering in its broad scope, this important publication is a remarkably accessible discussion of the epigraphic material labeled as ‘Cypro-Minoan’ (hereafter CM), ‘Eteocypriot’ (hereafter EC) and Cypriot Phoenician (hereafter CPh). Consideration of the broader context in which this material was produced has invited pertinent considerations of archaeological and historical evidence, resulting in what the author justifiably calls an “interdisciplinary investigation” (p.2).

The structure is neat and straightforward. Alongside the customary lists of illustrations, tables and abbreviations, as well as acknowledgements, the reader is greeted with a useful concordance of the EC and CPh inscriptions cited in the book, which follow a special numbering (prefixed by EC and Ph respectively). The core of the volume consists of a short introduction and three extensive chapters dealing separately with the material for each of the aforementioned categories. These are followed by a concise conclusions section.
It is necessary to stress from the outset the inevitable asymmetries in the treatment of this material – themselves reflecting our own variable knowledge about the languages represented in these entities. These range from our ignorance of the language(s) rendered in the CM script(s), through our formidable gaps in any reconstruction of EC, up to our sufficient knowledge of Phoenician. Throughout the book, prospective readers must be wary of the distinction between language and script. Although phrases such as “non-Greek languages/scripts” (pp. 1, 2) tend to blur this, the material discussed is not uniformly defined: CM is an epigraphic entity; EC is apparently a linguistic one, utilizing the Cypriot syllabary also used for 1st millennium BC Cypriot Greek; lastly, CPh is defined linguistically, epigraphically (it is written in the Phoenician abjad), as well as geographically (CPh as opposed to Phoenician material found elsewhere). Appreciating this, the discussion is mostly sensitive to the idiosyncrasies of each group and to the different agendas that each material is used to address.

Epigraphic material lends itself easily to approaches that illustrate well the advantages of studying inscriptions as material artifacts: the author’s careful exposition of the chronological and geographic distribution of each group of inscriptions (pp. 15-21 on CM; 118-122 on EC; 184-188 on CPh) facilitate proper definitions of studied material and generate the necessary framework for any attempt to put the use of the script(s) and the language(s) represented in their historical context.

Chapter 1 (“Cypro-Minoan”) deals commendably with nearly all aspects of this intriguing epigraphic corpus, stretching throughout the Late Bronze Age up to the Cypro-Geometric period and throughout the island, up to Ugarit and now Tiryns in the Argolid. The author has provided remarkably succinct and thoughtful accounts of complicated issues, such as the internal sub-categories of CM writing or the possible origins of these scripts. In her brief overview of previous decipherment attempts she is rightly critical, siding with Palaima’s exposition of the inappropriateness of nearly all published proposals.1 Steele’s emphasis on the diversity of the CM corpus is very useful, stressing how sign variation can be affected by regional and chronological factors, as well as the physical properties of the material inscription.2 Her discussion of CM morphology observable in CM inscriptions is rigorous (although retaining the rather conventional distinction between CM 1, CM 2 and CM 3) and focuses on the (probably meaningful) recurrence of sequences more than two graphemes long and observing consistent alterations or additions (pp. 66-71). It is interesting to compare her results to those of a similar analysis conducted recently and independently by Yves Duhoux.3 Her approach to (what can be deduced about) CM ‘phonology’ rests understandably on the assumption that CM graphemes similar/related to Linear B and Cypriot syllabic signs may have had similar phonetic values. The discussion of CM “in context” (pp. 80-89) includes a careful assessment of the possible extent of CM literacy and a brief overview of the archaeological evidence for the presence of different population groups in Late Bronze Age Cyprus, including the so-called Greek settlement at the end of the Bronze Age or the incipient Early Iron Age. Interestingly, the case-study chosen is the famous Opheltau inscription of Cypro-Geometric (1050-950 BC) date, previously considered Cypriot Syllabic, but recently reclassified by Olivier as CM. Steele discusses the place of the inscription in the development of Cypriot syllabic writing without prejudice, introducing a welcome agnostic tone as far as its palaeographic affinities are concerned. The observation that acceptance of the reading o-pe-le-ta-u (a thematic Genitive Singular Cypriot dialectal form) is based on cumulative evidence rather than a solid epigraphic basis (pp. 95-96) is very important and should be considered in all discussions of the Hellenization of the island.

Chapter 2 (“Eteocypriot”) provides an excellent introduction and analysis of the EC corpus, advocating a necessary “back to the basics” approach “in order to examine critically the foundations on which our knowledge of the language is based” (pp. 101-102). However, one would expect a more extensive assessment of Egetmeyer’s recent suggestion of a separate 1st millennium non-Greek language at
Golgoi4 (p.100). After a useful historiographic overview, Steele transcribes and briefly discusses twenty-six EC inscriptions (mostly from Amathous) and presents the chronological and geographical distribution of the material, disposing of the theory that EC was only a 4th century BC Amathousian phenomenon (p.119, also p.161). She also makes the observation that, although EC might well have been associated to one of the languages rendered by a CM script, “no secure link to any pre-Greek language of Cyprus can be established linguistically” (p.121). Unlike CM, the EC material utilizes a deciphered script, the so-called Cypriot syllabary, although its sparse attestation creates a considerable impediment. Nonetheless, Steele makes an excellent effort to synthesize a body of puzzling and inconclusive data. Even so, her painstaking discussion only manages to isolate few linguistic features, amongst which the already known -o-ko-o- patronymic ‘sequence’ (mostly attached to Greek names) still seems the most certain diagnostic element of EC. The sidelights offered to EC phonology and orthography are valuable (pp.140-146), particularly the preservation of the digamma or the possible similarities in rendering consonant clusters with the aid of orthographic (or “dummy”) vowels (a practice that appears in both Linear B and Cypriot Greek syllabic inscriptions). The discussion of EC “in context” (pp.160-167) focuses on the interaction between EC, Cypriot Greek (written in the Cypriot syllabary or the alphabet) and Phoenician at Amathous: although there is intriguing evidence for Greek-EC contact (four bilingual inscriptions, Greek names rendered in EC, Amathousian kings with Greek names, cf. also pp.148-152), there is nothing comparable to suggest interaction between EC and Phoenician, despite the almost certain Phoenician presence at Amathous as early as the 8th century BC. This observation highlights a significant problem in any correlation between epigraphic and archaeological evidence in 1st millennium BC Cyprus: EC-speakers are not archaeologically discernible (pp.149, n.144, pp.162-163). The case-study chosen here is the Amathous bilingual (Greek/EC) inscription (pp.167-172), whose possible Greek solecisms may indicate an EC-speaking scribe and/or commissioner.

Chapter 3 (“Phoenician”) deals with the Phoenician inscriptions found on the island. Despite our considerable knowledge of Phoenician, there had been so far no synthetic discussions of Cypriot Phoenician. This chapter fills this gap considerably, although it includes no complete list or corpus of all known CPh inscriptions (almost 500, excluding inscriptions on coins). As with CM and EC material, Steele surveys carefully the chronological and geographical distribution of CPh. The lack of neat correspondence between epigraphy and archaeology applies here too: a distinct Phoenician identity is not well matched in material assemblages (p.187). Since the language of these inscriptions is known, this chapter is able to focus on topics that were impenetrable for the other two groups, such as possible dialectal features in CPh. Steele examines cautiously the evidence for and against the dominant view that Cypriot Phoenicians spoke the Tyro-Sidonian dialect by discussing two alternatives: the existence of Byblian dialectal features at Lapethos and the possibility existence of a distinct CPh dialect. The latter is very interesting, but unfortunately relevant evidence is inconclusive. “Phoenician in contact” discusses many intensely interesting topics, such as the few CPh-Greek bilingual inscriptions, possible CPh loanwords, as well as Phoenician/Greek ‘equivalencies’ in onomastics (Phoenician names translated in Greek or rendered in Hellenized form). Steele discusses the highly interesting phenomenon of Cypriot families with ‘mixed’ names, with Greek and Phoenician names distributed across relatives, very suggestive of the close association between the Greek-speaking and the Phoenician-speaking communities on the island. This is followed by an intriguing survey of Kition epigraphy (CM, Cypriot syllabic, Greek alphabetic and CPh material). The case study chosen, the so-called ‘Baal of Lebanon’ inscriptions on two bronze bowls, mostly discusses the identification of the city Qartihadasht with an eighth-century Cypriot power-centre.

The short “Conclusion” chapter offers some final notes on themes recurring throughout the book: a synthetic assessment of the chronological and geographical distribution of the material; the variable
interpretative potential; last but not least, evidence for contact between languages and linguistic communities in Cyprus.

Bibliographic references are admirably full,8 while all three Indices (cited inscriptions, discussed syllabic signs and a general one) are immensely helpful. Only the illustrations can be considered quantitatively insufficient; although the nine tables and three distribution maps are necessary and useful,9 only the Opheltau inscription is illustrated (p.91).

Due to space restrictions, it has been impossible to do justice to the multitude of important and original observations abounding throughout the book. In a work dealing with so complicated topics with commendable clarity and sobriety, it is only fair that praise should obscure criticism. This important and pioneering publication should be consulted by anyone with a scholarly interest in ancient Cyprus and the complex linguistic landscape that it helps clarify.

Notes:

6. However, Duhoux has suggested a relationship between EC and the language rendered by the CM 1 script, based on the shared occurrence of a -ti (nominal?) suffix (assuming that homomorph signs had the same value in both scripts). See Y. Duhoux, “Eteocypriot and Cypro-Minoan 1-3”, Kadmos 48 (2009), pp.39-75, at pp.67-70 (not cited in the book under review).
7. Only the Kition inscriptions have so far received proper publication (most recently: M. Yon, Kition dans les textes. Testimonia littéraires et épigraphiques et Corpus des inscriptions, Kition-Bamboula V, Paris 2004). A current project undertaken by Robert Allan under the auspices of the British Academy (Council for British Research in the Levant) aims at a full CPh corpus.
8. With very few omissions, such as Duhoux (supra n.5). Of 2014 publications one could now add Duhoux’s succinct entries on “Cypro-Minoan syllabary” and “Eteocypriot” (Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics, edited by G.K. Giannakis, volume 1, Leiden 2014, pp.408-409, 571-572).
9. One should note that Maps 1-2 (pp.20, 120) chart the distribution of CM and EC inscriptions only within Cyprus (CM has also been found at Ugarit and Tiryns and a couple of fragmentary EC graffiti have been found in Egypt).

CALLS FOR PAPERS: The Archaeology of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (ASOR, Atlanta)
From Kyra Kaercher [mailto:kaercher@bu.edu]:
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Call for Papers: ASOR 2015: The Archaeology of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq
The Archaeology of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq session(s) will provide a forum for the large number of researchers currently engaged in the archaeology of this region, bringing together field reports and material studies spanning early prehistory to the Islamic period. Given the difficulties (or impossibility) of conducting archaeological fieldwork in many areas of the Near East, such as Syria, Iran, most of Iraq, Lebanon, and (even) Turkey, the opening of Iraqi Kurdistan has resulted in the region becoming the focus of intense archaeological attention. Many projects are working in this area, as well as many individuals dealing with the cultural heritage and history of this region. A session devoted to the Archaeology of Iraqi Kurdistan will enable scholars to disseminate their latest results, share ideas, and receive feedback.

Organized by: Glenn Schwartz and Kyra Kaercher

Presenters can submit an abstract of 250 words or less via ASOR's online ASOR's Online Abstract Submission Site.

http://www.asor.org/am/2015/call-2.html

Please note that the deadline for abstracts is February 15, and that ASOR membership and meeting registration is required in advance for participation. For more information on the rules and regulations visit http://www.asor.org/am/2015/call-for-papers.html.

For any other questions feel free to contact me at kyrak@upenn.edu

NEWS: Babylon and world heritage list

From <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2015-01/19/c_133930811.htm>

Iraq tries to get Babylon on world heritage list

BAGHDAD, Jan. 19 (Xinhua) -- Iraqi Minister of Tourism and Antiquities on Monday said that his country is seeking to restore the ancient ruin city of Babylon onto the UNESCO world heritage list.

"We have finished our part and prepared a dossier to be sent to the UNESCO tomorrow, and so we met our obligation to prepare this dossier on February 1," Adel Shirshab told a press conference in Baghdad.

Earlier, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) signed a memorandum of understanding with the Iraqi government and the government of Babil province, in which the Iraqi side has to prepare a dossier by some Iraqi archaeologists and tourism experts to assess the damages and situation of the site.

Babylon is the capital of Babylonia, whose remains can be found near the city of Hilla, some 100 km south of Baghdad.
The city was officially recognized as one of the first civilizations on earth. However, all that remains of the ancient city is a mound of broken mud-brick buildings and debris in the fertile Mesopotamian plain between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in central Iraq.

Babylon had sprung up by the beginning of the third millennium BC (the dawn of the dynasties). The city is home to the famed Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the Seven Wonders of antiquity.

The site is the remains of a Mesopotamian capital that flourished for centuries, it was home to Hammurabi (1792-1750 B.C.) who introduced the world's first known set of laws, and Nebuchadnezzar (604-562 B.C.) who built the famed Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

Under the former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, the city was terribly damaged when he decided to rebuild Babylon with modern bricks inscribed with his name, right atop the original walls.

Then the 4,000-year-old city became military "Camp Alpha" soon after the U.S.-led invasion in 2003.

UNESCO earlier said that the U.S. troops and contractors inflicted considerable damage on the historic Iraqi site of Babylon, driving heavy machinery over sacred paths, bulldozing hilltops and digging trenches through one of the world's most important archaeological sites.

Military operations and conflicts also took a heavy toll on Iraq's cultural heritage, including the considerable damage inflicted on the historic site of Babylon by U.S.-led coalition forces as they based their troops on the site in 2003 and 2004.

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LECTURES: "Eras and Dynasties in Babylonian Historiography" (Tel Aviv, February 4)

From Amir Gilan [mailto:agilan@post.tau.ac.il]:

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The Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University, are honoured to invite you to the lecture:

"Eras and Dynasties in Babylonian Historiography"
Paul-Alain Beaulieu
University of Toronto

Wednesday, February 4th 2015
Seminar Room 204
Gilman Building
Tel Aviv University

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eREVIEWS: Of "... Implicit Knowledge Structures in Ancient Geographical Texts"
Modern scholars, it seems safe to say, know far more about the geography of the ancient world than any of the ancients themselves, even more than such luminaries as Ptolemy, Strabo, or Pliny, definitely more than someone like Aristophanes’ Strepsiades. Of course, in this context ‘more’ directly implies the precision of modern geographic science, cartography and toponymic orthography. ‘More’ necessarily forces modern assumptions and expectations on the Greeks and Romans and is why their ability to manage without the use of maps needs frequent repeating. Common Sense Geography, the combined effort of a research group within the TOPOI Excellence Cluster, usefully challenges such modern expectations. The diverse group of scholars, including ancient historians, philologists, geographers, archaeologists, linguists, and other experts, show that our understanding of the ancients’ ideas about space, their Raumbilder, depends upon the interaction between their “language, culture, and cognition” (309).

The volume’s fourteen chapters are divided into four subsections. In general, the first (untitled) and fourth (“Conclusions & Perspectives”) define the concept of common sense geography and illuminate the theoretical terminology and methodological models that underpin it, while the second (“Themes & Topics”) and third (“Authors & Texts”) offer various case studies employing the precepts of common sense geography. There are individual chapter bibliographies as well as a cumulative bibliography, an index of ancient sources and a general index. Scattered throughout are useful images, figures, and maps.

Two multi-authored introductory chapters (one by Geus and Thiering; the other by Dan, Geus and Guckelsberger) explain that common sense geography concerns a community’s consensus about the knowledge of their world’s physical environment. Implicit, and therefore hard to describe, it is the shared and intuitive information (as opposed to scientific) that allows “normal” (25) individuals (i.e. not expert geographers) to describe and navigate their world (33). Ubiquitous because of its pragmatism, it is both relevant and accessible to its audience, a fact that limited the widespread development of more scientific representations (25). The editors also categorize common sense geography along a spectrum that includes “intuitive” geography such as that employed by seafarers, “scholarly” geography such as that appearing in Herodotus or Pliny the Elder, and “fully reasoned” geography which, for the ancients at least, reached its apogee with Ptolemy.

