

# ARCHAIA

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Yale Program for the Study of Ancient and Premodern Cultures and Societies

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## A Message from the Chairs

ECKART FRAHM  
IRENE PEIRANO GARRISON

This Newsletter marks the end of the first year during which the two of us have co-chaired ARCHAIA, Yale's Program for the Study of Ancient and Premodern Cultures and Societies. We took over this role in the summer of 2019 from Joe Manning (Classics and History) and Ed Kamens (East Asian Languages and Literatures), who had aptly steered the program since 2015 and deserve the sincere thanks of the whole ARCHAIA community for their excellent work. Joe Manning not only co-chaired ARCHAIA, he also led, together with Anders Winroth and Johanna Fridriksdottir, the 2018 ARCHAIA Study Tour to Iceland and Greenland, to explore the history and science of climate change.

When we took up the baton, we anticipated that we would have to cope with the usual challenges university programs without departmental status face, such as securing funds and keeping all our stakeholders happily engaged. Little did we know at this point that ARCHAIA, like the rest of the academic world, would find itself within eight months engulfed in a major health crisis – one whose dramatic proportions invite comparison with similar situations in ancient history. But of this later.

Since its inception in 2015, the ARCHAIA qualification had been awarded to nineteen students (you will hear from some of our recent qualification recipients and from some alumni later in the newsletter). We are glad to report that as of now over a dozen students, from several different departments and fields, are in the process of obtaining the qualification, and that student participation in various ARCHAIA-sponsored activities and events throughout the year was high.



ARCHAIA co-chairs Eckart Frahm and Irene Peirano Garrison

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The central components of ARCHAIA are the Ancient Societies Workshop lecture series and the class taught in conjunction with it. This year, these were on the topic of “Images of Cult and Devotion.” We are profoundly grateful to Jacqueline Jung (History of Art) and Laura Nasrallah (Divinity School and Religious Studies) for organizing the lecture series, and to Jackie for teaching the seminar. A more elaborate description of both is found elsewhere in this newsletter, but we would like to stress that the sixteen graduate students enrolled in the seminar, and the many more who participated in the lectures, were certainly exposed to a wide range of topics and approaches, which is an important objective of ARCHAIA’s agenda.

The graduate students themselves, under the leadership of ARCHAIA Forum coordinators Mary Gilstad (East Asian Languages and Literatures) and Joe Morgan (Classics and History), organized a number of events as well and participated in many others, including a discussion with Blair Fowlkes Childs, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute of Sacred Music and curator of the 2019 exhibition “The World Between Empires” at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, on museum work as a career path for those who pursue ancient studies, a round-table on Jewish and Roman law with Orit Malka, the Polonsky Academy Fellow at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, and a conversation with Claire Bower, Professor of Linguistics at Yale, about the potentials of the new concept of “Deep History,” which leads into layers of the past much earlier than those that historians traditionally tackle.



Yale Peabody Museum and the Yale Babylonian Collection present

### *Women at the Dawn of History*

Saturday, February 29, 2020  
9:30 am to 4:30 pm

In the patriarchal world of ancient Mesopotamia, women were often represented in their relation to men—as mothers, daughters, or wives—giving the impression that a woman’s place was in the home. But, as we explore in this symposium, they were also authors and scholars, astute business-women, sources of expressions of eroticism, priestesses with access to major gods and goddesses, and regents who exercised power on behalf of kingdoms, states, and empires. This full-day symposium features talks, discussions, and museum displays exploring the roles and representations of women in ancient Mesopotamia. Zainab Bahrani (Columbia University), author of the acclaimed book *Women of Babylon*, will deliver the keynote address.

