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# Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art Newsletter

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Volume 2

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The Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art presents works of art from around 8000 B.C. to the advent of Islam in the seventh century A.D. and from across the entire Middle East, Iran, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. We are passionate about the culture of this vital and vibrant region of the world and work to promote and to preserve its foundational and irreplaceable heritage.

In addition to its staff, the Department benefits from the expertise of visiting research Fellows and a dedicated team of volunteer guides, as well as the invaluable support and guidance of its Visiting Committee and its Friends of Ancient Near Eastern Art and Ishtar Society members.

This is a time of real challenge for our field both in the United States and in the Middle East. We are deeply grateful to our community and to all who support and promote the art and culture of the ancient Near East. This work has never been more important.



Panel with striding lion. Mesopotamia, Babylon ca. 604-562 B.C. Fletcher Fund, 1931 (31.13.1)

## Happy Spring from the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art!

Greetings! It has been an extraordinarily busy year for us in the Department. I hope that we have done a good job keeping all of you up to date since our Spring 2017 Newsletter but just in case some of our work has escaped your notice, we have once again compiled brief notes on the highlights of the year.

As always, the primary work of the Department centers around documenting and caring for our collection and our archival materials—an ongoing responsibility that is skillfully and thoughtfully led and guided by Yelena Rakic, with the help of various departmental colleagues but most notably Daira Szostak, Anne Dunn-Vaturi, and Caitlin Chaves Yates. Their efforts and dedication represent exemplary museum practice and will also make the project of re-imagining and renovating our permanent galleries in the near future a much easier and more creative endeavor.

The debt owed to them by all of us in the Department and the Museum is enormous. There is a lot to report beyond this essential work so I hope that you enjoy this year's Newsletter and that you will continue to join us for events and gatherings throughout the year!

With my warmest wishes,  
Kim

THE  
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# The Kelekians, the Sacklers, and the Story of the Assyrian Relief Gallery

**Anne Dunn-Vaturi and Yelena Rakic**

The Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art's Assyrian relief gallery (Gallery 401) is without a doubt one of the most beloved spaces within The Met. In fact, you'll notice how many of the photos in this Newsletter were taken in that gallery. It is with great pleasure that we highlight the story of the reliefs in this issue of our Newsletter.

A key figure in bringing the Assyrian reliefs to New York was Dikran Garabed Kelekian (1868-1951), an influential collector and art dealer. Born in the Armenian community in Kayseri (modern-day Turkey), he first came to the United States in 1893 as a commissioner for the Persian Pavilion at the World's Columbian Exposition, which was held in Chicago. He ran his business from Constantinople, Cairo, Paris, London, and New York, where his first gallery, called *Le Musée Bosphore*, was located at 303 Fifth Avenue. By 1898, he became an American citizen, and was appointed Persian consul in New York in 1902. Kelekian not only attracted the major collectors of his time in Europe and America, but also cultivated friendships with artists such as Milton Avery, Mary Cassatt, Henri Matisse, and Pablo Picasso. His son, Charles Dikran Kelekian (1900-1982), joined the antiquities business as early as 1919. Following his father's death, Charles continued his own art dealership, together with his daughter, Nanette B. Rodney Kelekian (b. 1926). Nanette, who was a staff lecturer and editor at The Met from 1948 to 1955, is to this day a Friend and Visiting Committee member of the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art and a much appreciated benefactor of the Museum.

Dikran Kelekian's involvement with The Metropolitan Museum of Art dates back to the 1890s, when two exhibitions of his collection were organized: the first, mounted in 1895, focusing on textiles and featuring eighty-four pieces; and an exhibition of Persian pottery and other objects in 1898. Although Kelekian was to sell and give objects to The Met from 1906 onwards, "it was in his role as tastemaker that he proved to be even more important for the young institution" (Jenkins-Madina 2000, p. 76). His American clients included countless museums, as well as major private collectors, such as John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to whom he sold the Assyrian reliefs from Nimrud, which Rockefeller eventually gifted to The Met in 1930 (MMA 32.143.1-18). The Assyrian reliefs immediately became one of the undeniable treasures of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and form the core of the display in the Ancient Near Eastern galleries today. The story of these sculptures is well known, having been most extensively recounted by John M. Russell (1997), who follows the travels of these artifacts from

their ancient past through their post-discovery history in his book, *From Nineveh to New York*.