Thiering, in the volume’s final chapter, explains common sense geography through the lens of cognitive linguistics and cognitive psychology. In short, he offers various categories of analysis, questions, and terminologies that illuminate the mental models formed by the Greeks and Romans. Unsurprisingly, it is by far the most sophisticated chapter, and although the editors defend its placement at the end of the volume as a sort of “‘aha’ experience” (14), readers uninitiated in gestalt theory or figure/ground asymmetries may find it beneficial to read it both before and after the case studies which frequently illustrate the theory, even if only by implication.
The volume’s second section (“Themes & Topics”) includes five contributions that employ thematic approaches to illustrate the utility and indeed prevalence of common sense geography. Arnaud, for example, neatly describes how ancient mariners navigated without the use of instruments but instead relied upon implicit knowledge structures “to form cognitive maps for orientation” (40). These structures included the ability to estimate distance through duration, course through astronomy and to a certain extent wind direction, and location through a cognitive series that understood a sequence of places lying on the same parallel or route. The mariners’ necessary emphasis on a particularly important port, like Caralis in Sardinia, could leave later geographers assuming that it was both the easternmost and southernmost point of the island (63). Thus, this mariners’ geography, this common sense geography that consisted of limited linear sections designed for the practical necessity of travel, significantly affected the ‘cartographic’ geography that developed later. Poiss next argues that common sense geography can illuminate a mental model based on a bird’s-eye view which, although often dismissed, is readily recognized in poetic similes describing the territorial purview of the gods, in historical descriptions of battles, and in geographic descriptions of cities and towns. Chiai then illustrates how effectively the island and the associated concept of insularity were employed as cognitive categories to define and compartmentalize the Mediterranean and even civic space. Bianchetti shows how political concerns could undermine scientific geography in favor of a common sense geography that in this case viewed Britain as an alter mundus, another world. Finally, Bekker-Nielsen, in a clearly organized and developed chapter, compares what he calls hard and soft spaces in the Roman world. The former are often determined from the ‘top down’ while the latter from the ‘bottom up’. Whether a determinant of citizenship, coastal rights, or political boundaries between or within provinces, he illustrates how the Romans often attempted to impose hard spaces – definite divisions – where soft spaces – determined by human interaction – were more prevalent and powerful. His enlightening discussion ought to be read alongside Nicolet’s still important study concerning the Romans’ need to impose geographic organization(s) in the early imperial period.

Four chapters next address issues of common sense geography in specific texts. Geus catalogues the various implicit structures for distance in Herodotus and other Greek sources. In short, he convincingly illustrates that Herodotus and his contemporaries had no standard way to calculate a distance or average. Rather, our sources relied on their own judgment to select a distance from available sources or to construct another based on their own mental model of common sense geography. Dan then argues that in Xenophon’s Anabasis geography served almost as a character, a fierce and unfamiliar enemy that the Greeks needed to conquer. The Greek text betrays different levels of spatial thinking and modeling that can be equated to different ranks in society, from the intuitive geography of the uneducated soldiers through the reasoned geography of the elite and literate officers. As a result both hodological and bird’s-eye views are present, a mishmash of common sense geographies that render the work both “complex and accessible” (183) and consequently more representative of the various ways the Greeks, at least, could perceive an otherwise unknown world. Next, Florentina Badalanova Geller reassesses traditional interpretations of the so-called Babylonian mappamundi currently located in the British Museum and argues that it could have served as a sort of geographic master-model, or at any rate an illustration of such a Vorlage (202), upon which the biblical description of the Garden of Eden was based. It is argued, then, that this tradition, alongside a healthy dose of contemporary cultural imperatives, affected other late antique and medieval illustrations of Mesopotamia. Markham Geller concludes the section on authors and texts with a clever discussion illuminating the origins of Berossos’ Babyloniaka. Employing the concepts of common sense geography, principally the identification of cultural assumptions and cognitive linguistics, Geller shows that Berossos’ text better illustrates Babylonian rather than Greek traditions. He argues therefore that the geography was originally written in Aramaic.
for an Aramaic speaking audience, and that the author probably never even travelled to Kos, but rather
that his works and therefore his influence were transmitted and translated there.

Alongside Thiering’s theoretical essay discussed above, the volume’s final section (“Conclusions &
Perspectives”) includes Guckelsberger’s chapter emphasizing that although the technical skill to conduct
something approaching scientific geography existed, common sense geography was an efficient and
adequate (enough) way to locate specific geographic locations. However useless these locations (points)
may be for the rendering of an accurate map, they allowed (usually) for the practical needs of daily life
(241). Finally, Ilyushechkina, Görz, and Thiering posit the creation of a semi-automatic computational
tool to catalogue and categorize basic expressions of orientation and geography found in the written
ancient sources. These computations should help identify universally understood concepts of common
sense geography. The decision to focus on an English translation of Dionysius Periegetes proves the
potential of the project, even if there is lingering suspicion that something may be lost from the Greek
original.5

So much for the sequential, chapter-by-chapter (hodological?), summary of the volume’s contents; now
for an admittedly brief bird’s-eye evaluation of its significance to our growing understanding of
geography and worldview in the ancient Mediterranean world. First, many of the authors (but see
especially Poiss, Dan, and even Badalanova Geller) challenge the dominance of the hodological (linear
and uni-dimensional) worldview so prevalent in modern scholarship. While there is no reason to
surrender completely this model, these studies, alongside others,6 usefully illustrate that the ancient
worldview was much more complicated and varied than is often assumed. Second, a number of the
contributions (especially Bianchetti, Bekker-Nielsen, Dan and Geller) show how common sense
geography recognizes and emphasizes the interconnection between politics and geographic knowledge.
Political concerns as much, and even more than some sort of scientific curiosity, guided both the
collection and presentation of such knowledge. Finally, all the contributions (but especially those by
Arnaud, Guckelsberger, and Geus) illustrate the simple practicality inherent in common sense
geography. Whether it be political considerations that determined spatial awareness, or the mental
maps that guided travel, common sense geography reveals a distinct adherence to practicality, even if,
as Bekker-Nielsen demonstrates, severe contradictions between expectation and reality could arise.

The editors (and many of the contributors) admit that Common Sense Geography is by no means a final
word, but rather is designed to spark further research, and so it should. Collectively, they have
illustrated the potential of their interdisciplinary research program to challenge prevailing assumptions
and illuminate the ancient worldview. In short, the authors demonstrate that modern expectations of
precision and accuracy were both unexpected and unnecessary in antiquity. Recognizing this fact will
only improve our view of the ancient worldview. There is, nevertheless, room to expand the scope of
the question, or at any rate, the breadth of the source material. Considering the volume’s focus on
cognitive linguistics it is perhaps appropriate, if not necessary, that texts and textual analysis dominate
the contributions, but other items of evidence, especially in the material record, deserve increased
attention. In a brief footnote, for example, the editors state the need for further work on two potentially
illustrative categories of evidence, Roman military diplomata and portable sundials.7 As illustrated
elsewhere, maps or at least geographic images, however incomplete their survival or fuzzy their
reconstructions, may also provide a fruitful area of further study.8 Cicero correctly bemoaned the
difficult task of writing geography (Ad. Att. 2.4; 2.6). Like Atticus we should continue to encourage
further research, and thankfully, unlike Atticus, we can expect results.

Notes:
1. See for example Talbert, R., ed., The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World (Princeton 2000) and Pleiades, the digital gazetteer that offers both precise coordinates and orthographies for ancient places.
3. Those interested in the present volume’s themes should also see the contributions collected in Geus, K. and Rathmann, M., eds., Vermessung der Oikumene, (Berlin 2013).
6. See, for example, Talbert, R., “Rome’s Provinces as a Framework for World-View,” in Roman Rule and Civic Life: Local and Regional Perspectives, ed. L. de Ligt et al., (Amsterdam 2004), 21-37.

BOOKS: 3, on Akhenaten
From <http://www.icontact-archive.com/9BwG8tBcsCW6ZOspnXfR3abviJnGj3O+w=4>:

Pharaoh Akhenaten, who reigned for seventeen years in the fourteenth century B.C.E, is one of the most intriguing rulers of ancient Egypt. His odd appearance and his preoccupation with worshipping the sun disc Aten have stimulated academic discussion and controversy for more than a century. Despite the numerous books and articles about this enigmatic figure, many questions about Akhenaten and the Atenism religion remain unanswered.
In Akhenaten and the Origins of Monotheism, James K. Hoffmeier argues that Akhenaten was not, as is often said, a radical advocating a new religion but rather a primitivist: that is, one who reaches back to a golden age and emulates it. Akhenaten's inspiration was the Old Kingdom (2650-2400 B.C.E.), when the sun-god Re/Atum ruled as the unrivaled head of the Egyptian pantheon. Hoffmeier finds that Akhenaten was a genuine convert to the worship of Aten, the sole creator God, based on the Pharaoh's own testimony of a theophany, a divine encounter that launched his monotheistic religious odyssey.

The book also explores the Atenist religion's possible relationship to Israel's religion, offering a close comparison of the hymn to the Aten to Psalm 104, which has been identified by scholars as influenced by the Egyptian hymn.

Through a careful reading of key texts, artworks, and archaeological studies, Hoffmeier provides compelling new insights on a religion that predated Moses and Hebrew monotheism, the impact of Atenism on Egyptian religion and politics, and the aftermath of Akhenaten's reign.

2. Assmann, Jan
From Akhenaten to Moses: Ancient Egypt and Religious Change (Oxford University Press, 2014)
Hardcover List: $34.95 Your Price: $26.99 Add to Cart

The shift from polytheism to monotheism changed the world radically. Akhenaten and Moses—a figure of history and a figure of tradition—symbolize this shift in its incipient, revolutionary stages and represent two civilizations that were brought into the closest connection as early as the Book of Exodus, where Egypt stands for the old world to be rejected and abandoned in order to enter the new one.

The seven chapters of this seminal study shed light on the great transformation from different angles. Between Egypt in the first chapter and monotheism in the last, five chapters deal in various ways with the transition from one to the other, analyzing the Exodus myth, understanding the shift in terms of evolution and revolution, confronting Akhenaten and Moses in a new way, discussing Karl Jaspers' theory of the Axial Age, and dealing with the eighteenth-century view of the Egyptian mysteries as a cultural model.

3. Dodson, Aidan
Amarna Sunrise: Egypt from Golden Age to Age of Heresy (Oxford University Press, 2014) Hardcover List: $29.95 Your Price: $20.99 Add to Cart

The latter part of the fifteenth century BC saw Egypt's political power reach its zenith, with an empire that stretched from beyond the Euphrates in the north to much of what is now Sudan in the south. The wealth that flowed into Egypt allowed its kings to commission some of the most stupendous temples of all time, some of the greatest dedicated to Amun-Re, King of the Gods. Yet a century later these temples lay derelict, the god's images, names, and titles all erased in an orgy of iconoclasm by Akhenaten, the devotee of a single sun-god. This book traces the history of Egypt from the death of the great warrior-king Thutmose III to the high point of Akhenaten's reign, when the known world brought gifts to his newly-built capital city of Amarna, in particular looking at the way in which the cult of the sun became increasingly important to even 'orthodox' kings, culminating in the transformation of Akhenaten's father, Amenhotep III, into a solar deity in his own right.
LECTURES: The Iranian Jewish community... (London, Feb 4)

From <http://www.iranheritage.org/Iranian-Jewish_Community/default.htm>:
[Go there for links to tix]
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The Iranian Jewish community:
A short survey of their history from the Achaemenid to the Qajar Lecture

Wednesday 4 February, 6.30pm
Asia House, 63 New Cavendish Street London W1G 7LP

Organised by
Iran Heritage Foundation and Iranian Jewish Centre.

Abstract
Iran is the only country in the Middle East where there has been a continuous Jewish community since 500 BCE. According to both biblical and historical sources, the Jews first came to Iran after they were freed from their Babylonian captivity by Cyrus the Great. Today there are still over 25000 Jews living in Iran as an officially recognized religious minority.

In this talk Mehri Niknam will explore the history of the Iranian Jews with reference to their culture and religion to examine to what extent the Jewish community was affected by the history, culture and religion of their host country.

Biography
Mehri Niknam is the Founder and Executive director of the Joseph Interfaith Foundation, the only national joint Muslim-Jewish interfaith organisation in the UK. She has been a consultant in Muslim-Jewish relations since 1995.

In 2008 she was awarded the Fulbright scholarship in Interfaith and Community Action to teach and research Jewish-Muslim relations in the US. Her contributions to Muslim-Jewish relations were recognised nationally in 2005 when she was awarded the MBE by Her Majesty the Queen. In the same year she was made Honorary Fellow at Leo Baeck College, the only Reform Rabbinic Seminary in Europe. Her academic field is 'Comparative Judaism and Islam in the Middle Ages'. She also studied Classical Persian Literature and has given seminars at various universities in the UK and the US.

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NEWS: Apollo temple in Bulgaria

From <http://popular-archaeology.com/issue/winter-01012015/article/archaeologists-investigate-ancient-greek-temenos-on-black-sea-island>:

Archaeologists Investigate Ancient Greek Temenos on Black Sea Island Mon, Jan 19, 2015 Possible evidence of lost temple of Apollo uncovered.

Sozopol, Bulgaria-A team of archaeologists are discovering new finds on a tiny island just off the Black Sea coast near Sozopol, Bulgaria-finds that may shed additional light on the location and features of a lost temple to Apollo erected by Archaic Greeks in the late 6th century BCE.

Epigraphic sources document that a temple to Apollo was raised on an island near the ancient Greek colony of Apollonia Pontica, which is located near present-day Sozopol. But there has been no evidence to suggest where the temple was actually located-until recently, when an archaeological team under the direction of Kristina Panayotova of the National Institute of Archaeology and Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, unearthed a fragment of East Greek pottery with an inscription dedication to Apollo.

The ancient temple was famous for another reason: It was here, in front of the temple, where a colossal 13-meter high bronze statue of Apollo was raised and dedicated to the Apollo letros (the Healer), the patron deity of Apollonia Pontica.

"In 72 BCE the Romans under Marcus Lucullus sacked the city and the colossal sculpture was taken to Rome as a trophy," state Panatoyova and colleagues in a summery of their excavations project on the island. "It was exhibited for several centuries on the Capitoline Hill."* It has been lost to the world since the advent of the Christian era, as has the exact location of the temple.

Panayotova's teams have been conducting excavations at the site since 2009, and have thus far uncovered evidence of Greek settlement here going back as far as the 7th century BCE and a late 6th-early 5th century BCE Archaic Greek temple complex which may be the lost temple of Apollo. Other finds included remains of a temple from the 4th century BCE Hellenistic period; an ancient Greek tholos; an ancient Greek copper foundry; an early Byzantine basilica and necropolis; two ritual pits from the Archaic period containing numerous artifacts; several early Christian 5th century CE graves; structures dated to the Archaic period; and many other finds.

Apollonia Pontica is considered among the earliest urban Greek settlements on the Western Black Sea coast. The city acquired its name in honor of its patron deity, Apollo, and was founded by the philosopher Anaximander and Miletian colonists around 610 BC., becoming an important center of trade between ancient Greece and Thrace. Strong, prosperous and independent for centuries, it was finally
conquered by the Roman legions under Marcus Lucullus in 72 BCE. The city thereafter became known as Apollonia Magna, or Great Apollonia. Its name was changed to Sozopol during the Christian period in the 4th century CE.