<b>Kline Geology Laboratory, auditorium</b>	12:15	Lunch	
9:30	Coffee and pastries	1:30	Agnete W. Lassen, Yale University <i>Women and Seals in the Ancient Near East</i>
10:00	Irene Peirano Garrison, Yale University Opening Remarks	2:00	Zainab Bahrani, Columbia University <i>Accompanied by her own Image: Gender and Representation Revisited</i>
10:15	Amy Gansell, St. John’s University <i>The Beauty and Power of Ancient Assyrian Queens at Nimrud’s Northwest Palace</i>	2:45	Kathryn Slanski, Yale University Response General Discussion
11:00	Break		
11:15	Eckart Frahm, Yale University <i>From Sammu-ramat to Semiramis and Beyond: Metamorphoses of an Assyrian Queen</i>	<b>Yale Peabody Museum, 1st Floor</b>	
		3:15	<i>Ancient Mesopotamia Speaks</i> viewing
11:45	Klaus Wagensooner, Yale University <i>Between History and Fiction: Enheduanna, the First Woman Poet in World Literature</i>	<b>Sterling Memorial Library, 3rd Floor</b>	
		4:00	Guided tour of <i>Women at the Dawn of History</i> exhibition

As in previous years, ARCHAIA served as co-sponsor of a number of reading groups, lecture series, and symposia at Yale, all focused on specific periods or topics, but open enough to invite the kind of cross-disciplinary exchange ARCHAIA seeks to foster. Among them were the Late Antiquity Reading Group, the Lectures in Medieval Studies Series, the Medieval Renaissance Art Forum, the Women in Ancient Studies Forum, and a number of individual lectures. ARCHAIA also co-sponsored a symposium on “Women at the Dawn of History,” which took place on February 29, 2020 at the Yale Peabody Museum, with Zainab Bahrani of Columbia University as keynote speaker. The symposium coincided with the opening of an exhibition on women in ancient Mesopotamia organized by the Yale Babylonian Collection in Sterling Memorial Library, as a contribution to the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of coeducation at Yale.

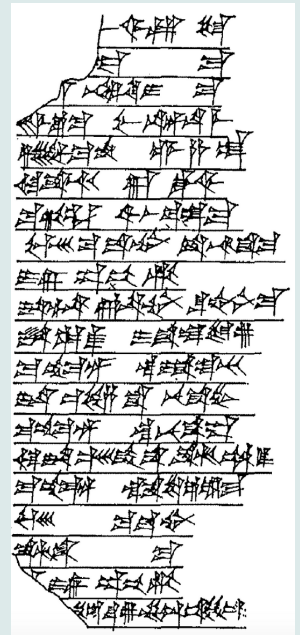
The above list, while impressive, is far from comprising all events in ancient and premodern studies that regularly take place at Yale. Other, more discipline-specific initiatives include, to name just three, the Greco-Roman Lunch, which brings together Yale Classicists, the Archaeology Brownbag Lectures, focused on presentations of archaeological fieldwork, and the “Cuneiform,” where Yale Assyriologists (and sometimes guests from other universities, such as NYU, Brown, or Harvard) read together unpublished or difficult Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian texts. ARCHAIA believes in disciplinarity being the foundation of interdisciplinarity and is grateful that so many students and scholars at Yale produce and disseminate the specific knowledge without which broader, comparative approaches would remain shallow and insincere.



*Kathryn Slanski opens the discussion at the "Women at the Dawn of History" symposium*

As spring break approached, so did the Corona pandemic. In March, the university announced that college students should not return to Campus, that the remaining classes were to be held remotely and libraries and laboratories closed, and that Commencement would be cancelled. Connecticut and New Haven implemented social distancing measures and other massive restrictions.

In the absence of a vaccine or an effective antiviral drug, we suddenly faced calamities eerily similar to those that people in the ancient and premodern world experienced when struck by epidemic disease. The bubonic plague that ravaged Europe 1349 is only the most famous example; others include the plague described by Thucydides that hit Athens between 429 and 426 BCE, and the series of epidemics that may have helped bring down the Roman Empire, from the Antonine Plague of 165 to 180 AD to the Plague of Justinian in the 540s AD, which had probably originated in China. When assessing the procedures put in place by our governors and administrators in connection with the Corona pandemic, one cannot help but notice that they aren't really that much more advanced than those in use in the eighteenth century BCE in the kingdom of Mari on the Middle Euphrates, where measures against contagious disease included, just like today, restrictions of movement and social distancing. One letter from Mari, addressed to the king by the general and diviner Asqudum, asks that "my lord give orders that inhabitants of the towns, from the moment on they have been touched (by disease), must not enter into untouched towns. Otherwise, it could easily happen that they touch the whole country." Much of the land, Asqudum writes, had been badly affected by the disease. Another letter, written by the king to his main wife, expresses concern about a sick harem woman and orders that "no one drink from the cup she drank from, and no one sleep in the bed she slept in." Several cuneiform letters indicate, moreover, that better-off people used to flee their home towns in the case of an epidemic and move to safer places, much like well-heeled New Yorkers have fled to the Hamptons or the Catskills in recent months.



