



IN SITU

News and Events of the Harvard Standing Committee on
Archaeology



Giza Plateau 3D model (photo: Peter Der Manuelian)

The Giza Project and the Harvard Semitic Museum

Peter Der Manuelian (Director of the Harvard Semitic Museum)

Ambitious plans are afoot on several fronts. The Giza Project just completed a 2-year, 1,000-hour endeavor to replicate a royal chair found during the Giza Pyramids excavations of 1925–1927. Only thousands of tiny fragments remained of this chair upon its discovery, 90 feet underground, just to the east of the Great Pyramid of Khufu. The unfinished burial chamber belonged to Khufu's mother, Queen Hetepheres (ca. 2500 BCE). Meticulous documentation by Harvard University–Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition director George Reisner allowed for

restoration of much of the queen's furniture on paper. This elaborate chair, however, had never been recreated physically until now. Using 3-axis milling machines, real cedar, gold, and even faience tiles, the chair is now on view at the Harvard Semitic Museum.

Other digital projects at the Harvard Semitic Museum include the scanning by Alexandre Tokovinine last

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On the Origins of the SCA

Carl Lamberg-Karlovsky on the beginnings of the Standing Committee in the late 1970s

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Viking Studies at Harvard

Stephen Mitchell on recent discoveries at the Viking site of Tønnesminde and the upcoming 2016 field school

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Visiting the Krenma Oracle

Laura Nasrallah on the importance of field visits in understanding the Early Christian world

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Committee

Rowan K. Flad (Chair; Anthropology)

Suzanne Blier (HAA/AAS)

Peter Der Manuelian
(NELC/Anthropology/Semitic Museum)

Susanne Ebbinghaus
(Harvard Art Museums)

Ioli Kalavrezou (HAA)

Michael McCormick (History)

Stephen A. Mitchell (Scandinavian)

Jerry X. Mitrovica (EPS)

Laura Nasrallah (Divinity School)

Michael Puett (EALC)

Jeffrey Quilter
(Anthropology/Peabody Museum)

Daniel L. Smail (History)

Adrian Staehli (Classics)

Piotr Steinkeller (NELC)

Jason Ur (Anthropology)

Gary Urton (Anthropology)

A message from the Chair

Friends and Affiliates of the Standing Committee on Archaeology at Harvard University:

Welcome to a new chapter in the Standing Committee on Archaeology (SCA) at Harvard. This newsletter is the result of continuing efforts to integrate archaeologists across Harvard through a transdisciplinary network of faculty, staff and researchers who share a common interest in investigations of the past through the various material records that provide insights on human history and social change. The significance and value of understanding the relationships among these material records *in context* inspires the name of this new bulletin: *In Situ*. We aim to use this venue to highlight some of the many activities happening on campus over the course of the year and identify many of the individuals who make up the rich community of archaeologists across campus. Headlining this issue is a report by Prof. Peter Manuelian, Director of the Harvard Semitic Museum at Harvard and a member of the SCA on the recent activities he has been involved in as museum director and Philip J. King Professor of Egyptology in the Departments of Anthropology and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.

Also in this first issue we have a brief origin story of the SCA authored by C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, Stephen Philips Professor of Archaeology and Ethnology. He succinctly describes the several factors that precipitated the bringing together of the Standing Committee, for which he would serve as the first chair. Over the years, the standing committee has been responsible for regular talks and symposia that bring together archaeologists to discuss and reflect on shared themes. This year we sponsored four such events: three SCA sponsored talks and a special roundtable discussion that focused on the topic of iconoclasm in the context of cultural heritage, involving speakers and discussants from a variety of disciplines. Each of these events was well-attended and helped integrate the disparate archaeological interests at Harvard. They represent only a small fraction of the vast array of archaeological events on campus this past year, however. Many other archaeology talks and events were held throughout the year by the various departments, museums, seminar series, classes, centers and initiatives that make up our affiliates across the university. These events are listed on our calendar of events, available on our redesigned website: (www.archaeology.harvard.edu).