Panayotova and colleagues plan to return to continue excavations at the site in 2015, and will be operating a field school for students and volunteers. "The Field School Season 2015 envisions excavations at the top of the island, in the area of the Archaic and Classical Greek and Hellenistic temples, Ancient Greek copper foundry and the Early Christian basilica and necropolis, where the excavations from 2012 take place," state Panayotova and colleagues.* More information about Apollonia Pontica and the field school can be obtained at the project website.

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**CALLS FOR PAPERS: EABS (Cordoba, Spain, 12-15 July)**

From Athaliah Brenner, A. [mailto:A.Brenner@uva.nl]

The Bible in Arabic in Judaism, Christianity, Islam is a new Programme at the European Association of Biblical Studies (EABS, [http://www.eabs.net/site/](http://www.eabs.net/site/))

The Programme description:

Shortly after the expansion of Muslim rule in the 7th and 8th centuries CE, Christians, Jews, and Samaritans living in the Muslim world began to translate their sacred texts— the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament and the Samaritan Pentateuch— into Arabic. Many of these translations, from languages such as Hebrew, Greek, Syriac and Coptic, have come down to us in a vast corpus of manuscripts and fragments hailing from monasteries, synagogues and libraries, especially in the Middle East. Compared to other translation traditions of the Bible throughout its history, the Arabic versions in manuscript and later on in print are the most numerous and reveal an unusually large variety in stylistic and didactic approaches, vocabulary, scripts and ideologies. Although originally intended for internal consumption by the different denominations that produced them, the translations were also quoted and adapted by Muslim writers, who were familiar with many biblical episodes and characters through the Qur'an. The study of Arabic translations of the Bible has only recently started to come into its own, but much remains to be done. We invite papers on the various aspects of the production and reception of the Arabic Bible outlined above.

Call for Papers for the EABS Conference in Córdoba, Spain, 12-15 July 2015 For the Cordoba conference in 2015 two sessions are envisaged: one of a more general nature and one dedicated to a specific topic. For the first we welcome papers dealing with translations of isolated verses, chapters or entire books from the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament that were produced in the Middle Ages by Jews or Christians belonging to different denominations. Papers may address stylistic approaches, vocabulary, use of script (e.g., Hebrew or Syriac), ideologies (e.g., literal versus explanatory) or specific doctrinal outlooks of the translations. Another focus of interest is genuine quotations from the Bible in works by medieval Muslim writers.

For the specialized session, entitled "The Bible in the language of Islam", we invite papers examining the use of Islamic, and especially Qur'anic vocabulary and stylistic features in Arabic translations of the Bible produced by Jews, Christians or Samaritans. And see [http://www.eabs.net/site/research-groups/the-bible-in-arabic-in-judaism-christianity-islam/](http://www.eabs.net/site/research-groups/the-bible-in-arabic-in-judaism-christianity-islam/).
FELLOWSHIPS: 2 PhD researchers for 'Reconfiguring Diaspora, the Transformation of the Jewish Diaspora in Late Antiquity' (Utrecht)


==================================================================

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Job description

You will work within the framework of a project entitled Reconfiguring Diaspora. The Transformation of the Jewish Diaspora in Late Antiquity. The project has been funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (N.W.O.). The project’s director is Prof. dr. Leonard V. Rutgers. You will be based at Utrecht University. There you will be part of the Department of History and Art History, Section Ancient History and Classical Civilization.

The prime objective of the research project is to reconfigure the classical notion of Diaspora by studying the massive social and cultural changes that affected Jewish communities throughout the Mediterranean during the transitional period that saw the demise of the classical world and the rise of medieval society. This project places special emphasis on the phenomenon of linguistic change as it seeks to come to a new understanding of the larger social and cultural patterns at play in named process. Questions to be addressed include: why and how were the Jewish communities of the Diaspora marginalized, how did this affect their Diasporic self-consciousness, and what factors explain why intragroup relations in Europe have developed along the lines laid down during precisely this period?

Within the project, two PhD positions and one Postdoc position are available for the following projects: The Renaissance of Hebrew among the Jewish communities of the West (PhD) The Renaissance of Hebrew and Aramaic among the Jewish communities of the East (PhD) The Construction of Eretz Israel in
The project has been structured in such a way that PhD and the postdoc candidates are expected to cooperate closely and intensively with one another and with the project leader. You must be willing to do some research travel and are also expected to participate in the organization of several international conferences and in the writing of occasional blogs for the project’s website.

Requirements
A successful candidate should preferably have:

For PhD position 1: a (research) master degree in Jewish history or in classics, with an outstanding record of undergraduate and master’s degree work. You should possess a good working knowledge of rabbinic Hebrew, and passable working knowledge of classical Greek, and Latin. Knowledge of Italian and familiarity with epigraphy is a plus.

For PhD position 2: a (research) master degree in Jewish history or in classics, with an outstanding record of undergraduate and master’s degree work. You should possess a good working knowledge of rabbinic Hebrew and Aramaic. Knowledge of classical Greek and Latin and familiarity with papyrology is a plus.

Additionally:

- a willingness and ability to engage with archaeological contexts; excellent knowledge of English, both verbally and in writing, as English will be the project’s primary language; the capacity to work both as a creative and independent researcher and as part of a team.

Conditions of employment
Utrecht University offers an 1,0 fte appointment, beginning May 1st 2015, consisting of an initial period of 18 months which, after a satisfactory first year, will be extended by another 30 months (4 years in total), with a gross monthly salary starting at € 2.083,- in the first year, ending at € 2.664,- in the fourth year on a fulltime basis.

Utrecht University offers a pension scheme, a holiday allowance of 8% per year, an end-of-year bonus of 8.3% and flexible employment conditions. Conditions are based on the Collective Employment Agreement of the Dutch Universities.

Organisation
Utrecht University strives for excellence in teaching and study performance. This also holds for the clearly defined research profiles with respect to four core themes: Sustainability, Life Sciences, Dynamics of Youth, and Institutions. Utrecht University has a strong commitment to community outreach and contributes to answering the social questions of today and tomorrow.

The Faculty of Humanities has around 7,000 students and 900 staff members. It comprises four knowledge domains:
- Philosophy and Religious Studies
- History and Art History
- Media and Culture Studies and Languages, Literature and Communication.

With its research and education in these fields, the Faculty aims to contribute to a better understanding of the Netherlands and Europe in a rapidly changing social and cultural context. The enthusiastic and motivated colleagues and the excellent facilities in the historic town centre of Utrecht, where the Faculty is located, provide a stimulating professional atmosphere.
Are you interested? For more information please contact the project leader, Prof Dr L.V. Rutgers: l.v.rutgers@uu.nl.

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**eREVIEWS: Of "Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World"**
From <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2015/2015-01-22.html>:

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Bryn Mawr Classical Review 2015.01.22

Reviewed by Christine Shepardson, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (cshepard@utk.edu)

Andrade's book is a welcome contribution to the growing collection of scholarship that integrates methodological sophistication and academic rigor in its study of Roman Syria. As Andrade writes in his Preface, the "main interest" of his book is "to show how idioms and practices in circulation among various Near Eastern societies were domesticated by Greek communities and embedded in Greek practice" (xvii). Although the book is not an easy read, it makes a significant contribution to scholarship, not only by re-reading textual and material evidence but more importantly by changing how scholars think and write about Syrians in antiquity.

The book consists of an introduction, conclusion, eleven chapters arranged thematically and roughly chronologically in three sections, and a useful collection of maps. The Introduction provides a valuable overview of the book. Some readers may find the twenty-one page chapter-synopsis excessive, but although it leads to some redundancy, it also provides a thorough introduction to the work's complex method and arguments. "Parts I and II stress how Syrians could create both Greek and 'barbarian' cultural expressions that deviated from classical expectations," while "Part III maintains that Syrians expressed a consciousness that classical Greekness was an artifice that could be de-constructed or displaced by alternative forms" (240).

One challenge raised by the book for some readers will be Andrade's writing style, which is learned but dense. In an effort to engage with a wide range of theorists, including "Bourdieu, Bakhtin, Butler, Foucault, Lacan, and various post-colonial thinkers" such as Homi Bhabha (2n6), Andrade writes, for example, of "discursive and performative fields" (3) and of "signs" that "are pregnant with polyvalent, unstable, and 'multiform' significances" (2). While this allows for a sophisticated and nuanced argument, his concentrated usage of specialized vocabulary may obfuscate his meaning for some readers. Ironically, the book also repeats its main points more than necessary. Although this is not the most desirable way to address concerns about clarity, at least it ensures that readers will follow the key claims.

Part I, on "Greek poleis and the Syrian ethnos" from the second century BCE to the first century CE, begins with Chapter 1 on Antiochus IV. Antiochus poses an interesting case study, Andrade demonstrates, because he broke with the Seleucid tradition that "Greek citizenship generally belonged to ethnic Greeks" (44). Coins issued in the Near East under Antiochus IV exhibit local iconographic
traditions alongside or transformed by Greek iconography, what scholars traditionally describe as "creolization, hybridity, the Middle Ground" (38). Rather than stress the dilution of an immutable "Greekness," Andrade counters that these coins represent "innovative forms of Greekness" (53). This, alongside his "establishment of a Greek politeia in Jerusalem" reveal that Antiochus allowed "the incorporation of local ethnicities into Greek civic communities" in ways that had never happened before (55). While Andrade argues that Antiochus' experiment ultimately failed, the changes that Antiochus implemented facilitated later redefinitions of "Greekness" under Roman rule (65).

Chapter 2 examines "the Near East" from 63 to 31 BCE, particularly through some of the work of Cicero, who spent time as the provincial governor of Cilicia. This study demonstrates that while Romans allowed for the possibility of people from a variety of ethnic origins becoming "Greek," Romans often wrote about this acquired "Greekness" as a theatrical performance that was "culturally illegitimate" (72). Antiochus I of Commagene is Andrade's prime example, a local leader who expressed his authority at the sanctuary of Nemrud Dağ in terms that his subjects saw as a regional expression of Greek authority, but that Cicero disparaged. Nevertheless, it was, Andrade argues, Rome's "patronage of 'imitation' Greek cities. that facilitated Syria's integration into Rome's provincial landscape" and later allowed Syrians "to advocate the legitimacy of their Greek and Roman performances" (93).

Chapter 3 concludes Part I with a study of "Syrian Greeks of the Roman Near East" from 31 BCE to 73 CE. Andrade studies "client dynasts" such as Herod, these dynasts' adaptation of Roman cultural markers, and the potential for local discord that this created, such as many Jews' increased isolation from these new cultural expressions. While this case study is relevant, Andrade's treatment of Judaism lacks the sophistication of his other material, and where followers of Jesus fit into the picture is left largely unexplored. This chapter does raise interesting points about the evolution of the category "Syrian," concluding that "many Syrians of diverse ethnic and social affiliations. cast themselves as Greek citizens and members of the Roman imperial Syrian ethnos" (112). Nevertheless, while Andrade consistently challenges the false polarity of "Greek" and "Syrian," he is less careful with the category of "Jews," which he continues to place in opposition to "Greeks," even as he expands the latter category to include a variety of local ethnicities (115). His central point, however, remains: "Instead of ambiguously referencing hybridity, creolization, and terms that similarly index the amorphous space between immutable binary traditions, one can discuss the reconstitution of Greekness and Syrianness as intersecting categories that shared many of the same polyvalent symbols" (119).

Part II, "Greek collectives in Syria (first to third centuries CE)," consists of four chapters, two that study the region's cities more broadly, and two case studies, of Palmyra and Dura-Europos. Chapter 4 shows how "Greek poleis of Roman imperial Syria constituted performative and discursive frameworks" that allowed non-Greeks to engage with and reshape symbols of Greek culture (127). Urban writers' discrimination against "peasants," for example, facilitated "the social cohesion of ethnic Greeks and Syrians" who shared urban Greek citizenship (136). This reshaping of Greekness allowed a new variety of ethnicities and traditions to become "Greek" in a non-classical definition of the term. Chapter 5 continues this argument through a study of "the epigraphic documents and monumentalized spaces" of Antioch, Apamea, and Gersasa (150). These two chapters show that Roman Syrians "transformed how Greekness was constituted and who could participate in Greek citizen discourse and performance," particularly through the structures of Syria's Greek poleis (170).

Chapter 6 examines the city of Palmyra and its construction of a distinctly un-classical form of Greekness that reflected a significant continuity with local "Near Eastern" traditions that preceded Roman rule. Andrade usefully challenges academic representations of Roman Palmyra as having "a superficial layer
disguising a truly 'oriental' essence" (209), and insists in contrast that "the Palmyrene civic council and citizen body produced and expressed an innovative form of civic Greekness" that scholars should recognize as such (210). Chapter 7 focuses on Dura-Europos, where Romans also granted "Greek" status to people of varying local ethnicities. Andrade argues that this in turn "stimulated new types of people to become insiders of Greek civic orders in ways that transformed the types of Greekness that could be performed" (240).

While Parts I and II provide important examples of Andrade's thesis through a focus primarily on a handful of examples from material culture, Part III (Chapters 8-11) shifts to a literary analysis of the works of Lucian of Samosata. Andrade shows an impressive breadth of expertise in his survey of material and literary culture over a wide span of time and space, but Part III seems the most comfortable and is the easiest to read.

Chapter 8 lays the foundation for the following chapters by framing "the socio-cultural context that Lucian, Syrian Christian writers, and Palmyrene insurgents confronted" (245). Andrade persuasively argues that Roman perceptions of the "barbarian" ethnicities of the Roman Near East worked hand in hand with a redefinition and revaluation of classical Greekness in the Second Sophistic to ensure that only classicizing models were recognized as legitimate expressions of Greekness in the second and third centuries (247). Such understandings by default "relegated the Near East to its margins," even if "many Syrians were descended from Greeks or cultivated Greek cultural characteristics" (251). This in turn left Syrians open to charges of deceit for performing versions of Greekness from the margins.

Chapters 9 and 10 argue that Lucian actively critiqued such Roman categories and stereotypes (260), "writing back" from the periphery (288). In Chapter 9 Andrade focuses on Lucian with brief references to Justin Martyr and Tatian, showing how each challenged stereotypes of Syrians and sophists as uncultured and cultured, respectively. This is done most productively through Andrade's study of the term doxa, translated here as an "appearance of reality that often obscures or distorts knowledge of the real or true" (262-3). These Syrian authors argued that "sophists deceptively generated classical models and 'origins' [of Greekness] through their performative acts" (277). This in turn allowed Syrians to critique "the performance of a sophistic Greek culture and the centrality of its classical forms, as stabilized and staged by Roman power" (287), undermining its normativity.

Chapter 10 is a careful analysis of Lucian's On the Syrian Goddess, which likewise represents "the binary of Greek subject and Syrian spectacle, as a doxa" that masks the real similarity between these two apparent opposites (291). Andrade's thoughtful analysis suggests that Lucian's text "renders boundaries between 'Greek' and 'barbarian' categories incoherent, and it maps how Syrian culture integrated Greek idioms and intersected with Greek culture," thereby challenging Roman narratives that denigrated and marginalized Syrians" (292). Andrade concludes that Lucian's text "stages a meta-doxa through which the author interrogates and examines the production of cultural categories that sophists created through performance. It maps how Syrians produced (As)Syrian culture by cultivating Greek idioms, and it shows how they could constitute 'Greek' and '(As)Syrian' as intersecting, shifting categories expressed by the same signs and not possessing clear, coherent boundaries" (312). Chapter 11 argues that as Roman Syrians continued to perform locally colored versions of Greekness, they "increasingly located Syria as the center of a Greek and Roman imperial landscape" (316). Palmyra's third-century zenith under Zenobia is Andrade's example par excellence.