*Drawing of an 18th century BCE cuneiform letter from Mari about a harem woman suffering from a contagious disease (from G. Dossin, ARM 10, 129)*

Despite the dire circumstances, some of ARCHAIA's work continued, adapted to the new situation. The ARCHAIA core seminar and lecture series became Zoom events, with the first lecture after the break, a talk on the "Materiality of Buddhist Icons in Medieval China" by Wei Cheng Ling of the University of Chicago, attended by more than fifty virtual audience members. Other events, however, had to be postponed or abandoned. We particularly regret the cancellation of this year's ARCHAIA Study Tour, which would have allowed thirteen students to explore the manifold cultural landscapes of Sicily under the capable chaperoneship of ARCHAIA Post-doc Carolyn Laferrière and ARCHAIA steering committee member Felicity Harley.

And yet, things move on. Sixteen students received ARCHAIA Summer Fellowships. Normally meant to facilitate participation in archaeological excavations, language study abroad, or research stays at museums and archives, the fellowships awarded this year will instead help students buy books they cannot easily access because of library closures, and fund online language acquisition. An announcement by ARCHAIA Steering member Mick Hunter about an online reading group scheduled to discuss over the summer a variety of ancient texts has been met with unprecedented enthusiasm by students tired of prolonged social distancing protocols. A new initiative spearheaded by Mick Hunter and Irene Peirano Garrison on "Innovating Premodern Languages Pedagogy @Yale" is about to be launched, after a first meeting brought together dozens of interested faculty and students teaching anything from Classical Arabic to Armenian, Syriac, Sanskrit, Classical Chinese and Japanese, Babylonian, Sumerian, Greek, Latin, and ancient Egyptian. Preparations for the 2020–2021 ARCHAIA Workshop and Core Seminar, organized by Maria Doerfler and Travis Zadeh from Religious Studies, on the topic of "Law and History: History and Law," are in full swing, with a second core seminar to be taught by Kevin van Bladel (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations), on "Socio-linguistics of the Ancient World," scheduled for the spring of 2021. And ARCHAIA looks forward to moving into its new premises in the 320 York Street Humanities Hub, even though the transition will have to wait until 2021 rather than taking place, as initially planned, in the summer of 2020.



Perhaps most importantly, two new hires will join the ARCHAIA team next year. Dr. Anne Hunnell Chen will join us as the new Postdoctoral Associate. Anne has previously held positions at Brown and Hofstra and is a specialist in Late Antique Roman art, Persian art, and Digital Humanities (read more about her exciting work). At Yale, her post-doctoral project will center on the ancient site of Dura Europos in Eastern Syria, where in the second and third centuries CE a multi-ethnic population left documents written in Greek, Latin, Palmyrenean, Hebrew, Hatrian, Safaitic, and Pahlavi. Some were Christians and Jews, while others worshipped ancient deities of the Greco-Roman world and the Near East. Abandoned in the third century CE, ancient Dura Europos was rediscovered in 1920. In 1922, the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters led by Franz Cumont began its systematic exploration of the site, and in 1928, Sterling Professor of Ancient History and Classical Archaeology Michael I. Rostovtzeff led a Yale team in a ten-season collaborative excavation of the site. Currently, Yale holds a collection of approximately 12,000 objects from Dura, discovered during the Yale-French Excavations, as well as the archive of the excavation records. Thanks to the extraordinary state of preservation of its remarkable finds, including wall paintings, papyri, textiles, and other organic materials, Dura-Europos



*View of the Euphrates River from Dura-Europos (YUAG)*

offers an excellent vantage point into exploring and advancing our knowledge in areas of research that are at the heart of ARCHAIA's intellectual mission. The unique features of Dura Europos demand the interdisciplinary approach and collaboration advanced by ARCHAIA, and Yale's Dura collection offers an unparalleled opportunity to develop new methodologies for future comparative and interdisciplinary research. The upcoming 100th anniversary of the excavations in Dura represents, moreover, a welcome incentive to organize a conference on Dura Europos at Yale in 2022.