This website provides a resource for you to keep abreast of the wide variety of activities on campus related to our archaeology community. We keep an up-to-date catalog of the upcoming and past events and the site also provides a list of affiliated departments, centers, and museums, as well as a list of affiliated individuals. The Standing Committee itself (listed on the left margin of this page) is a rotating committee comprising a small fraction of the archaeologists at Harvard. Two other members of our standing committee have contributed items to this newsletter. Laura S. Nasrallah, Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity in the Harvard Divinity School tells us about a recent visit with students to the oracle at Kremna in Turkey, and Stephen A. Mitchell, Professor of Scandinavian and

Folklore in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literature provides an update on the upcoming Harvard Viking Studies archaeology field school in Denmark this summer.

Each year the standing committee is convened to provide guidance and advice to the chair on the organization of the year's academic events and to manage secondary fields in archaeology at the undergraduate and graduate levels. These secondary fields certify for undergraduates concentrating outside an archaeological field that they nevertheless have received substantial background in archaeology during their undergraduate education. Likewise, the secondary field for PhD students certifies for students whose PhD is not ostensibly in an archaeological discipline, that they have engaged in a focused and concerted way in the study of archaeology through their coursework. One of our secondary field PhD students, Henry Gruber (History), has contributed an essay to this issue describing the impact of this secondary on his PhD track.

Beyond the committee, the SCA have a large group of affiliates. Part of the motivation for this newsletter and for the renovation of the SCA website was to more formally identify the broad base of scholars across the university that represent the core network the SCA hopes to represent and support. Many of these affiliates are listed below – while there may be omissions as this is an ongoing effort, we think that it is an important step towards strengthening our community of scholars across the university. We look forward to seeing you at our events in the upcoming academic year and welcome your comments, suggestions and feedback at sca@fas.harvard.edu.

Associates of the SCA

Associated Faculty

Ruth Bielfeldt (History of Art and Architecture)
David Carrasco (Anthropology/Divinity School)
William L. Fash (Anthropology)
C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky (Anthropology)
Matthew Liebmann (Anthropology)
Richard H. Meadow (Peabody Museum)
David Reich (Harvard Medical School)
Christian Tryon (Anthropology)
Noreen Tuross (Human Evolutionary Biology)
Eugene Wang (HAA)

Active Emeritus Faculty

Ofer Bar-Yosef (Anthropology)
Peter Machinist (NELC)
Irene J. Winter (HAA)

Associates, Visiting Faculty, Visiting Fellows

Adam Aja (Harvard Semitic Museum)
Gojko Barjamovic (NELC)
Nick Blegen (Anthropology)
Katherine Brunson (Fairbank Center)
Mark E. Byington (Korea Institute)
Cao Bin (Anthropology)
Patricia Capone (Peabody Museum)
Jennifer Carballo (Peabody Museum)
Nicholas Carter (DRCLAS)
Luis Jaime Castillo Butters (DRCLAS)
Jessica Inés Cerezo-Román (Anthropology)
Noa Corcoran-Tadd (Anthropology/SCA)
Ravid Ekshtain (Anthropology)
Barbara Fash (Peabody Museum)
Ellery Frahm (Anthropology)

LeeAnn Barnes Gordon (Peabody Museum)
Joseph A. Greene (Harvard Semitic Museum)
Robert S. Homsher (NELC)
Lingyu Hung (Fairbank Center)
Theresa Huntsman (Harvard Art Musuem)
Laura Lacombe (Peabody Museum)
Brian Lander (HUCE)
Tonya Largy (Peabody Museum)
Diana Loren (Peabody Museum)
Christopher Loveluck (History)
Laure Metz (Anthropology)
Elizabeth M. Molacek (Harvard Art Musuem)
Ajita Patel (Peabody Museum)
Jen Poulsen (Peabody Museum)
Linda Reynard (Human Evolutionary Biology)
Naomi Riddiford (Anthropology)
Kathryn Sampeck (DRCLAS)
Kara Schneiderman (Peabody Museum)
Ludovic Slimak (Anthropology)
Alexandre Tokovinine (Peabody Museum)
Tong Shan (Anthropology)
Zha Xiaoying (Anthropology)
Zhang Jianping (Anthropology)
Zhu Ping (Anthropology)
Bahadır Yıldırım (Harvard Art Musuem)
Karl Zimmerer (DRCLAS)