The book shows "how diverse performances of Greekness (with Syrianness and Romanness) were in antiquity" (343). One of Andrade's most important contributions, although it is somewhat surprising
that he does not engage with Edward Said's work, is his warning to scholars against following ancient sources that classify "the Roman Near East's inhabitants as 'other' to contrast them with classical proto-westerners" (343). Rejecting academic descriptions of Roman Syria that highlight its "creolization, hybridity, bricolage," Andrade reminds readers that Syrians "realigned and reconstituted what could be experienced as pure or authentic categories" (344). Roman Syrians were not a less authentic hybrid of Greekness and local traditions; they were a new expression of Greekness, redefined but recognizable and as legitimate as any other.

Andrade's book offers an important correction to scholarship that perpetuates a false stability for a classical notion of "Greekness" and represents Syrians as necessarily non-Greek. The book also brings theoretical sophistication to scholarship on Roman Syria. On the other hand, it relies on disparate test cases such as an inscription or a coin to generalize much more broadly, usually about Roman Syria and sometimes about "the Near East," a category that could use better definition. Andrade's discussions of Jews and Christians lack his characteristic nuance in comparison to his facility with a wide range of other topics; and while his integration of sophisticated methodological concepts is laudable and will change academic conversations for the better, the unnecessarily dense writing will impose some limits on the book's audience. These concerns aside, the book is of great importance in both its method and its content for the study of Roman Syria and the surrounding region from the Seleucid period through the early Roman Empire. Scholars will benefit a great deal from Andrade's impressive contribution to, and reshaping of, these ongoing discussions.

INTERVIEWS: With Maggie Anton

Author of historical novels to speak at Jacksonville Jewish Center Maggie Anton's 2 most recent books inspired by ancient Jewish magic. Her latest novel, "Enchantress," is a love story set in fourth-century Babylonia.
By David Crumpler Mon, Jan 19, 2015 @ 12:01 pm

Author Maggie Anton spent years researching an ancient world filled with blessings, curses and demons to write her two most recent historical novels. The magic and sorcery of fourth-century Babylonia proved to be irresistible topics for the Talmud scholar and expert in Jewish women's history.

They became an integral part of "Rav Hisda's Daughter: Apprentice," published in 2012, and "Enchantress," which came out last fall. Both works combine ancient Jewish magic with Talmudic lore and romance to tell the story of one of the most frequently mentioned women in the Talmud, a compendium of Jewish oral law and stories 1,500 years old.

Anton will be speaking about ancient Jewish magic at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Jacksonville Jewish Center in Mandarin. The event is free.

She didn't expect to become a writer or a Jewish scholar, she said in a telephone interview from her home in Los Angeles. She was working as a clinical chemist for Kaiser Permanente when she enrolled in a class and "fell in love with the Talmud" in 1992.
Anton became intrigued by the fact that Rashi, an 11th-century French rabbi and author of a comprehensive commentary on the Talmud, had no sons, but three daughters. According to legend, they were very learned at a time when women were traditionally forbidden to study the sacred texts.

She decided to research the family, and began writing her first series of books, the "Rashi's Daughters" trilogy. She eventually quit her day job to become a full-time writer and lecturer in 2006.

Here's more from the recent interview:

*What can your audience expect on Wednesday?

Even though I'm an author of novels, I don't read from my books, and I don't really talk about the writing process. I talk as a scholar about the research behind my novels, about the amazing things that I learned, [in this case] about ancient Jewish magic and how pervasive it was. It wasn't confined to the Jews of the first five centuries. Magic was what everybody did, particularly for healing. They didn't know about viruses or bacteria. Everybody thought that what caused illness or misfortune in general were demons or the evil eye. It's interesting that even in the 21st century, I don't have to tell anyone what demons or the evil eye are.

I talk about the history of the magic that was done then, the amulets, the incantation bowls. The Jewish sorceresses were apparently quite prominent professionals in this field. Not like we imagined witches, they didn't live in caves, and people didn't sneak off to see them. They were considered healers.

*How did you make the leap from researching ancient Jewish magic to writing a historical novel?

Actually, the historical novel part came first. There's a woman in the Talmud, Rav Hisda's daughter ... She's a child in her father's classroom, he's teaching a bunch of boys and young men how to do Jewish law, so they can get jobs working in the Jewish courts ... and so she's in the classroom, and suddenly her father calls up his two best students, and asks her, "Who do you want to marry?" And this is very strange, because most girls in fourth-century Babylonia didn't get a choice of anybody, let alone a choice of two, and he doesn't ask her in a private room someplace, he asks her with the two suitors standing right in front of her, and in front of the whole class, and she replies, "Both of them." Which is pretty gutsy.

After a lengthy silence, the younger of the two says, "I'll be the last one." And the Talmud tells us that is indeed what happened. That first she marries the older one, and then she has some kids with him, and then she's widowed, somewhat young, and then she marries the other one, and has more kids and lives happily ever after with him.

In wanting to tell her story, I started researching through the Talmud what it said about her family. I discovered that ... this whole family is doing sorcery. And that means sorcery is going to have to be part of this book.

*The daughter's name is Hisdadukh.

The Talmud just calls her Rav Hisda's daughter. ... One of the things I found from looking at these incantation bowls where they all name the clients was that a lot of the women, maybe a quarter or a third of the female clients, their name was something or other "dukh," which is ancient Persian for daughter. They were named after their father, so I thought Hisdadukh was actually her name.
My daughter said, "Oh, that's a terrible name, nobody can pronounce it, you've got to give her a nickname." But I said that's probably her name. I try to be really accurate and authentic. I did give her a nickname at my daughter's insistence. I called her "Dada," which is also a name I saw on an incantation bowl. Anyway, that's what I ended up having the family call her, just to make it easier on my poor readers.

*You didn't grow up in an observant household.
I need to clarify that. I didn't grow up in a religious household. My family, we were secular, with socialist leanings, but I still got a Jewish education. I went to, from the age of 6 to 12, something called kinder shul, which was put on by the Workmen's Circle people, and I learned Yiddish, and I learned Jewish history, and about Jewish culture. I was growing up in the 1950s, so the land of Israel existed as a modern state, and I learned about that. So I did have quite a bit of Jewish education, just not religious education. I didn't go to synagogue, I didn't learn the prayers. I didn't learn Hebrew.

After I got married, my husband and I were living in Glendale [Calif.], and we got very involved in the synagogue there. So this whole world was opened up that I didn't know about as a child.

*You also took a Talmud class for women.
I admit I signed up for it not because I had any great knowledge of Talmud - my knowledge of Talmud consisted of reading "The Chosen" by Chaim Potok - but because it was forbidden to women [to study]. If I was a man, I probably never would have studied Talmud, my husband had very little interest, but all you have to do is make something forbidden and it becomes much more attractive. So I signed up for the class just to see what is this forbidden stuff, and I fell in love with the Talmud. It became my passion.

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**PoSTDOCS: The Transformation of the Jewish Diaspora in Late Antiquity (Utrecht)**


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Specifications - (explanation)
Location Faculty of Humanities
Function types Research, Development, Innovation, Postdoc positions
Scientific fields Language and Culture
Hours 32.0 - 40.0 hours per week
Salary € 3037 - € 3831 (gross per month, see below)
Education Doctorate
Job number 709754
Translations en
About employer Utrecht University
Short link www.academictransfer.com/26155
Apply for this job within 26 days

Job description
You will work within the framework of a project entitled Reconfiguring Diaspora. The Transformation of the Jewish Diaspora in Late Antiquity. The project has been funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (N.W.O.). The project's director is Prof. dr. Leonard V. Rutgers. You will be based at
Utrecht University. There you will be part of the Department of History and Art History, Section Ancient History and Classical Civilization.

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The Renaissance of Hebrew among the Jewish communities of the West (PhD) The Renaissance of Hebrew and Aramaic among the Jewish communities of the East (Ph.D.) The Construction of Eretz Israel in Rabbinic Literature (postdoc)

The project has been structured in such a way that PhD/postdoc candidates are expected to cooperate closely and intensively with one another and with the project leader. Candidates must be willing to do some research travel and are also expected to participate in the organization of several international conferences and in the writing of occasional blogs for the project’s website.

Requirements
A successful candidate should preferably have:
- a PhD in Jewish studies or any related pertinent field (manuscript submitted to the dissertation committee), with an excellent working knowledge of rabbinic literature, in particular the ability to work independently on materials from the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds; excellent knowledge of English, both verbally and in writing, as English will be the project’s primary language; the capacity to work both as a creative and independent researcher and as part of a team.

Conditions of employment
We offer a postdoc-position for 0,8-1,0 fte beginning May 1st 2015. Initially, there is a one year contract. After a positive evaluation this contract can be extended with a maximum of three years in total. Salary ranges between € 3.037,- and € 3.831,- gross per month on a fulltime basis depending on experience and qualifications.

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Media and Culture Studies and Languages, Literature and Communication.
With its research and education in these fields, the Faculty aims to contribute to a better understanding of the Netherlands and Europe in a rapidly changing social and cultural context.
The enthusiastic and motivated colleagues and the excellent facilities in the historic town centre of Utrecht, where the Faculty is located, provide a stimulating professional atmosphere.

Additional information
Are you interested? For more information please contact the project leader, Prof Dr L.V. Rutgers: l.v.rutgers@uu.nl

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**ePETITIONS: To change the Italian habilitation system**
From Maria Giovanna Biga <vanna.biga@gmail.com>:

More than 160 colleague from around the world have already placed their names to a petition that denounces the outcome of the 2012 Italian National Scientific Qualifications in the crucial sector 10/N1 (Cultures of the Ancient Near East, Middle East and Africa).

The commission that assessed the qualifications of candidates competing for university chairs made its decision with just a small number of experts with competence or skill to judge this particular area of knowledge (sector 10/N1). It failed to expand its expertise even when legally permitted to consult with external specialists in such areas as Jewish studies, Assyriology, History of the ancient Near East, History of Religions in Antiquity, Biblical Studies, and Egyptology.


Please go there for a longer description of this unhappy condition. We hope that you will join us in this appeal by signing it.

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**NEWS: Reading the Herculaneum Scrolls**
From <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/21/science/more-progress-made-toward-learning-contents-of-herculaneum-scrolls.html>:

More Progress Made Toward Learning Contents of Herculaneum Scrolls By NICHOLAS

Researchers have found a key that may unlock the only library of classical antiquity to survive along with its documents, raising at least a possibility of recovering vanished works of ancient Greek and Roman authors such as the lost books of Livy's history of Rome.
The library is that of a villa in Herculaneum, a town that was destroyed in A.D. 79 by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius that obliterated nearby Pompeii. Though Pompeii was engulfed by lava, a mix of superhot gases and ash swept over Herculaneum, preserving the documents in a grand villa that probably belonged to the family of Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, the father-in-law of Julius Caesar.

Though the hot gases did not burn the many papyrus rolls in the villa's library, they turned them into cylinders of carbonized plant material. Many attempts have been made to unroll the carbonized scrolls since they were excavated in 1752. But all were highly destructive, and scholars eventually decided to leave the scrolls alone in the hope that better methods would be invented. More than 300 scrolls survive more or less intact, with many more fragments.

Researchers led by Vito Mocella, of the Institute for Microelectronics and Microsystems in Naples, Italy, now say that for the first time, they can read letters inside the scrolls without unrolling them. Using a laserlike beam of X-rays from the European Synchrotron in Grenoble, France, they were able to pick up the very slight contrast between the carbonized papyrus fibers and the ancient ink, soot-based and also made of carbon.

The contrast has allowed them to recognize individual Greek letters from the interior of the roll, Dr. Mocella's team reported on Tuesday in the journal Nature Communications. "At least we know there are techniques able to read inside the papyri, finally," Dr. Mocella said in an interview. His team is considering several ways to refine the power of their technique.

"If the technology is perfected, it will be a real leap forward," said Richard Janko, a classical scholar at the University of Michigan who has translated some of the few scrolls that can be read.

The Mocella team's work is the second recent advance in reading the Herculaneum scrolls. In 2009, Brent Seales, a computer scientist at the University of Kentucky, succeeded in delineating the physical structure of a Herculaneum scroll by X-ray-computed tomography, a process similar to a CT scan. The layers of papyrus wound up inside the scroll are highly ruffled and irregular because the hot gases liberated all the water from the fibers as well as carbonizing them.

The Mocella team's method visualizes letters free floating inside the scroll, but each letter will need to be assigned to its correct place on Dr. Seales's surface before the letters can form words. Dr. Seales and Dr. Mocella worked with Herculaneum scrolls acquired by Napoleon in 1802 and belonging to the Institut de France in Paris.

"This is absolutely a major step forward," Dr. Seales said of the Mocella report. "These guys are focused on showing the imagery with best contrast. But to really read the papyrus, you need to untangle its surface, which is the active area of my work."

Classical scholars are particularly interested in the physicists' progress because of the chance of uncovering lost works of Latin and Greek literature. Piso's grand villa - which is the model for the Getty Villa, part of the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles - is thought to have probably contained a large and wide-ranging library, much of which may still exist in unexcavated portions of the building.

"It would have been odd for a villa of this sort not to have had a major library," Dr. Janko said. "So this technology, when perfected, does open the way to rediscovering a lot more ancient literature."
The scrolls that have been opened pertain mostly to Greek philosophy and contain several works by Epicurus and his adherent Philodemus. But the library may also have had a Latin section. This could contain some of the many lost works of Roman history and literature. Even the texts of known works would be of great interest.

"For a scholar, it would be wonderful to have a manuscript of Virgil written in his lifetime because what we have are medieval manuscripts which have suffered many changes at the hands of copyists," said David Sider, a professor of classics at New York University.

BOOKS: Les baux ruraux en Grèce ancienne: Corpus épigraphique et étude
From http://www.mom.fr/publications/les-collections-de-la-msh-mom/tmo/les-baux-ruraux-dans-la-gr%C3%A8ce-ancienne:

Vient de paraître aux Publications de la MOM

LES BAX RURAUX EN GRÈCE ANCIENNE
CORPUS ÉPIGRAPHIQUE ET ÉTUDE
ISABELLE PERNIN

75 €

Ce livre contient 259 inscriptions grecques antiques relatives à la pratique locative en milieu rural (location de terres agricoles et de bâtiments construits sur ces terres). Si ce recueil ne comporte aucun inédit, il rassemble pour la première fois des documents publiés dans des éditions très variées et pour certains jamais traduits en français. Les inscriptions conservées proviennent essentiellement de Grèce continentale, des îles de la mer Égée ou d’Asie Mineure et sont concentrées sur les quatre derniers siècles avant J.-C.

This book contains 259 Ancient Greek inscriptions dealing with the leasing of land. This collection contains no unpublished inscription but for the first time brings together documents published in very varied editions and for some, never translated into French. The inscriptions available today mostly come from continental Greece, the Aegean Islands and Asia Minor. Most documents date back to the last four centuries B.C.

CALLS FOR PAPERS: "The Qur’an and the Biblical Tradition (IQSA)" (SBL, Atlanta)
From Athalya Brenner, A. [mailto:A.Brenner@uva.nl]:

Biblia Arabica Consultation, SBL Annual Meeting in Atlanta, November 2015

The Biblia Arabica Project (http://biblia-arabica.com/) now has an SBL Consultation. The Unit's description on the SBL site is: "Jews, Christians, and Samaritans living under Muslim rule translated their sacred scriptures into Arabic. Interest in this vast treasure of texts has grown, and their contribution to the history of interpretation and religious history is considerable. This consultation will discuss these
Here is our CfP for 2015: "The "Biblia Arabica" Consultation invites paper proposals for a joint session with the "The Qur’an and the Biblical Tradition (IQSA)" Unit, on the topic: "The Bible is at the same time everywhere and nowhere in the Arabic Qur’an" (Sidney H. Griffith): Case Studies and Reflections. This session aims at studying the elaboration and treatment of specific biblical themes in the Qur’an and by its interpreters. Case studies may be on divine revelation, attitudes to class, violence and destruction, attitudes to women, prophets and prophecy, space and time, but do not have to be limited to these. Proposals will reflect explicitly on the theme as articulated by Sidney Griffith, and consider processes of canon formations and renewal on the basis of earlier canons. (Our second session will be an invited Panel)."