Anne will be joined by Kyle Conrau-Lewis as the ARCHAIA Graduate Alumni Fellow. Kyle graduates this year with a PhD in Classics from Yale and is also an alumn of the ARCHAIA qualification. A specialist in book history, new philology, and digital humanities, Kyle will support a number of ARCHAIA curricular and co-curricular projects.

We say goodbye to our inaugural Postdoctoral Associate, Carolyn Laferrière. Carolyn, who organized, among other things, last year's immensely successful exhibition *Sights and Sounds of Ancient Ritual* at the Yale University Art Gallery, will move on to a new position at the Center for the Premodern World at the University of Southern California. Congratulations, Carolyn, and thank you for your incredible contributions! We wish you all the best.

That ARCHAIA was able to conduct a search for a new postdoc in the Corona era has been a great boon, and we are truly grateful to those who have made this possible by having faith in us and providing the necessary funding: the FAS Dean's Office and Kathryn Lofton, Dean of Humanities, as well as the departments of Classics and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, and the Judaic Studies Program. For their continued support of other activities undertaken by ARCHAIA, we would like to thank the Yale MacMillan Center and its director, Steven Wilkinson. We have profited a lot from the tremendous work done throughout the year by the members of the ARCHAIA Steering Committee. And last but not least, we are much indebted to our Administrative Assistant, Pasquale Cicarella, our Operations Manager, Linda Relyea, and our ARCHAIA Undergraduate Intern, Claire Saint-Amour, without whom our work as ARCHAIA chairs could not have succeeded.



## Capstone Projects

The ARCHAIA Graduate Qualification provides intellectual opportunities to graduate students in GSAS and at the Divinity School, extending their studies beyond departmental lines. Students fulfill the requirements of their home department with a complementary course of study which includes the Archaia core seminar and an interdisciplinary Capstone Project. This year, two students completed their capstone papers and earned the Qualification. Congratulations, Oana and Emily!



Oana Capatina is graduating from Yale Divinity School this spring with an MA in religion and a concentration in Second Temple Judaism. Her research examines the ways in which Diaspora Jewish communities composed, canonized, and interpreted biblical texts to create ideologies of resistance against Hellenistic and Roman imperialism. She has also recently begun to explore the rise of synagogues in Ptolemaic Egypt and the epigraphic habits of Diaspora groups across the greater Mediterranean. Her ARCHAIA capstone, "Mistress Fortuna: Intertextuality and Liminality in Book III of the Sibylline Oracles," looks at practices of pseudepigrapha, founder discourses, and the integration of Roman lyric poetry in Jewish oracles circulated throughout Roman Egypt. During her

time at Yale, Oana was a Two Brothers Fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a coordinator of the YDS school-wide Colloquium, and an editor of the YDS Women's Center's journal, VOICE. She received a BA in Classics from the University of Minnesota, where her summa thesis applied Catherine Bell's theory of ritual to the temple architecture of Upper Egypt. Upon graduating, Oana will begin working at Yale's Women Faculty Forum as a gender equity and policy associate.

Emily Hurt writes, "I am a fourth year PhD student working on a project entitled Cultural Memory in the Palimpsest City under Roman Empire. Broadly I am interested in the Roman destruction of cities and the ways in which civic communities processed trauma, remembered their past, and continued to craft unique, local identities after the reconstruction of their cities. I have participated in ARCHAIA since my first year at Yale and sought to embrace an interdisciplinary approach to Ancient Studies at the university by helping to found Women in Ancient Studies and the Late Antique Reading Group. In my first year, I took the ARCHAIA Core Seminar 'Fakes,



Forgeries, and the Making of Antiquity.' The seminar led to my capstone project, a research paper entitled 'The Things Left Behind: A Comparative Study of Relics and Falsehood in Western Europe and Sri Lanka.' The paper is a comparative study of the concept of legitimacy in the cult of relics both in the Christian Latin West and in that of the Buddha in Sri Lanka. I am exceedingly grateful to ARCHAIA for the strong community it has created among those who study the ancient world and for its continued efforts to broaden the horizons of the faculty and graduate students at Yale."