The Kelekian connection with the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art continues today. In 1988, Nanette gifted correspondence, paperwork, and photographs related to the modern history of the Assyrian reliefs to the Department (see Kelekian Assyrian Reliefs File). The Department is currently in the process of creating a space dedicated to housing its archives, where this important resource—which has already been used extensively by John Russell for his book—will be available for researchers. Furthermore, 272 varied objects from the Kelekian ex-collection—ranging from miniature cylinder seals to monumental Assyrian sculptures—were acquired between 1925 and 1999. These objects cover a broad temporal span (from the fourth millennium BCE to the early Islamic period), and come from regions as far apart as Cyprus and Central Asia. More recently, Nanette lent a Pazuzu plaque (L.2004.8), which can be admired in Gallery 406 and is being studied by Miriam Said, Mellon Curatorial Intern in the Department (see below).

As part of The Met's commitment to publishing the ownership history of its collection on the Museum website, Anne Dunn-Vaturi is conducting critical provenance research. Notably, she has been working in the Kelekian Archives (Onassis Library for Hellenic and Roman Art, Department of Greek and Roman Art) in order to identify objects acquired not only directly from the Kelekians, but also from other collectors or dealers. This archival resource—containing invoices, correspondence, ledgers and shipment inventories, published catalogs, and photographs—is broadly important for the history of collecting and art dealing in America.

The Assyrian reliefs were found in the palace of Ashurnasirpal II (r. 883–859 BCE) at Nimrud, which was excavated by the Englishman Austen Henry Layard between 1845 and 1847. Most of Layard's finds were sent to the British Museum; however, several found their way to other institutions or into private hands. Layard himself sent reliefs to his cousin, Lady Charlotte Guest, who had a garden pavilion built especially for them at Canford Manor, her country home in Dorset, England. Known as the "Nineveh Porch," the collection of Assyrian sculptures displayed there was surpassed at the time only by the Assyrian collection in the British Museum. In 1919, Lady Charlotte's grandson, Ivor Churchill Guest, sold sixteen of the reliefs and the two colossal winged guardian figures to Dikran G. Kelekian.

The sculptures first traveled to New York, where they remained in storage for four years while Kelekian was looking for buyers among universities and museums. Subsequently, they were placed on display at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology while that institution considered their acquisition. Finally, after extensive negotiations and deliberations, Kelekian brokered a deal

in 1927 with John D. Rockefeller, Jr. “on the corner of Fifty-sixth Street and Madison Avenue” (deCamargo 2012, p. 52). Rockefeller embarked on a mission to determine the best home for the collection, where it could be of the greatest public service as well as most useful in the study of the history of art. He ultimately chose The Metropolitan Museum of Art, where a direct consequence of the Rockefeller gift was the creation of the Department of Near Eastern Art (encompassing the arts of the ancient and Islamic Near East) in 1932.



The Assyrian sculptures in the Great Hall, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1933

Shortly after their arrival, the Assyrian sculptures were installed in a prominent position at the south end of the Great Hall. The two colossal winged guardian figures of a bull and lion originally formed part of two gateways in the palace courtyard. In antiquity, each gateway was guarded by a matching pair, either two bulls or two lions, and The Met’s counterparts are in fact on display in the British Museum. At The Met, the Assyrian sculptures were subsequently moved to the north wing, where two new galleries of Ancient Near Eastern art were opened behind the Egyptian galleries in 1960. Dismantled in 1967, they were to remain off view until February 25, 1981, when the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Gallery for Assyrian Art opened as the first stage of the reinstallation of the Ancient Near Eastern collection. This gallery underwent further modifications during a reorganization of the collection and was unveiled on October 19, 1999. Today, the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Assyrian Sculpture Court (Gallery 401) showcases the sculptures in a space designed to evoke their original setting. The modern floor tiles in the gallery match in size and appearance those found in Assyrian palaces; and the roof beams used in the gallery echo the great beams of cedar wood that would have originally spanned the palace rooms. This gallery is both a timeless gift and tribute to three of the great benefactors of the Department and the Museum. It is a vibrant space frequently filled with streams of visitors, from school groups to tourists, and has recently hosted events such as *Teens Take The Met* and performances organized by Met LiveArts, providing a unique place in New York City for engagement with the art of the ancient Near East.