Seniors Graduating with a Secondary in Archaeology

Emily Ciccio (Classics)
Sumya Karki (Government)
Santiago Pardo Sanchez (History)
Tina Qian (Applied Mathematics)
Christopher Valenti (Government)

Mission Statement

The Standing Committee on Archaeology is a multidisciplinary group of scholars appointed to promote the teaching of archaeology at Harvard and advance knowledge of archaeological activity, research, fieldwork, and techniques in the many and varied fields where archaeology is employed as an approach to past cultures and histories around the world. Archaeology can be seen as the study of past human societies through the recovery, analysis, and interpretation of material remains. Those who practice archaeology employ a wide range of methods, techniques, and theoretical orientations drawn from across the spectrum of academic disciplines to further their specific intellectual goals. Likewise, scholars of many disciplines who do not consider themselves to be practicing archaeologists nevertheless use the results of archaeological work in their teaching and research. Our members and students work in and with a wide range of the museums and departments on Harvard's campus.

The Context for the Founding of the Standing Committee of Archaeology

C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky (Anthropology)

The late 1970s and 80s brought significant changes to archaeology at Harvard. The Standing Committee for Archaeology was a factor in such change and played a role in bringing about further change. I shall enumerate these changes. They are not listed in chronological order for almost all co-occurred.

1. President Derek Bok appointed Giles Constable the Director of Dumbarton Oaks. The new Director had the specific charge to bring the Pre-Columbian and Byzantine programs at Dumbarton Oaks into more direct collaboration with Harvard University – research programs, funding, teaching, and publication were all given a new direction. The Director of the Peabody Museum and Byzantine scholars were to participate directly on Dumbarton Oaks Boards. This was to have an important and enduring impact on the museums and departments at Harvard.

2. President Bok appointed a Museum Council whose membership was to consist of the Directors of Harvard's numerous museums. A budget was allocated and meetings were to be held monthly to discuss mutual museum programs and problems. It was this Council that formulated the policy for the acquisition of antiquities. No longer could museums purchase objects from the antiquities market. Although two museums initially

objected, the President and Fellows adopted the policy.

3. Recognizing that archaeological personnel and resources were to be found in different museums and departments in the University the Dean of the Faculty, Henry Rosovsky, supported the notion that a Standing Committee for Archaeology could be initiated. The Director of the Peabody was charged with advancing the petition to Harvard's archaeological community. The Semitic Museum, the Fogg Museum, and the Department of Classics, with their considerable archaeological cohorts, offered strong support. The Museum Council discussed the issue and a document was formulated and presented to the FAS Faculty. It was voted upon and approved by a substantial majority. The Standing Committee was born with Professor Lamberg-Karlovsky as its first Chair.

4. I must mention the role of the Standing Committee and the Museum Council in their strong support of the Peabody Museum's initiating a program of excavation at Harvard Yard. This proposal, submitted by the Director of the Peabody, was approved by the President and Fellows in the mid 80s.

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summer (2015) of two colossal Assyrian statues from Khorsabad, Iraq, in the Louvre Museum, Paris. We hope to 3D-fabricate these 16-foot high statues (Gilgamesh, and a winged bull, or “lamassu”) for display in the Museum’s third floor Mesopotamian gallery.

That gallery will also be enhanced next year by a series of newly cast resin reproductions of Assyrian palace reliefs, reproduced from the Museum’s aging collection of fragile plaster casts. This procedure, invented by curator Adam Aja, involved several rounds of Harvard students (and Elson Family grants) working for course credit as part of ANE 103, “Ancient Lives,” taught by Gojko Barjamovic. An exhibition of selected reliefs was held at the Arts at 29 Garden Street last December at the end of the course.