# Dr. Carolyn Laferrière

## ARCHAIA Postdoc 2017-20



Dr. Carolyn Laferrière has spent an exciting and productive three years at Yale as ARCHAIA's first postdoctoral associate. During her time in the position, she immersed herself in ARCHAIA's interdisciplinary community, which has, in turn, expanded the scope of her research and developed her teaching. Beyond teaching a directed reading course, she also offered two graduate seminars: as co-instructor for a seminar on ancient Greek festival culture, she joined her fellow instructor Prof. Jessica Lamont and fourteen students on a study trip to Greece; and as instructor of the ARCHAIA core seminar on "Sensory Experience and Ancient Ritual," for which she also hosted guest lecturers, in addition to organizing a year-long workshop series on the same theme.

Apart from her teaching and co-curricular efforts, Dr. Laferrière has also been able to devote herself to her research. She recently published articles in *Classical Antiquity* and *Greek and Roman Musical Studies* and contributed chapters to three edited volumes, *Tracking Hermes and Pursuing Mercury*, *The Beauties of Song: Aesthetic Appreciations of Music in the Greek and*

*Roman World*, and *A Cultural History of Music: Antiquity*. In January 2020, she co-chaired a panel on music and dance at the annual meeting for the Society of Classical Studies; she is currently gathering these papers, plus two additional articles (including one by herself), for publication with *Greek and Roman Musical Studies* sometime next year.

In addition to two current projects on gesture in relief sculpture and on figural vases represented in Athenian red-figure pottery, she has been hard at work on her book manuscript, *Seeing the Songs of the Gods: Divine Music in Archaic and Classical Greek Art*. One of the most rewarding experiences from her time at Yale was curating the exhibition *Sights and Sounds of Ancient Ritual*, which was on view from November 2018 to March 2019. For this project, she led a team of curators that also included Dr. Andrew Turner and Daphne Martin (Yale College '19), and she benefitted immensely from Susan Matheson's guidance and support. *Sights and Sounds* was a huge success, and was the subject of positive reviews in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Republican American*, *New Haven Register*, *Hartford Courant*, *Art Daily*, *Yale News*, and *Yale Daily News*. As part of the exhibition programming, she offered Gallery Talks and led public tours. She also organized an evening event, *Sounding Ancient Ritual*, during which Barnaby Brown and Stef Conner thrilled the audience with their performance of surviving fragments of music on modern replicas of ancient instruments. Dr. Laferrière is very grateful for the support and encouragement she's received over the past three years from ARCHAIA, History of Art, Classics, and YUAG. Although she will miss Yale's vibrant intellectual community, she's excited to begin her new position as a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for the Premodern World, a new interdisciplinary initiative at the University of Southern California.

# News from Recent Graduates



James Nati earned his ARCHAIA qualification in 2016, and graduated with a PhD in Religious Studies in 2019. He is currently Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible & Old Testament Studies at Santa Clara University's Jesuit School of Theology, and at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA. His research focuses on the textual traditions of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, and more specifically on the development of these traditions in the Second Temple period (500 BCE – 100 CE). His dissertation, "Textual Criticism and the Rules from Qumran," takes a text from the Dead Sea Scrolls – the Community Rule – as a test case for considering how biblical texts developed, and it asks how ancient scribes might have understood the nature of their developing literature. James is particularly interested in ideas of originality and authenticity as they were understood by biblical authors and early Jewish scribes. He has published articles and book reviews in *Revue de Qumran*, *Dead Sea Discoveries*, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, and a number of edited volumes. In addition to preparing his dissertation for publication, he is currently at work on two book projects: a commentary on the Community Rule (with John J. Collins; Oxford University Press) and a handbook on the Ethiopic texts of 1 Enoch and Jubilees (SBL Press).

T.C. Schmidt has been appointed Visiting Assistant Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Fairfield University. His dissertation, "The Last Book: Revelation, Commentaries, and the Making of the New Testament," constructs a new model for analyzing the formation of the New Testament by examining how Greco-Roman testaments were created and authorized. He shows that the book of Revelation provided several key distinctives that allowed the New Testament to become a valid Greco-Roman testament in the eyes of readers. He has also published a book length translation *Hippolytus of Rome: Commentary on Daniel and "Chronicon"* (Gorgias Press) and is a co-author of *Revelation 1-3 in Christian Arabic Commentary: John's First Vision and the Letters to the Seven Churches* (Fordham Press). He is currently preparing a monograph on Josephus' testimony about Jesus in Greek, Syriac, and Arabic traditions.