If you're interested in proposing a paper, please enter it on the SBL site (http://sbl-site.org/meetings/congresses_proposeapaper.aspx?meetingid=27&volunteerunitid=669) and/or contact Athalya Brenner-Idan (a.brenner@uva.nl)

CALLS FOR PAPERS: “Infants as Votive Offerings in Ancient Carthage” (ASOR 2015)

From Brien K. Garnand [mailto:bgarnand@gmail.com]:

ALL FOR PAPERS: MEMBER ORGANIZED PANEL

ASOR Annual Meeting: Atlanta, GA 18-12 Nov 2015 “Infants as Votive Offerings in Ancient Carthage”

The Phoenicians invented the alphabet, established commercial networks, and spread urbanism around the Mediterranean and beyond the straits of Gibraltar, but they were also infamous for allegedly practicing child sacrifice. The Hebrew Bible (e.g. Jeremiah, the Deutonomistic History), Greek historians (e.g. Citarchus, Diodorus) and later Christian apologists (e.g. Tertullian), all condemn the practice and add lurid details—distraught mothers wailing, grimacing infants roasted in the outstretched arms brazen statues, tiny mouths fixed in a rictus of sardonic laughter. In any case, discoveries made at votive infant burial precincts seem to confirm the preferential selection of 1-3 month old infants for dedication. Our workshop brings together specialists contributing to the final report of the ASOR Punic Project excavations at Carthage (1976-1979), but the session is open to other specialists who might provide the historical and archaeological context relating to these votive dedications, both in the metropolis and in their colonies.

Please submit abstracts of 250 words (or less) directly at the ASOR website: http://www.asor.org/am/2015/call-2.html

N.B.
- Abstracts submission deadline - 15 Feb 2015
- Applicants must have paid for ASOR membership and for meeting registration at the time of application (If an abstract is not accepted, the registration fee can be refunded)
- Applicants can be primary author of only one presentation during the meetings
- For procedural details, visit http://www.asor.org/am/2015/call-for-papers.html

If you have questions about this panel, please contact:
Brien Garnand – bgarnand(at)harvard.edu
Joseph Greene - greene5(at)harvard.edu
LECTURES: "By the Rivers of Babylon ... Trauma and Post Traumatic Memory" (Jerusalem, Jan 21)
From Anat Sella-Koren [mailto:marketing@blmj.org]:

Lecture at the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem
Lecture
Wednesdays | 19:30 | Free with Museum admission
21.1 - "By the Rivers of Babylon" (Psalms 137) - Trauma and Post Traumatic Memory Prof. Yair Zakovitch, Hebrew Univ., [In Hebrew]
Advance reservations required, place is limited: 02-5611066

CALLS FOR PAPERS: SBL Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew (SBL 2015)
From Jacobus Naude <naude@ufs.ac.za>:

Call for Papers: SBL Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew Section (Atlanta, Georgia, 21-24 November 2015)

The Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew Section solicits papers for three sessions and a joint session with NAPH. The first session will be non-thematic; papers that address the study of Biblical Hebrew using a well-articulated linguistic method are welcome, and those that apply linguistics to particular Biblical Hebrew texts are especially encouraged. The second session will be topical focussing on "the syntax of edge constructions", including but not limited to such phenomena as left-dislocation, right-dislocation, fronting (topicalization), extraposition, other word-order shifts and pronominal resumption. The third session will be a second topical session considering topics of VP argument structure such as object marking, transitivity, ergativity, case marking, valency and the like.

Papers are also invited for a joint topical session with the NAPH on Editing the Hebrew Bible (the growth and change of biblical texts) and Historical Linguistics (a topic addressed in the recent volume by Robert Rezetko and Ian Young, Historical Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew: Steps Towards an Integrated Approach (Atlanta: SBL, 2014)). Papers should discuss how the growth and change of biblical texts can challenge and contribute to historical linguistics. Papers for all sessions should be grounded in sound linguistic theory and applied to a set of texts in order to further our understanding of the phenomenon under discussion. Please submit your abstract online. Submitters who have not presented a paper previously in the Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew Section are asked also to include the full paper.

To proposal a paper for this session, click here: http://www.sbl-site.org/meetings/Congresses_ProposeAPaper.aspx?MeetingId=27&VolunteerUnitId=95
For more information, contact the Program Unit Chair, Prof Jacobus Naude naude@ufs.ac.za

NEWS: Can you buy genuine antiquities in Israel?
From http://www.haaretz.com/life/archaeology.premium-1.637020
[Go there for pix]

Ha’aretz English Language Edition
Can you buy genuine antiquities in Israel?

Even if you're getting a real artifact from Israelite history, chances are it's not kosher.

By Marty Friedlander

Israel is awash in ruins and plenty of tourists want to take a piece of history home - and they can, sometimes for little more than a history textbook would cost. There are plenty of authorized shops throughout Israel where antiquities are sold. Usually you can be relatively certain that the artifact is genuine, and that it is what the seller says it is. But don't be surprised if he turns coy on details.

If an artifact is being sold openly in Israel, it must conform with the restrictions imposed by the Antiquities Law of 1978, which forbids the sale of any manmade item from before 1700 CE. However, there was a grandfather clause in the law that permitted the sale of items already in the inventory of the antiquities shops. And there are dozens of authorized antiquities shops, many in the Old City of Jerusalem, and in upscale hotels. All offer a certificate of authenticity with each sale.

The upshot is that the salesman may show you a perfectly genuine Hellenistic oil lamp - that he swears has been sitting on the shelf of his shop since Menachem Begin entered office. "What can I do? Sales have been slow." [Wink, wink.] This means, of course, that the lamp was almost certainly robbed from a bona fide site.

Israel is blessed with thousands of archaeological sites and many are virtually unguarded. Just this December the police arrested six men from the village of Seir, near Hebron, for robbing a cave high above the Tze'elim stream in the Judean Desert. The unique artifacts they found included a 2,000-year-old lice comb that most probably belonged to a Judean seeking refuge in the desert during one of the revolts against Rome.

Yet the arrest was the exception to the rule. Most of the thievery goes undetected, and the loot makes its way into the antiquities market.

The stolen stele of Seleucus

Consider, for instance, the Heliodorus stele, which according to media reports was purchased in 2007 by New York financier Michael Steinhardt.

The magnificent 2nd century BCE inscription in Greek, which was "of unknown provenance," included a letter from Seleucus IV to an aide named Heliodorus. But to the frustration of scholars, the bottom of the stele was missing, leaving a gap in the historical tale. No one was saying where the stele was found.

Subsequently, it was realized that three inscribed fragments unearthed in 2005 and 2006 in a cave at Tel Maresha in Israel were in fact the missing pieces of the Heliodorus stele. Tel Maresha head archaeologist Ian Stern distinctly remembers arriving at the site one Sunday morning in 2005 to find that the cave had been "turned upside down"; possibly it was that weekend that the Heliodorus stele was discovered and robbed.

An artifact of "unknown provenance" can be sold; one from Tel Maresha or any other specific place will go to a museum collection or basement.
Which brings us back to the original question: Is that Persian period juglet in the store window genuine?

The shopkeeper will say yes. And most likely, it is. There's such an abundance of genuine material available that it makes no sense to start making counterfeit pots and vessels.

Ah, but was it robbed as part of an illegal excavation? This is a far tougher question, one that if asked is liable to have you thrown out of the store. "Don't ask, don't tell" is the byword of this business.

Coins are different. They are more likely to be counterfeit, several Old City antiquities dealers admitted to this reporter. Archaeologists concur.

No export allowed
While the Antiquities Law permits the sale of some the full gamut of artifacts, it forbids the export of some, including columns and ossuaries (stone boxes for secondary burial of bones). A beautifully carved and ornamented Second Temple-era 2nd temple ossuary can be acquired for as little as $1,500, but cannot leave the country.

Perhaps you are wondering about crossing into Palestinian Authority-controlled areas, thinking there might be fewer restrictions. But it isn't so. The Palestinian Authority strictly enforces a tough antiquities law of its own.

As for the Israeli law - given the improbability of antiquities shops sitting on inventories for decades, one might ask how such a dubious enterprise is allowed to continue. One answer is that by permitting the sale of items of "unknown provenance," even the academic world benefits, such as in the case of the Heliodorus stele. If the inscription had been sold on the black market, it would have never been displayed in public.

An alternative to acquiring antiquities in the somewhat unsavory retail marketplace is to burrow through the stockpile of less-significant shards at an actual dig site. For instance, at Israel's most popular hands-on archaeology-for-a-day program, "Dig for a Day" at Tel Maresha, the staff scrubs, examines and catalogs all of the shards found by the volunteers, and then offers the diggers a chance to take home the discards, which consist mainly of shards that lack identifying features.

For the archaeologist, the piece may be no more than a discard. But when the tourist sees it on her coffee table back home, it conjures up the memory of that day when she felt such a strong physical connection to an ancient culture, that is still very much alive.

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CONFERENCES: Update on "Urbanized landscapes in early Syro-Mesopotamia and prehispanic Mesoamerica" (Bologna, 9-10 February)

From Nicolò Marchetti <nicolo.marchetti@unibo.it>:

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<www.orientlab.net/adams50>

Following the general information circulated on January 4th last, the detailed program of the conference "Urbanized landscapes in early Syro-Mesopotamia and prehispanic Mesoamerica", is given below. The
meeting may also be followed in streaming through the web. Discussions will be recorded and published in the proceedings as well, after an editorial process. Publication will follow the open access format.

Venue: Aula Prodi of the Department of History and Cultures, Piazza San Giovanni in Monte 2, Bologna, Italy.

Program:
9th February, h 14.30
Gary Feinman (Chicago), The comparative investigation of early urbanized landscapes: an interdisciplinary reframing
David Wengrow (London), Cities before the state in early Eurasia
Nicolò Marchetti (Bologna), Conceptualizing urbanized landscapes in early Syro-Mesopotamia

10th February, h 9.30
Davide Domenici (Bologna), Beyond Dichotomies: Comparing Mesoamerican Urban Societies
Nikolai Grube (Berlin), Low-population cities and invisible bureaucracies: Were Maya kingdoms states?
Norman Yoffee (Santa Fe), "The Evolution of Urban Society" today: Robert Adams in and for a new century

Papers, pointing to new avenues of research and questioning established schemes, will revolve around the questions below, by taking also into consideration environmental markers and landscape features, scales of analysis, indicators and samples, models of social organization.

Registered attendees (at least a week before the meeting) may present a problem during discussions after each paper through 5-slides/5-minutes maximum to better illustrate their argument: a 10-words maximum title is required to describe the problem which they will tackle.

Interested colleagues and students are warmly invited to Bologna, for any practical information and requests please contact davide.domenici@unibo.it or nicolo.marchetti@unibo.it.

Supporting institutions are the Department of History and Cultures and the Specialization School on Archaeological Heritage, with the patronage of the Institute for Higher Studies of Bologna University.

The conference is organized on the occasion of the 50th year (actually 49, but it will be 50 when our proceedings are published) since the publication of Bob Adams' "The evolution of urban society: early Mesopotamia and prehispanic Mexico" in 1966. An updated bibliography of Bob Adams may be downloaded from the conference website.

CALLS FOR PAPERS: "... The Object as Magnet" (ASOR 2015)
From Rick Hauser (beyond.broadcast@mindspring.com):

CALL FOR PAPERS

ASOR Annual Meeting in Atlanta, GA (November 18-21)

OBJECT BIOGRAPHY FOR ARCHAEOLOGISTS II:
The Object as Magnet
BRIEF STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: This interdisciplinary workshop aims to link narrative to practice, revitalizing the concept of "object biography".

WORKSHOP THEMES

Object Biography for Archaeologists II: The Object as Magnet
Year Two of a continuing investigation.

Far from being inert and passive, the objects we excavate have a dynamic identity and significance not always noted in the record, but that must be recounted if we mean to set down the full description of any one item. As became abundantly apparent from presentations in Year One of our workshop series, an object can take on new meaning and have multiple lives, affording the archaeologist opportunities to establish connections and parallels that extend far beyond field note or catalog description, enlarging the purview of interpretation and enlivening academic debate across disciplines.

In Year Two, we aim to explore "The Object as Magnet" through what agency objects modify their essence and accrue meaning, drawing unto themselves the traces of varying states of existence and permutations of being.

We particularly welcome imaginative proposals that consider object multivocality; and case studies that explain how the life history of objects becomes entangled in the web of transnational meanings across cultures in changing legal, ritual or mortuary contexts.

We aim, in short, to explore the "enchantment" we experience when we encounter the archaeological object.

. Abstracts are due by February 15, 2015.

. Do note:

Abstracts for this session, rather than recounting in outline the "story" an object may tell, should pose problems or present controversial issues that an effective methodology of object biography might illuminate.

. Professional Membership in ASOR is required.
. Presenters must be registered for the Annual Meeting in Atlanta (November 18-21).
. Approved Sessions are all listed at:

http://www.asor.org/am/2015/call-4.html

. Questions?
. Contact by email Rick Hauser (beyond.broadcast@mindspring.com)
or Nancy Serwint (Nancy.Serwint@asu.edu).

JOURNALS: Oxford Journal of Archaeology 34/1 (February 2015)
From <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ojoa.2015.34.issue-1/issuetoc>:

Oxford Journal of Archaeology
Volume 34, Issue 1 Pages 1 - 108, February 2015

The latest issue of Oxford Journal of Archaeology is available on Wiley Online Library

Original Articles

Revisiting Old Friends: The Production, Distribution and Use of Peterborough Ware in Britain (pages 1–31) Vincent Ard and Timothy Darvill Article first published online: 17 JAN 2015 | DOI: 10.1111/ojoa.12046

An Absolute Chronological Framework for the Central-Eastern European Eneolithic (pages 33–43) Maciej Mateusz Wencel Article first published online: 17 JAN 2015 | DOI: 10.1111/ojoa.12047


Iron Age Saunas of Northern Portugal: State of the Art and Research Perspectives (pages 67–95) Marco V. García Quintela and Manuel Santos-Estéve Article first published online: 17 JAN 2015 | DOI: 10.1111/ojoa.12049


CONFERENCES: In honor of Patricia Crone (Princeton, February 25)

From <https://www.hs.ias.edu/sites/hs.ias.edu/files/Events/FacultyEvents/2-25_Crone_Colloquium.pdf>:
[Go there for abstracts and for a brief portrait of Patricia Crone]
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One-day colloquium in honor of Patricia Crone February 25, 2015 Institute for Advanced Study School of Historical Studies Princeton, NJ.

Session One Islamic Studies
Dilworth Room
9:00 am Greetings and Introduction
Sabine Schmidtk (Institute for Advanced Study)

9:30 am — 10:00 am
Everett Rowson (New York University)
“Patricia Crone’s contribution to the field of Islamic Studies”

10:00 am — 11:00 am
Michael Cook (Princeton University)
“Muhammad’s deputies in Medina”

11:00 am — 11:10 am BREAK
11:10 am — 12:10 pm
Sarah Stroumsa (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) “An Exercise in Methodological Skepticism: The Case of ‘The Cordovan Voluntary Martyrs’”

12:10 pm — 2:00 pm LUNCH

A display of Professor Crone’s publications will be on view in the Dilworth Room during the morning. Also available will be “Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone,” Leiden: Brill, 2015. Discount publication order forms will be available.

Session Two Iranian Studies
Dilworth Room

2:00 pm — 2:30 pm
Hassan Ansari (Institute for Advanced Study) “Patricia Crone’s Contribution to Pre-Modern Iranian Studies: Politics, Society and Religion”

2:30 pm — 3:30 pm
Kevin van Bladel (Ohio State University) “Persian Origins in Arab Colonies of Marw and Transoxania”

3:30 pm — 3:40 pm BREAK

3:40 pm — 4:40 pm
Daniel J. Sheffield (Princeton University) “Nativism and Prophethood in Early Modern Iran: Āẕar Kayvān and the Quest for Universal Religion”

4:40 pm— 5:00 pm Concluding Remarks
For those interested, at 5:00 pm there will be a prescreening of Diana Crone Frank’s documentary “For the Life of Me: Between Science and the Law,” depicting Professor Crone’s battle with cancer.