In February, 2016, Google came to the Harvard Semitic Museum to shoot a series 360-degree panoramas of the entire interior, for display on their Google Expeditions website (<https://www.google.com/edu/expeditions/>). The Google “Jump Camera” rig is a series of 16 GoPro cameras arranged around a cylinder. This should give “virtual visitors” a unique look at the Museum’s galleries, one that will hopefully entice them to make a real visit.

The Giza Project staff is currently finishing up a two-year NEH grant (“Humanities Collections and Reference Resources”) for Giza data entry work on collections housed primarily in Europe. The current Giza websites, <http://www.gizapyramids.org>, and <http://giza.3ds.com> are due for an overhaul. The Project just received two additional NEH grants (“Digital Projects for the Public” and “Humanities Collections and Reference Resources 2”), for the years 2016–2017, in order to develop the prototype and educational “gateways” for a new and improved Giza website, and enhance our data entry further.

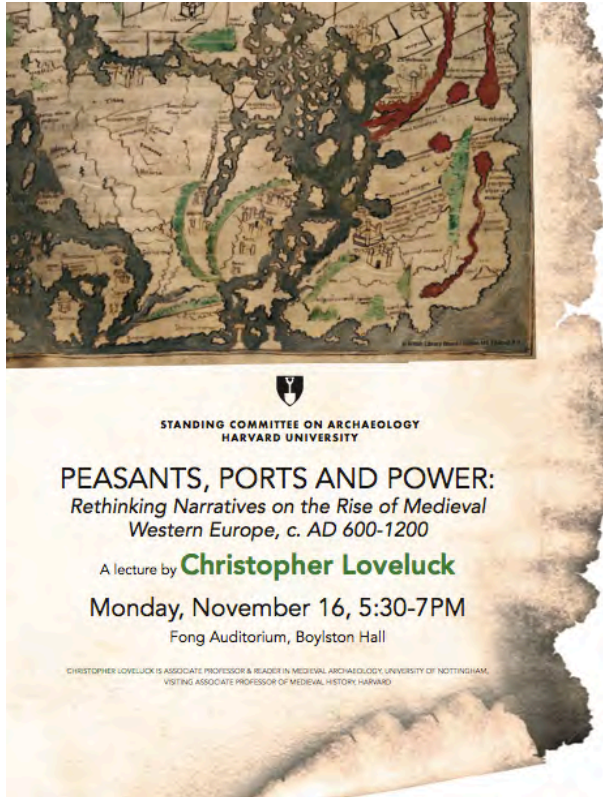
Additional fundraising is also in the works that will enable aerial drone photography and street-view-like ground capture of the entire Giza Necropolis, just west of modern Cairo. This work should enhance the new Giza website, as well as the MOOC course “GizaX,” currently in development with HarvardX. Our next steps may involve porting our 3D Giza models over to stereo headsets such as Google Cardboard, Samsung Gear VR, and Oculus Rift.

My General Education course, “Pyramid Schemes: The Archaeological History of Ancient Egypt” (Societies of the World 38), set a new record this spring 2016 with 363 students. The course requires seven TFs and 22 sections, a logistical challenge since there are five field trips (Peabody Museum storage, Giza 3D in the Visualization Lab classroom, Harvard Semitic Museum, and two trips to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). The course fills the auditorium called Menschel Hall, in the basement of the renovated Harvard Art Museums. I am also working in collaboration with the new Learning Lab initiative at the Bok Center to create “virtual curation” assignments for students in my Gen Ed and other classes as final projects.