In 2021, Jeffrey Niedermaier (East Asian Languages and Literatures) will begin working as an assistant professor of Japanese literature in the departments of East Asian Studies and Comparative Literature at Brown University. The joint appointment will be a chance for him to carry on the interdisciplinary conversations that he joined first as a participant in the 2015 ARCHAIA seminar, then as a co-organizer of the 2015–2016 ARCHAIA forum, and finally as a fellow traveler on the 2017 ARCHAIA study tour of southern Italy. (Note that what eventually would become the ARCHAIA program was back then a tangle of acronyms.) He looks forward to staying connected to the Yale community while he teaches courses just up the coast in classical Japanese language and literature and comparative poetics. Jeffrey works on classical Japanese poetic culture, which involves verse written in vernacular Japanese as well as literary Chinese, the common written language of premodern East Asia. He is interested in literary multilingualism, anthologization, and the potential for poetry to reflect and generate conceptions of distant abroads. The subject of his dissertation, "The Poetics of Elsewhere: The Wakan rōeishū Beyond Japan and China," is an influential eleventh-century anthology that juxtaposes vernacular "songs" with excerpts of poems and prose in Chinese.





# An Update from the ARCHAIA Forum

BY MARY GILSTAD AND JOSEPH MORGAN, CO-COORDINATORS

The ARCHAIA Forum is an interdisciplinary working group for graduate students who take the distant past as their object of study. Over the 2019-2020 academic year, the Forum continued its experimental shift towards small-group discussion of general topics related to interdisciplinarity and ancient and premodern studies at Yale and in academia in general, while maintaining itself as a platform for students to share current works-in-progress with an informal interdisciplinary audience. Some discussion topics were:

1. participation in grant projects run by faculty as an opportunity to build skills and expand professional network
2. elucidating the grant-writing process
3. the framing of interdisciplinary projects: what makes a seminar or research question “interdisciplinary”? What justifies an interdisciplinary research agenda?
4. the challenges of planning for summer and ideas for productive ways to use the time

The Forum also piloted an online shared folder for sharing articles and other materials with theoretical and methodological interest for a geographically, temporally, and disciplinarily diverse audience such as that of the ARCHAIA Forum.

## *Faculty Feature: Professor Kevin Van Bladel*



Professor van Bladel writes: "Last semester I led a graduate Arabic Seminar on reading medieval Arabic texts that are translations from ancient Greek works of science, medicine, and philosophy. Every week we read an Arabic excerpt of a major work from the history of science, comparing the Arabic translation with the Greek original. Authors included Aristotle, Galen, Porphyry, and other influential thinkers. The goal was to survey classical Near Eastern scholarship while practicing Arabic. Some of the participants consulted the Syriac version, too, where one was extant. I also taught an introduction to Middle Persian. We started with third-century Sasanian royal inscriptions and ended with a ninth-century Zoroastrian theological text. In the Fall, I'll follow this with an introduction to Manichaean texts in Middle Persian and Parthian.

"As for research, I am writing a book on the evolution of the Persian language, combining social history with models from contact linguistics, second-language acquisition, and other sub-fields of linguistics to explain correlations between social change and language change and to shed light on the social history of Persian speakers. (Next spring I'll teach an ARCHAIA graduate seminar on historical sociolinguistics of the ancient world, teaching these methods.) I have also finished articles on topics such as the demise of Elamite, Middle Persian literacy in the Sasanian period, the origin of the idea of Islamic Civilization, and the concept of the "Classical Near East." The last of these is a term of convenience to integrate scholarship in various fields normally separated by the interests of modern identity groups. Prospective graduate students who want to bridge subfields of the Late Ancient and early Medieval Near East can do so at Yale in the department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, where we have a PhD specialization in the Classical Near East."