NEWS: 1st century gospel?
From <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/mummy-mask-found-contain-oldest-known-gospel-first-century-ad-1484086>
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Egypt: Mummy mask found to contain ‘oldest known gospel’ from first century AD
By Mary-Ann Russon

A papyrus fragment taken from this ancient Egyptian mummy mask could well be the oldest copy of a gospel known to exist

Archaeologists believe they may have found the oldest copy of a gospel ever known to exist, inscribed on a fragment of papyrus used to make an Ancient Egyptian mummy mask.
The ancient papyrus fragment contains a text from the Gospel of Mark and was written in first century AD prior to the year 90. So far, the oldest surviving copies of the gospel date back to the second century, which would make the new find at least 10 years older.

Pharaohs and nobility in Ancient Egypt might have been able to afford funerary masks made from gold but ordinary people usually could only afford mummy masks made from linen or papyrus.

Add to that, under the Roman rule of Egypt (30 BC-619 AD), Egyptian influences were being phased out by the Romans and indigenous Egyptians were considered to be on the lowest rung of society, far below Romans and Greeks, so the people were very poor.

Nevertheless, some traditions remained and at times, mummy masks would be made from recycled sheets of papyrus as the material was very expensive.

Mummy masks made from valuable papyrus

Now a team of archaeologists at Acadia Divinity College in Wolfville, Nova Scotia are taking mummy masks apart, using a special technique to remove the glue on the masks that does not harm the ink on the sheets of papyrus.

The researchers have discovered hundreds of new texts using this method, including philosophical writing and copies of stories by Homer, an important ancient Greek poet.

A papyrus fragment from the Gospel of Thomas written in Greek, which dates back to the third century AD (British Library)

"We're recovering ancient documents from the first, second and third centuries. Not just Christian documents, not just biblical documents, but classical Greek texts, business papers, various mundane papers, personal letters," Craig Evans, a professor of New Testament studies at Acadia Divinity College told Live Science.

The researchers are analysing the mummy mask texts in order to discover how biblical texts were copied and whether there were any alterations to the Gospel of Mark over time.

"We have every reason to believe that the original writings and their earliest copies would have been in circulation for a hundred years in most cases — in some cases much longer, even 200 years," Evans said.

"A scribe making a copy of a script in the third century could actually have at his disposal [the] first-century originals, or first-century copies, as well as second-century copies."

Anger over taking apart mummy masks

Although Evans' discovery is not insignificant, there are many scholars in the archaeology world who disagree with dismantling ancient mummy masks to access the papyrus texts.

There are also concerns Evans' work is not grounded in fact. Questions posed to him about where the mask came from and carbon dating have gone largely unanswered, as the Acadia Divinity College
The professor said he and his team are subject to a nondisclosure agreement until the papyrus is officially published.

Evans confirmed to Live Science the owners of the funerary masks do not want to be known and the only reason he can even mention the first-century gospel fragment is because a member of his team leaked some of the information in 2012.

"Here's a guy getting so excited about finding a first-century manuscript of a first-century text that he's totally oblivious to the destruction of archaeological material it entails," wrote Paul Barford, an English archaeologist living in Warsaw in his blog about private artefact collecting and heritage issues.

"By the way, they generally did not accompany sarcophagi. Getting the mask off the wrapping was usually accompanied by the destruction of the whole mummy."

Fears of improper research done by Christian apologists

Separate to archaeology is the field of Christian apologetics, whereby people seek to present a rational basis for the Christian faith against objections.

Apart from trying to prove miracles and defending authorship and dates of biblical books, Christian apologists often analyse ancient historical artefacts for connections to Christianity. Many archaeologists allege they obtain these items privately through unscrupulous means.

Roberta Mazza, a lecturer in Classics and Ancient History at the University of Manchester, has been trying to find out whom the papyri belongs to but has so far been unsuccessful.

Until the papyrus has been published, scholars and archaeologists will not be able to prove or disprove Evans' work.

In her blog, she wrote of Evans' talk at the 2014 Apologetics Canada conference: "These people are not doing any good service to the public and to our cultural heritage patrimony.

"The audience who attend their talks are told fantasy stories on the retrieval of papyrus fragments and their date, and on the quest for Christian original texts.

"Apolologists' speeches are not only misinformed, but can even encourage more people to buy mummy masks on the antiquities market and dissolve them in Palmolive soap."

Brice Jones, a doctoral candidate in religion at Concordia University, is concerned apologists often have "no scholarly credentials" and this is part of the problem with private collecting, which denies the world's people their heritage by hiding away artefacts that should be displayed publicly for study and enjoyment.

In his blog, he wrote: "The scholarly community needs to be more and more aware of these practices, how these artefacts are being used, and the religious agendas behind it all."
eREVIEWS: Of "Paul and the Faithfulness of God"

From <http://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/politics-paul-reviewing-n-t-wrights-political-apollo-michael-thate/>:

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Politics and Paul: Reviewing N.T. Wright’s Political Apostle — By Michael Thate site-iconmarginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/politics-paul-reviewing-n-t-wrights-political-apollo-michael-thate/

Michael Thate

N.T. Wright
Paul and the Faithfulness of God
Fortress Press, 2013, 1,696pp., $89

“There is [...] an elusively expansive cultural revolution curled up, as if still sleeping, within narrations of Christian origins.” (Ward Blanton)

“Authentic Christianity is not behind us: it is in front of us.” (Stanislas Breton)

Origins, Politics, and the Theological

Over the course of the past several years, a fascination with originist accounts of early Christian politics has established itself with no small polemical edge within the guild of Pauline studies. Much of the material appears to be a kind of refashioning of the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule. The pieces remain the same (e.g., Paul, the assemblies, the imperial cult) as do the questions (e.g., are similarities and differences between Paul and “empire” representative of borrowing, subverting, or tacit acknowledgment?). Strong stands have been made on both sides of the dividing lines when it comes to the relevance of empire to Paul’s theological matrix. Among the more eloquent spokesmen for a counter-imperial reading as a significant thread within Paul’s “gospel” is N.T. Wright. In his recent monograph, Paul and the Faithfulness of God, Wright extends his previous material in suggesting that Paul’s confession of Jesus as Lord is an offensive against empire’s confession of Caesar. As opposed to critiquing Wright’s exegesis or swapping historical narratives with him, I want to read his political Paul as part of his project of Christian origins within contemporary philosophical currents of origins, politics, and the tensive boundaries between the secular and the theological.

Perhaps no scholar has lent more clarity on how the project of Christian origins is a messy and complex participant within the emergent and merging spheres of the secular and the religious than Ward Blanton. In his most recent release, A Materialism for the Masses, Blanton conceives of Paul as a touchstone offsetting the apparatuses of power which not only use the necropolitical as sovereign threat but reframe and reconceive of death as profitable for its agendas. It is these “apparatuses,” for Blanton, which “often seem so much more alive, vibrant, and resilient than the ‘living’ who try in vain to resist them.”

Blanton’s project is an attempt to “snatch an undying life from imperial apparatuses which have, somehow and much to our horror, become more living than the living.” They have become a new kind of monster — an evolved zombie — no longer simply undead but imbued with a hyper focalization of life which lives off the life of others. Blanton sees in Paul a possible way to “curl up inside the
apparatuses themselves, hallowing out within their irresistibly effectual machinations the space of something like a downfall, something like an end, a kind of strangely invested or vibrant suspension of the machine or power in question.”

Paul as a comparative touchstone amidst the threat of these apparatuses affords a space “by which to think about a kind of excess of life (a ‘surplus of immanence’), an irreducible excess in life itself, an openness or freedom within things which is not without important philosophical, therapeutic, and political consequences.” In this respect, be it the work of the so-called materialist return to Paul in all its multiform guises, or those works which brand themselves as the purely “historical,” each are positioning themselves as the readers of what Blanton calls the Pauline signature: “those instances of an effect that is neither merely historical nor merely conceptual but some quasi-transcendental apparatus putting both into operation at one go.”

Paul as a touchstone within philosophical and conceptual reflection, of course, is not new. Jacob Taubes noted that Nietzsche, for example, that genius of transvaluation of all values, discovered a generative spark in Paul’s “critique of the concept of law.” Paul factors heavily within Taubes’ own political theology in his appropriation of the as-if logic in 1 Corinthians 7:29ff. and Romans 13:11ff. Hent de Vries, for one, is not surprised by the “philosophical renaissance of interest in Paul” and its coincidence “with the return of a certain specter of Marxism [...] as well as of Capital to dominate the geo-political scene.” He goes onto state:

We are witnessing various forms of direct democratic action—revolts, revolutions, popular insurgencies, national uprisings, civil disobedience—that elude modern forms of parliamentary representation and ideological affiliation. The impossible turns out, surprisingly, to be possible, as civil courage and acts of heroism lead to events that seem nothing short of the working of miracles. It is in this context that the writings of Paul seem newly relevant for philosophy and philosophers.

I think de Vries is correct. The return of the “impossible” has introduced fissures within our constructed rationalities and their supporting political, philosophical, and theological apparatuses. And from these fissures an openness to miraculation has occurred. This openness was perhaps prefigured in some measure in Taubes himself. He asked rhetorically in a letter to Armin Mohler: Was ist heute nicht “Theologie” (ausser dem theologischen Geschwätz)? What, today, is not “theology” (apart from theological chatter)?

But Taubes, of course, is not a theologian as such. He “ask[s] after the political potentials in theological metaphors, just as [Carl] Schmitt asks after the theological potentials of legal concepts.” The move here by Taubes is an important one to get straight. He is not asking about the presence of the political in the theological as such. He is after the potential of the political in the theological. This is a distinction between the analytic and the descriptive. The former introduces an adjective, be it theological or philosophical or political. The latter is descriptive of what is there.

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The Pauline Signature, the Originary, and the Political

Regardless of what one thinks of Taubes here, an important distinction emerges in his reading for the political potential within theological metaphors that might shed light on much of the current work on Paul and politics within contemporary Pauline and biblical studies. The distinction is this: are current
discourses of Paul and politics within biblical studies operating out of a movement of reading for the political potential within the historical material? Or is it reading for the political that is present within the historical?

No one doubts the political potential that emerges from the similarities between Pauline and imperial language. To repeat from Blanton, the Pauline signature allows us to “curl up inside the apparatuses themselves, hollowing out within their irresistibly effectual machinations the space of something like a downfall, something like an end, a kind of strangely invested or vibrant suspension of the machine or power in question.” Reading after the political potential of the Pauline signature strikes me as quite fascinating in terms of the current modes, moves, and moods within current forms of political theology as well as continental philosophy.

But to suggest that the political is there in Paul himself is another move altogether. We might well flip Taubes’ aphorism and ask, in some perverse allusion to Thomas Mann, Was ist heute nicht “Politik” (ausser dem politischen Geschwätz)? What, today is not “politics” (apart from political chatter)? What, then, does it mean to suggest a politics of Paul that was present within Paul himself? Political implications, again, are one thing, but questions of access to the “politics of Paul” need to be pressed. We do not after all have any explicit position statements or democratic voting records. What, therefore, does it mean for Paul to be political? Or, perhaps better, in what ways was it possible for Paul in fact to be political?

The answer to this question, I suspect, reveals one’s own politics. Much of the political chatter surrounding Paul’s “politics” within biblical studies takes an apologetic form, fashioning the wax nose of the man from Tarsus to play along the edges of our current episteme. This is the struggle over narrating the originary between those placing origin stories of Christianity within the spheres of the egalitarian and tolerant, the universal and the politically progressive, or the conservative and authoritarian. This is not a judgment on either side, but the positions taken here demonstrate what Blanton sees as the “elusively expansive cultural revolution curled up, as if still sleeping, within narrations of Christian origins.” Interpreters are branding their politics in the politics of Paul.

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Paul, God’s Itinerary, and the Birth of Early Christian Political Theology

It is within the longitude of Blanton and latitude of Taubes that I would like to locate Paul and the Faithfulness of God, N. T. Wright’s latest volume in his Christian origins series. In particular I am curious about his evolved reading of the political Paul within his tale of Christian origins and the question of God. Specifically with respect to the “question of God,” it is in this volume where God is named, as it were. In the first three volumes of Christian Origins and the Question of God, “god” remained left to be defined and hence not capitalized. With Paul, however, “god” becomes “God,” as Paul not only names and speaks of God “in a way nobody had done before”, but announces and embodies the “reconciliation [...] of Christian Origins and the Question of God”.

It is interesting in this respect to read of Wright’s anxiety not to be classed as writing a New Testament theology or a New Testament history. He wants a “dialogue” and “synthesis” between the two, and in effect relocates theology and, with Paul, turns it into a “different kind of thing.”
I find this move not only quite intriguing but promising, too — so long as it is clear what is going on in Wright’s movements. For him, the “question of god” is in “constant and complex dialogue with the question of ‘Christian origins’”. The movement from “god” to “God” in volume four, and not in volume two or three, thus places Paul along and within a major phase of what Régis Debray has brilliantly phrased God’s itinerary.

Though “Paul remains a decidedly and determinedly Jewish thinker” for Wright, Paul nevertheless “developed something we can appropriately call his ‘theology,’ a radical mutation in the core belief of his Jewish world”. Paul thus “invents something we may call ‘Christian theology’”. Again, Wright maintains that “Paul’s native Jewish world” set his theological agenda, but also that this world was “transformed […] in light of the cataclysmic revelation that the crucified Jesus had been raised from the dead”. Monotheism, election, and eschatology were “rethought, reworked, and reimagined” around Jesus and Spirit.

Wright’s use of Paul’s “native Jewish world” here sounds dangerously close to colonial speak of the so-called “enlightened native” progressing through Colonial apparatuses of power. But it is fascinating to consider the approach to (or positioning of) Paul as a major point within God’s itinerary specifically as it relates to his generation of what Wright calls, again somewhat unfortunately, “a primitive Christian theopolitics, a radical mutation of the Jewish view of pagan empire exactly in line with Paul’s radical mutation of Jewish theology as a whole.” Paul is placed at a key moment of God’s itinerary, the foundation of “Christian theology,” as well as a “Christian political vision.” But what is this “political vision?”

Emperor Claudius. Image via Wikimedia Commons

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I am not quite sure we get an answer to this question from Wright. He is absolutely correct in suggesting that we need to think more specifically about “Paul’s engagement with his various worlds,” and, when it comes to his politics, with Rome. But what precisely is Paul’s engagement? Wright leaves this term “deliberatively vague” in order to coordinate an integrated complex of borrowing, parallel thought, and a “rich mixture of affirmation, denial, derivation, confrontation, subversion, transformation, and a whole range of possible ‘yes-but’ and ‘no-but’, or perhaps ‘yes-and’ and ‘no-and’, relations.” This is all well and good, but nowhere do we get a picture of what it means for Paul to engage (in whatever form) with empire.

Again, quite rightly, he suggests doing away with “childish antitheses” and instead embracing “the deeper, more multiplex world to which his letters actually point”. But could we not return the serve of Wright’s rhetoric here and suggest he himself might be stuck in his own “childish antithesis”: viz., religion and politics were firmly bound together, so, of course, Paul was political otherwise he could not be theological? Moreover, does not this assume that Paul is in fact “deeply counter-imperial” when he may in fact be recycling colonial speak for a global protection-racket of his own? Here Wright may well fail his better wisdom of steering clear of easy declarations of “for” or “against.”.