Restoration of Queen Hetepheres’ chair at the Harvard Semitic Museum (photo: Rus Gant)

Past SCA Events 2015-16



Peasants, Ports and Power: rethinking narratives on the rise of medieval western Europe, ca. AD 600-1200

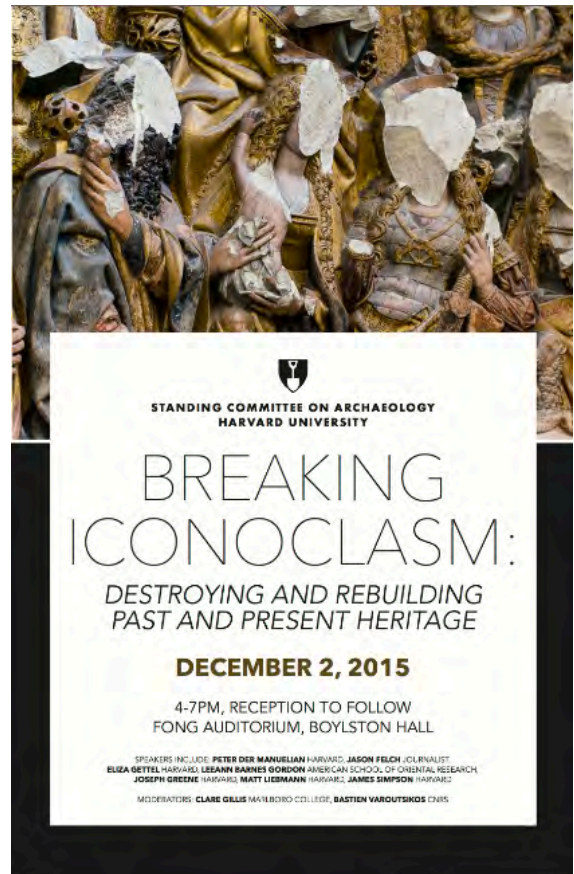
Christopher Loveluck - November 16, 2015

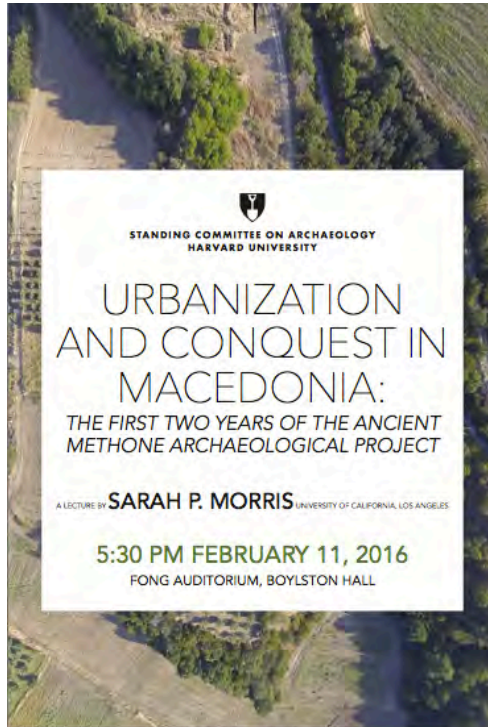
This talk focussed on exploring the dynamics of the social and economic development of the societies of northwest Europe from archaeological and interdisciplinary perspectives during the medieval period, ca. AD 600 – 1200. New research is focusing on coastal and maritime-oriented societies of the North Sea, western Baltic, Channel and, increasingly, the Atlantic coasts northwest Europe. This work has drawn together historical and archaeological data to draw new conclusions as to their nature, networks and roles as catalysts of change.

Breaking Iconoclasm: Destroying and Rebuilding Past and Present Heritage

SCA Special Roundtable - December 2, 2015

A roundtable discussion exploring interdisciplinary approaches to iconoclasm. Taking the recent events in Syria and Iraq as a starting point, a roundtable of specialists from a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds (including archaeology, museum studies, digital humanities, history, and journalism) discussed the various origins and expressions of iconoclasm from multiple perspectives and within varying historical contexts. Participants included Peter Der Manuelian, Jason Felch, Eliza Gettel, LeeAnn Barnes Gordon, Joseph Greene, Matt Liebmann, James Simpson, Clare Gillis, and Bastien Varoutsikos. Video of the event is available at the SCA website: <http://archaeology.harvard.edu/videos>.