*Kevin van Bladel is Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, and he serves as Director of Graduate Studies for the NELC Department.*

## Faculty Feature: Professor Maria Doerfler



Professor Doerfler writes: "When asked to talk about my research, I frequently describe myself as a historian of exegesis as an extreme sport. I am interested, in other words, in how individuals and communities read their authoritative texts, whether laws, or philosophical writings, or religious scriptures, in times of crisis. For the most part, I focus on late antiquity — roughly the first millennium of the Common Era — and the Eastern Mediterranean, a time and place rich in crises. Some of these involved wars, natural disasters, or other large-scale catastrophes, but others were both more personal and (even) more ubiquitous. Earlier this year, for example, I published a book on responses to childhood mortality — a very common event for virtually all premodern cultures — and the ways in which Christians in late antiquity read their scriptures to make sense of and develop an emotional vocabulary for coming to terms with these deaths. There are aspects of these strategies that are particular to Christians or, more commonly, certain regional or linguistic subgroups, but most are not *sui generis*: most people, regardless of religion, for example, turned to spells and amulets to protect children and other vulnerable persons, and many different groups throughout the centuries sought to deploy Bible stories for pedagogical purposes.

"Being part of ARCHAIA has enhanced my appreciation for the complexities of pre-modern history, literature, and life — all of which far exceed our narrow disciplinary boundaries — and gives me the opportunity to learn from others with similar interdisciplinary commitments. My teaching tends to play with the themes that animate my research, in large part because I enjoy inviting others, whether colleagues or students, into conversation with the texts that fascinate me. In my undergraduate teaching, this has taken the form of courses dealing with interpretive methodologies that transcend bodies and indeed categories of texts; how, for example, strategies for interpreting the Bible alternately inform, overlap with, or clash with those for U.S. Constitutional interpretation. Next spring, for the first time, I will be co-teaching (with my brilliant colleague Travis Zadeh!) the ARCHAIA seminar, on a topic near and dear to both of our work, namely the connections between law and historiography. We'll be tracing the intersection of creating historical narratives and frameworks with the practices of writing, commenting on, or otherwise transmitting law, whether civic or religious — including the places where pre- and post-modernity intersect, e.g., around questions of theoretical models or reception history. The seminar, alongside the ARCHAIA workshop, will, we hope, allow us to think deeply about these topics alongside not only graduate students and faculty from a wide range of disciplines, but some of the most exciting scholarly voices in and beyond the United States."

*Maria Doerfler serves as Assistant Professor of Eastern Christianity in Yale's Department of Religious Studies.*

## New Staff



ARCHAIA's new postdoctoral associate Anne Hunnell Chen specializes in the art and archaeology of the globally connected Late Roman world. She has published on Roman, Persian, and Digital Humanities topics, and taught equally wide-ranging coursework. She is currently at work on a monograph, *Tetrarchic Art, Architecture, and Ideology Between East and West (284-325 CE)*. Taking a transculturally-sensitive, multimedia, and contextual approach, hers is the first book to treat the imperial art of this critical transitional era in its own right, rather than as an accessory in a longue durée narrative. She argues that emperors of this era sensitively adjusted their ideological messaging to address ever-evolving internal and external

political pressures – including inordinate pressure from the Persian Sassanid East – and that the stylistic abstraction most commonly associated with the imperial art of the period was not as all-pervasive as generally assumed.

She has excavated at the Roman Baths in Iesso (Spain), and at the Roman imperial palace at Felix Romuliana (Serbia), a UNESCO World Heritage site. In 2013-14, she spent a year as a fellow in the Department of the Ancient Near East at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York where she worked on the international loan exhibition *Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age*. Currently, Dr. Chen heads a Digital Humanities project aimed at using Linked Open Data (LOD) to create an integrative, networked database and teaching resource for Roman archaeological sites throughout Southeastern Europe, and is an historical consultant for the Virtual Center for Late Antiquity (VCLA). She earned her B.A. degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the fields of Art History and Classical Studies, and her Ph.D. in Art History and Archaeology from Columbia University. Prior to joining the Yale community, she taught at Brown and Hofstra Universities.

Kyle Conrau-Lewis, who will serve as ARCHAIA Alumni Fellow, is a recent PhD graduate in the Classics department at Yale. His dissertation 'Reading Ancient History in Miscellaneous Books' examined how ancient compilers collected exemplary stories not simply as reference books of historiographical data but as self-critical works which reflect on the process of structuring historical memory and problematise the ethics of reading history. He is particularly interested in the intersection of new philology, manuscript studies and premodern literatures more generally. He is also interested in how digital media technologies can reshape the idea of reading and facilitate new modes of scholarship and pedagogy. Prior to coming to Yale University, he was an MA student at the University of Melbourne.