Granting Wright his own reconstruction of the possible interaction between Paul and Rome, or awareness of Paul and imperial claims on the ground, there are but two givens. First, Paul confessed God as cosmic authority. Second, Roman presences had entangled themselves throughout the empire in nearly every provincial setting conceivable.
What remains problematic for Wright is that these two givens do not automatically or necessarily conflict with one another. Paul walked along Roman roads through lands ruled by Caesar, and the majority of cities to which he traveled “constituted a monumental visual lesson about the relationship between the city, the gods, and the emperor.” Moreover, it is difficult not to hear resonances with Paul’s language and the imperial deification of Fides, Spes, Victoria, Libertas and Iustitia. And, let us even grant Wright that “August was the name that was found, literally, on everybody’s lips”. But we strain to find this name on Paul’s lips. Another name was there.

This is actually where I find Wright quite helpful in locating the political potential within the theology of Paul. As he suggests, the “new symbolic praxis which stood at the heart of his renewed worldview was the unity of the Messiah’s people”. The gospel of Jesus as the Messiah “created and sustained a particular community”. And, moreover, Paul’s political theology is borne from an apocalyptic framework which communicates “an alternative frame of reference [...] an alternative narrative to that which the world’s power-brokers are putting out, an alternative symbolic universe to reshape their imagination and structure their worldview”. This leads Wright to suggest that Paul “believed in a different empire, a different kind of empire”. And though I hardly share Wright’s conviction that we can know what Paul “believed,” nothing here demonstrates the level of “significance” of Caesar for Paul, nor requires “reasonably constant engagement” (whatever that means!) between these two magisteria.

Wright suggests that as Paul wrote to the assemblies in Corinth about “many gods and many lords” (1 Corinthians 8:5), “he could not have forgotten, and would not expect them to forget, the imperial temple that had recently been built at the west end of the Forum”. He might be correct — though, of course, major events and buildings and personages are blissfully forgotten in communication all the time — but as even he states, “there are many varieties of political comment and action”. But what kind of action and comment is present when there is no naming of the name that Wright claims was on everyone’s lips?

The political potential in the theological claim of a “united and holy community” rallied around a revolution that had already occurred in the “death and resurrection of Israel’s Messiah” is indeed rich. But, historically, how can this “constitute a challenge both to the implicit assumptions of communities in the ancient world and, more specifically, to the empire of Rome” when, a) there were certain communities which would have been off limits or unknown to early Christians; and, b) the “early Christian community” was hardly so stable an entity? Was not the building of this stable imaginary the project with which Paul was busying himself?

Paul’s constructed community involved great travel both within and without, travel which he attempted to police, as evident from the paraenetic sections in his letters. The early Christian community was a construct of Paul through which he fashioned early Christian communities out of a negotiated relationship with other communities that ate food sacrificed in pagan temples, paid and extracted taxes, and lived within a vast assortment of social bonds.

So much of what Wright says in Paul and the Faithfulness of God is helpful nuance to the overstatements out there on Paul and Caesar — some of which, it must be said, are found in his own popular writings on the subject. “There are many varieties of qualified support, and many varieties of qualified critique” when it comes to Paul and Rome. Paul’s political theology was “something much more subtle than either a ‘pro-Roman’ or ‘anti-Roman’ stance as commonly imagined.” There was a “lightness of step about Paul’s political critique. [...] There is much more to the gospel than opposition to
empire, whether Rome’s or anyone else’s.” And that “Paul’s teaching and theology cannot [...] be reduced to some kind of ‘anti-imperial’ rhetoric.”

But it is puzzling, after all this well-crafted nuance, to hear his charge of “a particular sort of deafness” operative in those who do not to hear allusions to Caesar in Paul’s writings. Despite these careful concessions, somehow the parousia of Jesus and the parousia of Caesar are in a bidding war, Paul’s gospel of Jesus outflanks the gospel of the emperor, the gospel of Jesus becomes an “upstaging, outflanking, delegitimizing and generally subverting the ‘gospel’ of Caesar and Rome.” And, strangely, the founding of Rome is somehow a parody of the story of Abraham and “a rather exact mirroring of what Paul was up to.” Yes, loyalty to Caesar may have been in some form among “one of the major features of life.” But this leaves a lot of life in which the regular pressures of food, family, finances were equally, if not more, pressing concerns. Moreover, regardless of the degrees to which Caesar may have impressed himself as one of the major features of life, Paul appears to have busied himself with his philosophy of undying life made possible by a new excess of life in Christ.

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The Political Wright

Readers of Paul and the Faithfulness of God might well be forgiven the cynical suspicion that these concessions amount to little more than trying to wiggle off the hooks of his critics, notably John Barclay. But I think it is more the case that Wright conflates the potential with the actual and situates his own politics within the politics of Paul. This should be hardly controversial as he has written eloquently on the authority of the Bible for life and practice. As he baldly states, he is after “twenty-first century answers to first-century questions.” And he reflects well what he sees in Paul’s political theology of “transformation” as opposed to the “abandonment” of current realities through much of his writing on Christian mission and his public speaking to Christian students at rallies on major American universities.

But one must ask what would the “transformation of present political realities” look like for the first-century Paul? What would the transformation of Caesar and the apparatuses of empire look like? Again, I find Wright quite helpful here. Paul was onto a “different kind of revolution. A different kind of ‘subversion’”, a “different fulfillment; a different kind of victory; a different kind of political theology.” Paul was not advocating “the normal sort of revolution”. But what kind of revolution or for what politics did he advocate?

When it comes to the political potential of Paul’s theology, Wright is correct that it is time to “integrate political ideas with philosophical and theological paradigms”. In this respect, he is more in line with the current philosophical readings of Paul than he perhaps realizes. The political consequences of Paul’s theology may well mean, to paraphrase Stanislas Brenton, that Paul’s politics are not behind us, but in front of us. In other words, we must become and make Paul’s politics. But as historians we must be prepared that there may simply be no twenty-first century answers (or questions!) for what Paul was doing.

Ironically, in Wright’s political tale of “The Lion and the Eagle: Paul in Caesar’s Empire,” there may be more spiritualizing happening than he might care to admit. If Paul could claim that the “Messiah himself was already ruling the world” he had to have meant something other than what was clearly happening in Rome. Whatever manner in which Jesus’ rule “constantly relativized all human claims to absolute power” these spheres of rule operated at the same time — though perhaps not in the same way.
Here Wright’s own reading of apocalyptic comes full circle. It may be better to think of these spheres not in conflict but in asymmetric indifference. When does the lion concern itself with the eagle? Perhaps only when the eagle lands. But discerning these historical landing points in Paul is difficult in that Paul himself makes little explicit mention of them. But within apocalyptic texts, even when there are landing points, a perspective of a different plane emerges which, as Wright points out, is a point of deep transvaluation. Placed along the coordinates of Blanton and Taubes, then, Wright’s narration of Paul’s place within Christian origins and the question of God, and his development of an early Christian political theology produces a wry historical irony. Talon and beak are not locked in conflict with tooth and claw; lion and eagle do not, after all, interact.

CALLS FOR PAPERS: "Near Eastern Archaeology as Salvage Operation..." (ASOR 2015)
From Ömür Harmanşah [mailto:omur@uic.edu]:

CALL FOR PAPERS: ASOR Member-Organized Session

Near Eastern Archaeology as Salvage Operation: Ethics, Politics and Method

American Schools of Oriental Research, Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA The InterContinental Buckhead Atlanta Hotel, November 18-21, 2015

Session Abstract

Ever since its beginnings, archaeological fieldwork in the Middle East has often taken the form of a salvage operation in context of development projects and military conflicts that threaten cultural heritage. Construction of dam projects, rural infrastructure projects, political instability, and looting operations open doors to archaeologists to work in precarious landscapes, working in a fast pace and with duly adjusted methodologies. While the ticking clock dictate less than desirable methodologies to survey and excavate, salvage operations lead to unusually intensive investigation of regions producing a wealth of data, channel unexpected funding into archaeology and heritage conservation, and allow easier acquisition of official permits. The increased scale of development in countries such as Turkey and Lebanon, and the threat of violence in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan impacted the way archaeologists do fieldwork. Archaeologists inevitably find themselves in politically charged situations where multiple stakeholders challenge the relationship of the archaeologist to local governments, multi-national companies, local communities, and activist groups. This session invites scholars to consider the ethical, political, and methodological issues in archaeological salvage operations. How has this rescue nature of archaeology impacted and shaped archaeological practice in the Middle East? Where does salvage operation locate archaeologists in the political ecologies of the field? The session will open a platform for real experiences of salvage archaeology on the ground, such as the recent dam projects in Southeastern Turkey, while salvage archaeology can be adopted as an allegorical concept to debate more broadly on methodologies, politics and ethics of archaeological fieldwork in the Middle East.

Organized by: Ömür Harmanşah, Associate Professor of Art History, School of Art and Art History, University of Illinois at Chicago
Interested speakers can submit an abstract of 250 words or less via ASOR’s online ASOR’s Online Abstract Submission Site.
http://www.asor.org/am/2015/call-2.html

The deadline for submission of abstracts is February 15, 2014.

Professional membership and registration for the Annual Meeting is required at the time of abstract submission (directions will be provided in the confirmation of abstract receipt). Members may only be primary author of one presentation. Abstracts will not be reviewed until first authors of the papers have registered for the meeting. Should an abstract not be accepted, the registration fee can be refunded.
Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this policy. For more information, visit http://www.asor.org/am/2015/call-for-papers.html.

Please send questions to Ömür Harmanşah (omur@uic.edu)

NOTICES: "For the Life of Me: Between Science and the Law"


IAS Professor's "Adventures in Potland" In Search of Treatment for Lung Cancer

Until recently, Patricia Crone was a familiar sight around Princeton, riding her bicycle (without a helmet) to and from the Institute for Advanced Study where she is professor emerita of Islamic history. At times, as I passed her in my car, I had to stifle the urge to call out to her about that. I worried about that lovely blond-bobbed head and the brilliant brain within.

A new documentary film For the Life of Me: Between Science and the Law opens with Ms. Crone's head full-frame. Her strong slightly-accented voice launches into her subject: marijuana and her search to get hold of enough of it to test its purported medicinal benefits. "I have cancer. It will grow and will eventually kill me," she announces boldly.

In November 2011, when Ms. Crone was diagnosed with lung cancer, it had already spread to her brain. Her options were few and grim. But her response was all business. She made her will, thought about what was needed to finish her latest book and had surgery to remove a third of a lung. She also did what she is good at: research.

The film, which screened in rough-cut at the Institute for Advanced Study on Sunday, shows every step in the process of Ms. Crone's decision to use marijuana in her fight against lung cancer. Produced and directed by her sister, Diana C. Frank, the work is deeply personal. It is also a highly professional exploration of its subject. Ms. Frank has worked for ABC, NBC and PBS. She has a PhD in linguistics from Cornell and has written for The New Yorker.

Ms. Crone attended Sunday's screening and the reception that followed in a wheelchair. She smiled a great deal, clearly pleased to be there and proud of her sister's filmmaking accomplishments.
The documentary shows Ms. Crone Googleing "Rick Simpson's Oil," touted for its tumor-shrinking properties, about which the accomplished academic acknowledges skepticism, but what does she have to lose? Having discovered that the National Cancer Institute describes some of the chemicals in marijuana, or cannabis, as having cancer-fighting potential, she decides to try it.

Then, in August 2012, she is advised to have whole brain radiation and faces a stark choice. Should she undergo whole brain radiation and risk damage to her brain and to her ability to conduct the research that is her joy? Or should she give marijuana in the form of "Rick's Oil" a chance? She decides to postpone the radiation treatment.

Her search for a pound of cannabis takes her to upstate New York and ultimately to Oregon. When she gets her hands on some, she brews her own batch of Rick's Oil in her Princeton backyard. The fumes are unpleasant to her and when she takes too much bread dipped in the dark thick liquid she finds the results decidedly "unpleasurable."

Ms. Crone knows that if she was caught with a pound of pot, she could be treated as a dealer and perhaps even deported to her native Denmark.

In effect, the film is Ms. Crone's confession to breaking federal law. Although New Jersey, like 22 other states, has legalized marijuana for medical use, it is classified as a Schedule I drug by the federal government. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, Schedule I drugs are defined as having "no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse. Schedule I drugs are the most dangerous drugs of all the Drug Schedules with potentially severe psychological or physical dependence." Cannabis is classified alongside heroin, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (ecstasy), methaqualone, and peyote.

Meanwhile, the National Cancer Institute describes marijuana as having anti-metastatic and tumor-shrinking qualities, but federal laws impede the development of the drug's medicinal potential. And while it's legal to buy in New Jersey for medicinal purposes, it's not easy to get hold of it, as Ms. Crone's story demonstrates, simply because it is illegal to grow without going through an extremely costly application process.

Ms. Frank's film traces changing attitudes to "pot" from the 19th century, chronicling the introduction of the 1937 tax on cannabis that was fiercely opposed by the medical community, which then considered the drug a valuable medicine. It describes a process fueled by ignorance and hysteria, and the scaremongering tactics of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics led by Harry Anslinger. By 1942, cannabis had been removed from the American pharmacopeia. In 1971, Nixon called it "public enemy No. 1."

What Ms. Crone learns from her "adventures in potland," she is eager to share with her doctors and is amazed to find they know little to nothing about the medicinal properties of cannabis. "Why?" she asks. And promptly goes looking for the answer.

We see Ms. Crone with a series of research scientists: Sunil Aggarwal, who looks for cannabinoid receptors in the brain; Ohio University's cancer researcher Ramesh Ganju and neuroscientist Gary L. Wenk who discusses some surprising results concerning cannabinoids and the aging rat brain; and Allan Israel Frankel in Los Angeles who recommends "a puff a day," and would like to see cannabis "as legal as cucumber."
In an effort to understand the situation she finds herself in, Ms. Crone meets with epidemiologist Ernest Drucker of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and author of A Plague of Prisons: The Epidemiology of Mass Incarceration in America, published by The New Press in September 2011. She consults leading marijuana reform activist Jon B. Gettman, whose 1995 petition to remove cannabis from Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act was denied; his second petition filed in 2002 is still under review by the Department of Health and Human Services. She is also shown with her Princeton oncologist David Sohar.

Ms. Crone speaks in a confident and wry tone that is heartbreaking given that the ending to this story is never in doubt; only the time-frame is under dispute.

The documentary is not without humor. In fact there is a great deal of humor as when Ms. Crone comments on the history of the drug that was once a commonplace for doctors in the past and is now classified as having no redeeming medicinal properties. "I've no cannabis, but lots of deadly prescription drugs," she says. She also notes: "If any of my Institute colleagues get high it's more likely to be on ideas than on pot."

In the end, when she begins to see symptoms of deterioration, Ms. Crone opts to have whole brain radiation. But she believes that the marijuana treatment has helped her. While using it, she was able to put off having the radiation treatment not once but twice, thereby avoiding probable damaging side effects to her brain for a period of 7 months.

The last shot is of Ms. Crone having her hair cut in April of this year. Her hope is that her experience and the film will promote future research into the endo-canabinoid system.

The film raises numerous questions. Why do big pharmaceutical companies seem uninterested in researching cannabis?

Change will no doubt come. But, as Ms. Crone observes, too late for her. What a loss of another beautiful mind.

Introducing her film, Ms. Frank pointed out that it would soon be finished. She hopes it will be shown on PBS in the near future. A kick-starter campaign is raising the necessary funds to do so. Let's hope it will be shown at the Garden Theater one day.

For more information, including a film trailer, visit: www.thelifeofmefilm.com.

The website includes numerous links to documents on cannabis and cancer such as the National Cancer Institute (www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/), it also points out that while there is much preliminary evidence that cannabis is effective against several different cancers, until the drug becomes FDA approved medicine, it is not advisable to forgo conventional treatments.

**NEWS: Urartian jewelry as class marker**

From <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/urartians-used-jewelry-according-to-status.aspx?pageID=238&nID=76781&NewsCatID=375>:

=================================================================
Urartians used jewelry according to status

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Jewelry used by women and men in the Urartian era provide detailed information about social class differences, Van Yüzüncü Yıl University Head of Archaeology Department Associated Professor Rafet Çavuşoğlu has said.