Urbanization and Conquest in Macedonia: The First Two Years of the Ancient Methone Archaeological Project

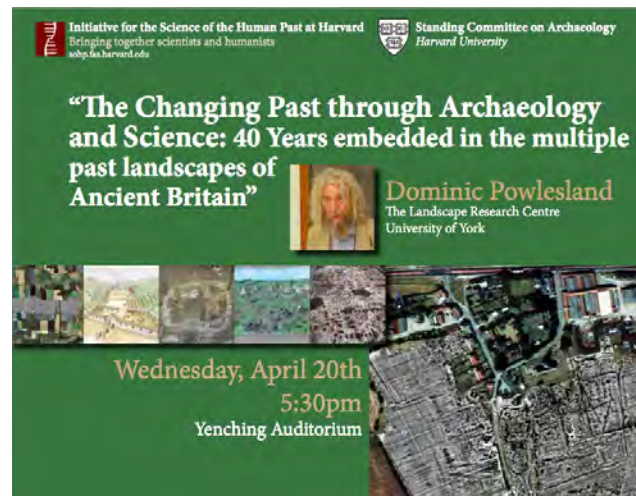
Sarah Morris (UCLA) - February 11, 2016

Ancient Methone is a city situated on the mouth of the Thermaic Gulf in Pieria, northern Greece, with a settlement record stretching from the Final Neolithic period, ca. 4000 BCE, to 354 BCE when it was conquered and destroyed by Philip II. The city served as a pivotal junction between the rich metal and timber resources of southern Europe and the Macedonian interior on the one hand, and the Aegean maritime sphere on the other. Merchants and settlers from throughout the Mediterranean are represented in the material culture of the city, indicating links with Mycenaean, Phoenician, Euboean, Athenian, and Macedonian societies. The 2014–2016 Methone Archaeological Project (a collaboration of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and the 27th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities) aims to enrich the understanding of these connections in northern Greece, a relatively understudied area in Aegean studies, as well as situate the ancient city within the wider Mediterranean world.

The Changing Past through Archaeology and Science - 40 years embedded in the multiple past landscapes of Ancient Britain (in conjunction with the Initiative for the Science of the Human Past at Harvard)

Dominic Powlesland (Landscape Research Centre, University of York) - April 20, 2016

Dominic Powlesland explored the work of the Landscape Research Centre, where he and colleagues have been engaged in primary archaeological research based in the Vale of Pickering in Yorkshire since the late 1970s. In addition to undertaking a series of massive excavations, and a vast amount of airborne and geophysical survey the LRC has been actively engaged in 3D modeling of archaeological contexts and landscapes for a number of years.



Harvard's Viking Studies Field School at Samsø, Denmark

Stephen Mitchell (*Scandinavian Studies*)

Continuing its cooperation with Moesgaard Museum and Aarhus University, Harvard Summer School's Viking Studies Program will return for a third excavation season in 2016 to the Danish island of Samsø and the site of Tønnesminde. The site, situated on the eastern side of the island, has thus far revealed parts of a Viking Age settlement (c. 750-1000 CE), as well as earlier remains of a settlement from the Pre-Roman Iron Age (c. 200 BCE) and scattered structures from the Neolithic Funnel-Beaker Culture (c. 3500 BCE).