## ARCHAIA's Sixth Annual Core Seminar: Images of Cult and Devotion in the Premodern World

BY CLAIRE SAINT-AMOUR

This spring, ARCHAIA offered its sixth annual core seminar, a graduate course considering topics in the study of ancient and premodern cultures from an interdisciplinary perspective. As in previous years, the course was paired with a parallel monthly lecture series, the Ancient Societies Workshop, in which Yale scholars and visiting faculty present on subjects related to the seminar's theme. The 2019-20 Ancient Societies Workshop, "Images of Cult and Devotion in the Premodern World," was co-organized by Professor Jacqueline Jung (History of Art) and Professor Laura Nasrallah (Divinity School). Professor Jung taught the seminar.

This year's seminar theme emerged from a graduate course Professor Jung was planning to teach in the department of History of Art. That original course would have covered the role of devotional images and liturgical arts in medieval Europe, which is a major focus of Jung's own research.



When she heard that ARCHAIA was looking for a topic for its interdisciplinary core seminar, she was excited about the prospect of extending the range of the course to cover a broader range of premodern places and cultures. “I thought it would be quite easy” to adapt the course, Jung says, “because this is a topic that lends itself to all sorts of premodern fields.” Professor Laura Nasrallah joined Professor Jung in developing a parallel lecture series that would complement the course. Nasrallah, who joined the Yale Divinity School faculty as Buckingham Professor of New Testament Criticism and Interpretation in July 2019, works on the intersection between the archaeological evidence of the ancient Mediterranean and the textual evidence of early Christianity. Jung and Nasrallah brought two different approaches to the question of spaces and images in premodern devotional settings -- both professors work on this question in their own research, but they approach it from different periods and cultural lenses.

The workshop series began in the fall, with Professor Milette Gaifman (History of Art) introducing students to the “spectrum of iconicity” -- an important theme in the seminar -- and Professor Nasrallah discussing questions of religious art in Early Christianity. When the seminar began meeting in January, its theme proved particularly well suited to interdisciplinary study and discussion. The sixteen students in the course hailed from several different departments and studied a range of places and periods, but the material offered insights and points of contact for all of them. Thomas Munro, a first-year PhD candidate in Classics, wrote that the course had been “especially useful in introducing us to the way different fields approach similar questions in their respective contexts.”

Meanwhile, the Ancient Societies Workshop series continued to offer specific case studies from professors in the fields of Islamic Art, Byzantine Art, Egyptology, Chinese Buddhist art and architecture, Religious Studies, and other related fields. A presentation on the visibility and invisibility of figurative statues in ancient Egypt by Professor Laurel Bestock (Brown University) was particularly illuminating and memorable, Jung says.



ARCHAIA ANCIENT SOCIETIES WORKSHOP

**YEARNING TO SEE GOD: THE STRANGE CASE OF AN EARLY BYZANTINE FAN**

Laura Nasrallah  
Yale University, Religious Studies/Yale Divinity School

**FRIDAY OCTOBER 25, 2019  
12-2PM  
PHELPS HALL, ROOM 401  
LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED**

With support from the MacMillan Center

The transition to virtual learning in April brought unavoidable changes, both for the core seminar and for the Ancient Societies Workshop. The final ASW presentation took place remotely, with Professor Wei-Cheng Lin of the University of Chicago joining over Zoom. A conference on “Temple Cultures and Pre-Modern Worlds in South Asia,” organized by Professor Subhashini Kaligotla (Yale History of Art), needed to be postponed. The reading list and topics for the core seminar changed very little, but class discussion moved to an asynchronous forum (discussion board) on Canvas, complemented by synchronous Zoom meetings, for logistical reasons. Although this was by no means an ideal situation for teaching and learning, Professor Jung found some unexpected resonances between the challenges of virtual education and the central questions of the course. “Questions of visibility versus physical presence became paramount in real life as we moved into virtual communications.” And, across great physical and temporal distances, both Jung’s students and their visiting speakers found ways to engage fully with “very distant and sometimes difficult materials.”