Artifacts and jewelry from the Urartian Kingdom 3,000 years ago, unearthed during excavations in the eastern province of Van, shed light on the mentality of lifestyle and management of the era.

Çavuşoğlu, who has been working on Urartian civilization for 21 years and examining these artifacts, said that as well as agriculture and stockbreeding, the Urartians were developed in metal embroidery, too.

"The Urartians used jewelry such as rings, bracelets, earrings and etc. that we use today. But their use was different then. Jewelry showed class differences in Urartian culture. There are also differences between men's jewelry with women's," he added.

CALLS FOR PAPERS: Archaeologists Engaging Global Challenges (ASOR 2015)
From Catherine Foster (mailto:catherinepfoster@gmail.com):
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CALL FOR PAPERS: ASOR Member-Organized Session: Archaeologists Engaging Global Challenges

American Schools of Oriental Research, Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA The InterContinental Buckhead Atlanta Hotel, November 18-21, 2015

This session will facilitate research among scholars of the ancient Near East to provide long-term viewpoints on global challenges facing humanity in the 21st century. The United Nation’s Millennium Project (www.millennium-project.org) has identified 15 Global Challenges including peace and conflict, energy, sustainable development, and democratization. Participants will tackle these issues through their original research and explore ways archaeologists can contribute uniquely informed, deep-time perspectives to international efforts by governments, international organizations and futurists addressing these challenges. This session will raise awareness about the role archaeology can play in overcoming the Global Challenges, provide case studies for direct engagement with one or more of the issues at hand, and create an interface between archaeologists and policy makers.

The deadline for abstract submissions is February 15, 2015. Please note the following:
1) 250 word abstracts should be submitted through the Oxford Abstract System
2) Professional membership in ASOR is a prerequisite for participation in the Annual Meeting Program for paper presenters. Further details are noted under the Rules for Participation section of the ASOR website.
3) Registration for the Annual Meeting is required at the time of abstract submission.
4) ASOR’s appearance policy states that members may only be primary author of one presentation.

For more information, see http://www.asor.org/am/2015/call-2.html.

Please send any additional questions to Catherine P. Foster (cpfoster@ameeri.org) and Erin Darby (edarby1@utk.edu)
Ancient history / The Hittites' thousand gods For the first time in Hebrew, a scholarly book reconstructs the history of the mighty Hittite Empire.

By Irit Ziffer

Hahittim Vetarbutam (The Hittites and Their Civilization), by Itamar Singer The Bialik Institute, the Library of the Encyclopaedia Biblica, and the Project for the Translation of Literary Masterpieces (Hebrew), 312 pages, NIS 111

During the Late Bronze Age, in the second half of the second millennium B.C.E., the Hittites ruled a mighty empire that stretched from Anatolia (modern Turkey) and northern Syria toward Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria and Ahhiyawa (the Mycenaean entity in the Aegean). As was the way of ancient empires, the Hittites' state collapsed and their rich culture sank into oblivion. Apart from mentions in the Bible, no written traces were known to have survived. And though Hittite civilization has been excavated and published extensively over the past hundred years, it still remains largely unknown to the general public.

In recent years, the Hittites have had a boost, though, in popular literature -- with books, in English and in German, by Trevor Bryce, Horst Klengel and Billie Jean Collins, and thanks to collections of mythological compositions, diplomatic texts, laws, letters and prayers translated by Harry Hoffner, Gary Beckman and Itamar Singer. Comprehensive exhibitions of Hittite archaeology, accompanied by catalogs, have been shown in Germany (2002 ), and this year's exhibition "Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C." at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York examined the role of the Hittites in spreading cultural property from Asia to Europe and vice versa in the context of international relations during the 2nd millennium B.C.E.

This long-awaited book from Itamar Singer, professor emeritus at Tel Aviv University, and one of our generation's leading Hittitologists, is the first in Hebrew on the topic. It is an up-to-date volume that addresses the general -- although it must be said, educated -- public. Basing himself on texts and archaeology, he reconstructs Hittite culture in a captivating way, so that even the uninitiated can follow the Hittites' cultural history. Each chapter is devoted to a specific topic and documents translated into clear and simple Hebrew can be found at the end of the book. The author also offers suggestions for additional reading.

The book covers the history of the Hittites from their earliest documentation in Anatolia during the period of the Assyrian colonies, in the 19th century B.C.E. (from which it is already possible to establish a Hittite presence on Anatolian soil ), through the founding of the early Hittite kingdom in the 17th century, and on to the empire's collapse in the 12th century B.C.E. It also touches upon the "Neo-Hittite" kingdoms that arose in Syria and southern Anatolia after the fall of the empire, without which the discussion would not have been complete. In fact, the "Kings of the Hittites" mentioned in the Bible alongside the Kings of Aram (I Kings 10:29; II Kings 7:6; II Chronicles 1:17 ) were rulers of the Neo-Hittite
kingdoms west of the Euphrates, which are called "The Land of Hatti" in inscriptions of the kings of Babylonia and Assyria.

The roots of Hittite culture are Indo-European, mingled with native Anatolian traditions of proto-Hattian in the north and Hurrian elements in the east and south (we owe much of our knowledge of these traditions to the Hittite archives). Added to these were Mesopotamian and Syrian influences. The Hittite language is an Indo-European language, like Persian, Sanskrit and its offshoots, and most of the languages of Europe. It is the oldest of the Indo-European languages to have been written - in cuneiform; even more ancient than Greek and Latin.

Diplomatic correspondence

In 1902 the Norwegian scholar Jorgen Alexander Knudtzon, who studied the el-Amarna archive that consists of Pharaoh Akhenaten’s diplomatic correspondence in Akkadian, then the written lingua franca of the Near East, pointed to three letters not written in Akkadian, in which he noted Indo-European (or as he put it, Indo-Germanic ) elements. One letter, from the king of Mitanni (in today’s northern Syria ), was written in Hurrian; the other two were from the king of Arzawa (western Anatolia ), whose location was not known at that time.

However, the breakthrough in the deciphering of Hittite is credited to Czech Assyriologist Bedrich Hrozny, who based his work on Knudtzon's insights. In a lecture Hrozny delivered in 1915 to the German Oriental Society, which had put at scholars' disposal the tablets discovered at Hattusa (modern Bogazkoy, Turkey), he focused on the sentence nu NINDA-an ezzatteni watar-ma ekutteni.

As an Assyriologist familiar with Akkadian and Sumerian cuneiform, Hrozny recognized the ideogram "NINDA" - "bread" - and assumed that the word "ezzatteni" would represent eating, from a root common to Greek, Latin and the German word essen. The word "watar" resembles English "water," German "Wasser," and it is followed by a conjugation of the verb "to drink" - "ekutteni." The suffix "-teni" at the end of the verbs was identified as second-person plural, and so he translated: "Then you will eat bread and drink water."

Bogazkoy is what remains of the site of ancient Hattusa, capital of "The Land of Hatti" (as it was called by its inhabitants of various ethnic origins), about 160 kilometers east of Ankara. Its excavation began in 1906 with funding from the German Oriental Society, and today it is on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites. The city’s excavations yielded tens of thousands of cuneiform diplomatic, administrative and legal documents as well as religious and mythological texts, from which it is possible to reconstruct the history of the Hittite kingdom, society and religion.

The documents shed light on the life of the capital itself. From them one learns that the "mayor" of the city and its security officer were in charge of its system of fortifications -- three gates guarded, respectively, by statues of sphinxes, lions and a warrior god -- and of the underground passages. The city's needs were supplied from huge granaries and when the grain supplies dwindled, in the 13th century B.C.E., the Hittites sent a delegation headed by a prince to Egypt to organize shipments of grain to Hatti.

The documents also describe the religious rites and the items that were provided to those ceremonies' participants from temple storehouses - for example, the large temple in Hattusa was surrounded by storehouses and the officiants lived in its annex. The descriptions of Hittite festival observances
illuminate the rituals in temples both inside the city and outside of it, in nature. Images of the kingdom's
gods were engraved in the smooth rock faces of the chambers of the sanctuary at Yazilikaya, north of
Bogazkoy, which was dedicated to the main pair of gods in the Hittite pantheon - the Storm God and his
mate. In the large gallery, a procession of gods stride toward a procession of goddesses, gathering in the
temple for the New Year. Above them, their (Hurrian) names are carved in Luwian hieroglyphics (named
after an Indo-European language the Hittites used for writing on seals and on stone). The small gallery
may have served as a royal funerary shrine as suggested by the gods of the underworld depicted in it.

One can also learn about the gods' appearance from the documents and from the archaeology.
Documents from the end of the empire detail the shape of divine statues, their symbols and dwellings. It
emerges that "the thousand gods of Hatti" can appear in the shape of humans, of animals or of various
objects and monuments.

Hittite law is a compilation of unwritten precedents that organized all areas of life: homicide and bodily
harm, runaway slaves, marriage, land tenure, return of lost property, taxes and exemptions from them,
laws concerning theft and injury to animals, theft and damage to plants and implements, trespassing,
blasphemy, setting of prices, bestiality, rape and incest. Hittite law was liberal and moderate and was
based on compensation for the injured party or his family, not on bodily punishment, as was the custom
among other peoples in the ancient Near East. The Proclamation of King Telepinu (15th century B.C.E.)
was aimed at regularizing the dynastic succession in order to avoid quarrels and bloodshed within the
royal family. Eventually political opponents were exiled instead of being executed.

Leaving their mark on Israel

Many diplomatic treaties were found in the Hattusa archives, which constitute a milestone in the
development of political thought. In the 13th century, after the Battle of Kadesh, the policy pursued by
King Hattusili III led to the signing of the "Silver Peace" (so called because of the silver tablets on which
the original treaty was inscribed) with Ramses II. A reproduction of it is set into the entrance to the
Security Council chamber at the United Nations as a model for the nations of the world. The original
Akkadian version of the silver peace treaty, on clay tablets, was discovered by Hugo Winckler in 1906
and its translation into the ancient Egyptian language is inscribed on the walls of the Temple of Amun at
Karnak.

In the treaty, the powers agree to refrain from hostile actions and to cooperate with each other.
Eventually Ramses II even married a Hittite princess. In the era of the Hittite-Egyptian peace, the two
powers enjoyed stable relations and exchanges of gifts. Diplomats, merchants, craftsmen and members
of other professions passed back and forth through Palestine (and perhaps even settled there), leaving
behind material objects, mostly seals and a handful of works of art. Along with the objects, technologies
and ideas were also transmitted that left their marks on the cultures of Canaan and Israel.

Hattusili III also maintained stable relations with Babylon and Assyria. It was only in western Anatolia
that all was not quiet. The conflict was with Wilusa, identified with (W)ilies-Troy in Homer's epics, and
over the control of some islands, among them Lazpa (Lesbos). Wilusa had been subordinate to the
Hittites since the 17th century B.C.E. Hattusili's brother and predecessor, Muwatalli II, who defeated the
Egyptian army at the Battle of Kadesh on the Orontes River, signed a treaty with King Alaksandu of
Wilusa, identified as Alexander, prince of Troy. Many believe the tradition reflected in the Iliad is based
on the ancient reality in western Anatolia during the second millennium B.C.E., which was the arena of
contention between the Hittites and Ahhiyawa (Mycenaean Greece), the Achaeans (Greeks) in the Homeric texts.

Biblical parallels

Very briefly, it is worth mentioning the magical rites aimed at changing fate, preserving family peace, helping women in childbirth, dealing with impotence, treating illnesses and lifting impurity. Among the Hittite rituals which have parallels in the Bible, are the sending of a scapegoat (to an enemy country to lift a plague) or the consulting of gods of the underworld and ghosts of the dead through digging pits in the ground, the biblical magical installation for divination called "ob" (First Samuel 28:7).

There is also a clear parallel between the Bible and Hittite writings in other areas. In the mythological texts, there is the creation of man from clay, an idea shared by the cultures of Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece. Or in the law - in the statutes on marital status, the law of levirate marriage and the laws concerning rape.

With the fall of the empire, Hittite fugitives from Anatolia fled to relatively peaceful southern Anatolia and northern Syria, where some measure of Hittite culture could still be found. Neo-Hittite kingdoms arose there, most notably Carchemish, which was ruled by viceroys, sons of the Hittite king starting in the 14th century B.C.E. These kingdoms, which survived the tempestuous period of the 12th century into the first millennium B.C.E., continued Hittite traditions such as monumental inscriptions in Luwian. These are the Hittites whom the biblical author had in mind when labeling some foreigners as Hittites.

Similarities also exist between words in Hittite and in Hebrew, for example in "culture words" common to both languages such as the word for wine -- yayyin in Hebrew, which is wiyanis in Hittite. And what about the names of "the sons of Heth" (Genesis 23:3, 5, 7, 10, 16, 18, 20) -- Ephron, Uriah and Ahimelech -- Hittites with Semitic names?

Itamar Singer's book is a treasure trove of knowledge celebrating the Hittites. It answers to the lack of a Hebrew book on the Hittites and their culture, which is one of the pillars of Western civilization.

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eARTICLES: "Ur III Tablets in the Wheaton College Archaeology Museum" (CDLI)

From Madeleine Fitzgerald [mailto:madfitz@gmail.com]:

We would like to announce the following new article in the Cuneiform Digital Library Bulletin at http://cdli.ucla.edu/?q=publications1/bulletin:

Parsa Daneshmand, Wolfson College, University of Oxford, and Meysam Abdoli, Allameh Tabatabai University, “A New King of Susa and Anshan,”


Keywords: Iran, Car Museum, Royal inscriptions, Elamite, brick, relief
For purposes of citation, this is a preprint version that goes archival on February 15, 2015.

NEWS: Tomb of Huy (D18)
[Go there for pix]
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Tomb of Huy, ruler of Nubia under Tutankhamun, to be opened to the public April Holloway

The tomb of Amenhotep Huy, ruler of Lower Nubia Kush under king Tutankhamun, is to be opened to the public for the first time following extensive restorations. The tomb is famous for its spectacular wall paintings.

Amenhotep, called Huy, was a viceroy of Nubia. The Lower Nubian Kush was a province of Egypt from the 16th century BC to eleventh century BC. During this period it was ruled by a viceroy who reported directly to the Egyptian Pharaoh. The viceroy was appointed directly by the Egyptian king and usually bore the titles "overseer of the southern lands" and "king's son of Kush". It is believed that the Egyptian 25th dynasty were descendants of these viceroys and so were the dynasties that ruled independent Kush until the fourth century AD.

Huy was the son of a lady named Werner. His father is not known. Huy was married to Taemwadjsy, chief of the harem of Amun and of the Harem of Nebkheperure (Tutankhamun). They had a son named Paser. Huy succeeded the viceroy Tuthmosis, who served under the pharaoh Akhenaten.
Huy ruled under Tutankhamun, and would have been responsible for organizing construction on Tutankhamun's behalf, as well as being responsible for military operations in the region of Nubia. The viceroy would bring tribute personally to the pharaoh they served under.

The tomb of Amenhotep Huy, which is located at Qurnet Marei on Luxor's west bank, consists of a court and a burial chamber, and is well known for the colorful and detailed paintings that adorn the walls of the tomb.

"Although it is a small tomb it has very distinguished wall paintings," Aly El-Asfar, head of the central administration of Upper Egypt, told Ahram Online.
"[T]he images depict figures painted in Nubian attire walking behind a chariot driven by a light brown figure, a black rider painted in traditional Nubian garb, and pulled by a cow. Walking before the chariot are more Nubian figure," writes Ahram Online. "Hunting scenes similar to those found in Tutankhamun's tomb are also depicted on walls as well as scenes showing Huy being greeted by high priests and among his family."

The tomb of Huy has undergone three years of restoration work and will be opened to the public in mid-December.