The strategic naval importance of Samsø, whose position dominates one of the two waterways into the Baltic, is reflected by the fact that in the early eighth century, the Kanhave Canal was dug across the neck of the island, allowing ships to be moved quickly from one side of the island to the other. Strengthening the impression of the importance of maritime activities to the island's culture, a large number of place names on the island are based on a type of Viking Age ship (the *snekke*). Furthermore, the fact that a royal estate was located on Samsø in the Middle Ages bolsters the belief that the island was likely to have been a 'central place' during the Viking Age, a view also inferred from the important role the island plays in medieval Nordic literature about the late Iron Age. According to medieval sources, it was on Samsø that the god Odin acquired knowledge of a special kind of magic (the

island can also boast of a genuine Odinic place name). The island is also associated with tales of awakened revenants and their heirloom weapons, reports of a talking treeman, and ballads and sagas about a battle between famous heroes and their berserker adversaries. Yet relatively little is known of daily life on Samsø during the Viking Age.

The Tønnesminde site has already yielded significant information to help complete our imperfect picture of life on late Iron Age Samsø. Thus far, the roughly two dozen sunken- or pit-houses and other features we have excavated at the site have contained artifacts typical of Viking Age settlements: bone fragments, unfired loom weights, potsherds, cooking pits, broken iron daggers, spindle whorls, and fossilized sea urchins likely to have been used as gaming pieces. And there have also been more unusual finds, including glass beads, ship nails, a soapstone vessel fragment hinting at trade with Norway, and, in one of last year's most exciting finds, the remains of a smithy in one of the pit-houses. The finds of copious amounts of hammerscale and pig iron in the smithy suggest that iron was being both smelted and worked at the site. Particularly tantalizing were the first indications of a Viking longhouse at the site exposed at the very end of the 2015 season. We look forward to further such finds in 2016 season!



Harvard Viking Studies Field School 2016

Harvard Summer School students work in small teams of three or four, excavating and recording a single structure. The field school acquaints students with key aspects of archaeological field-work in the South Scandinavian area, including: excavation, screening, profile drawing, use of the TotalStation, 3D photography, documentation of features and finds, field conservation of artifacts, and the analysis of excavated materials. The Field School is directed by a team of archaeologists from Moesgaard Museum and the Department of Archaeology at Aarhus University and forms one-half of the Viking Studies Program. The other half of the program explores in depth the medieval narrative legacy of the Viking Age.

For more information: http://people.fas.harvard.edu/~samitch/Viking_Studies_Program/



Excavations at the Viking Studies Summer School, Tønnesminde 2015 (photo: Jesper Buch Rais)



Harald Bluetooth's runestone at Jelling, Denmark (photo: Harvard Summer School)

Visiting the Oracle at Kremna, Turkey

Laura Nasrallah (Harvard Divinity School)



Stele at Kremna, Turkey (photo: J. Gregory Given and the New Testament Archaeology Program at Harvard)

Kremna was to have been my treat. Located in Roman Pisidia, in modern-day southwestern Turkey, up in the mountains yet not too far a ride from the bustling, touristy, Mediterranean city of Antalya, where we were headed next. Kremna held within it one of the best preserved lot oracles of the second-century Roman world, or so I had read, and so I had discussed in a recent conference paper turned article.

I had taken my seminar of thirteen students to some of the standard sites for the study of earliest Christianity in in the context of the Greek East.

Grand sites like Pergamon with its high citadels - from the substructure of a temple to the emperor Trajan one could look out over the tumbling hills to the precinct of the healing god Asklepios in the plain below. And sites like Ephesos, with its carefully reconstructed Roman-period city, which brings alive a civic center in the Roman imperial period and feels a little like an archaeological Disneyland, if you hit it at the wrong time, when the tour boats come in.

We were toward the end of our three weeks of travel in Greece and Turkey, after a spring

semester of coursework in Cambridge, MA, learning about archaeological methods and archaeological sites that could help us to understand the *context* into which those early Christian *texts* from the first to the fourth centuries CE had been born. What were the social, economic, and religious contexts in which these Jesus-followers had emerged? What notions of justice and civic order were available to them? What kinds of food were eaten? What of the evidence for slavery to help us reconstruct the lives and limited options of those who were both property and persons?

But Kremna was very much my choice. I had been writing an article, arguing that, in order to understand notions of fate and possibility in antiquity, we need to look not only at philosophical and theological treatises, but also at lot oracles (prognostication via the casting of lots). In the city center of Kremna, a stele was set into the steps before a building that formed a governmental center. Its four sides, inscribed in Greek, listed the throws of astragals or knucklebones. Stand outside the basilica, with its administrative and justice-oriented decisions made within, and you could throw your astragals, calculate the throw, and look it up: "The gods will save the sick man from his bed," says the oracle of Joyful Victory on the inscription. "High-thundering Zeus will be your savior and everything will be yours," offers an oracle of Zeus Ammon. "Do not hurry this, either to buy or to sell," says an oracle of the Delphic Apollo. And many, many more (see Stephen Mitchell's *Cremna in Pisidia* for translations.)

I had argued that instead of bifurcating elite philosophical writings from popular practices of divination, scholars need to bring them together, analyzing both as religious practices working out questions of fate. Analyzed in this way, we could see that Christian writers, who insisted upon a God that cared about the minutiae of a person's life, aligned not only with similar arguments by some of the Stoic philosophers, but also with those who cast dice in the hopes of ascertaining through such random practices the will of the gods.

The site guard, whom we had picked up in the city below, said we were only the second group to have seen the archaeological site that year. Things didn't seem promising as I showed him the picture of my stele and asked for his help so that our group could find it. The site was breathtaking: overgrown and green in May, a ruined bath complex lying below the crest of a hill and overlooking lakes and valleys below. My stele should have been just past the bath complex, in the forum of Kremna.

Eventually we found it. Tumbled over, covered with sharp thistles, its crown, inscribed in Latin, in one place, its monolithic Greek inscription not particularly legible and impossible to turn over. The students forgave the hike, I think, and were very gentle with me, maintaining enthusiasm despite a slightly dangerous and hard hike up to the site, despite the way in which my description of the location and condition, taken from a source written nearly twenty years earlier, did not match the tumbled-down reality. It was just as many of them had been learning at the sites which they researched for their papers: finding the gap between the descriptions and what we see on site, learning how to question the initial reports, and recognizing the importance of *being there* to understand not only the archaeological finds, but also the evolution of these sites over time and the happy challenges of bringing archaeological materials into the writing of history.

Secondary in Archaeology

Henry Gruber (PhD student, Department of History)

The Standing Committee has developed a secondary PhD field in Archaeology at Harvard, enabling graduate students working in fields as diverse as Religion, History or Chemistry to gain serious exposure to the methods and materials of archaeological research. Henry Gruber, a PhD student in the Department of History with a Secondary in Archaeology, has this to say:

I study the fall of the Roman Empire, and the social and economic organization of Mediterranean society on both sides of that supposedly momentous event. In the last decades, archaeology has revolutionized my field. The first large-scale surveys of the Roman and post-Roman countryside revealed devastation and abandonment on an unprecedented level. Underwater archaeology has given us a look at the cargoes of ships plying – unsuccessfully, in this case – the Roman sea. But every day, it seems new tools like ancient DNA and pollen analysis are making the insights of the ceramic revolution of a generation ago seem dated. We are the first generation since that of Gibbon to have new information about the fall of the Roman Empire.

Harvard is a particularly good place to develop that information and put it to use. While I am in the History Department, my research incorporates archaeology to answer questions of trade, communication, and, part and parcel with those, pandemic disease. Institutional tools like the Initiative for the Science of the Human Past and Harvard's Digital Atlas of the Roman and Medieval Civilization allow me to approach these topics in an interdisciplinary manner that combines careful philological study of our texts with the most cutting edge archaeological data, both from reports and my own fieldwork. With the material record firmly in mind, we are returning to texts that have been studied for hundreds of years and finding new surprises that show us that archaeology offers scholars a new way forward even on that seemingly most tired historical question – why did the Roman Empire fall?



Roman roads and ecclesiastical sites in the Eastern Mediterranean as seen in the Digital Atlas of Roman and Medieval Civilization (DARMC; <http://darmac.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do>)