#### Sources:

deCamargo, Luiza. “Content and Character: Dikran Kelekian and Eastern Decorative Arts Objects in America.” MA thesis, The Smithsonian Associates and the Corcoran College of Art and Design, 2012.

Jenkins-Madina, Marilyn. “Collecting the “Orient” at the Met: Early Tastemakers in America.” *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000), pp. 69-89.

Russell, John M. *From Nineveh to New York*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press in association with The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997.



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## Visiting Committee Member Spotlight: Giorgio Buccellati

Our VC member, Dr. Giorgio Buccellati, was recently awarded an honorary doctorate from the Ambrosian Library of Milan in October 2017. This prestigious award recognizes his lifetime of work in archaeology, philology and culture. Recently, he has continued his work on projects relating to Tell Mozan, Syria (ancient Urkesh), focusing on conservation, education and dialogue among local Syrians and other stakeholders. This Urkesh Extended Project opened an exhibition called “Archaeology for a Young Future” at the Archaeological Museum of the American University of Beirut, illustrating the activities that have continued at the site of ancient Urkesh since 2010. The opening was accompanied by a roundtable attended by representatives of Syrian archaeology to discuss the unifying role of the site among Syrians. In December 2017, the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Shanghai gave a research award to the project in recognition of their continued efforts at the site. Many congratulations, Giorgio!

## Special Exhibitions and Loans

### Upcoming Exhibitions

*Jewelry: The Body Transformed*  
November 12, 2018–February 24, 2019

Coming up this fall, The Met will mount an exhibition on the art of jewelry curated by Melanie Holcomb of Medieval Art, with Beth Wees as a consulting curator along with Kim Benzel, Soyoung Lee, Diana Craig Patch, and Joanne Pillsbury. The team – affectionately called “Team Jewelry” – has been working together for several years to conceive of a narrative about jewelry that puts the body front and center.

If the body is a stage, jewelry is its most dazzling performer. Throughout time and across cultures, jewelry has served as an extension and amplification of the body, accentuating it, enhancing it, distorting it, and transforming it. It is an essential feature of the performances that make us human, be it rituals of death or marriage, a coronation or a grand ball. Encompassing the grand traditions of bodily adornment found around the globe, this exhibition will explore how jewelry acts upon and activates the body it adorns.

Unfolding as a series of object-based vignettes that quietly move through time all the way to the present, the exhibition will present fascinating moments in the global history of jewelry. The 225 works in the exhibition will be drawn entirely from the Met’s own collection, with every department in the museum represented. For the Ancient Near East, our much revered jewelry from Ur and Dilbat will be featured.



Jewelry from the Royal Cemetery of Ur. Gold, lapis lazuli, carnelian, silver, and shell. Early Dynastic IIIA, ca. 2600-2500 B.C. Dodge Fund 1933 (33.35.3)

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## Between Parthia and Rome: Art and Identity in the Near East

Spring 2019

The Department's next major exhibition is scheduled to open in March 2019, and tentatively titled *Between Parthia and Rome: Art and Identity in the Near East*. Curated by Michael Seymour and Blair Fowlkes-Childs, the exhibition will present a new perspective on the art, religions, and culture of the Near East ca. 100 BCE – 250 CE, a period shaped by the Parthian and Roman struggle for regional control and the development of the great spice and silk routes. Visitors will experience a journey through the cities of South Arabia, Nabataean Petra, Judaea in the Roman period, the great sanctuary of Heliopolis-Baalbek, the oasis city of Palmyra, Dura-Europos on the Euphrates, and Hatra in northern Mesopotamia. The exhibition will examine connections across this region, and highlight distinctive and spectacular works of art, from images of gods and portraits of individuals, to incense burners and gold jewelry. Important contemporary issues will also play a major role: several key sites have been subject to deliberate destruction and looting in recent years, and the exhibition will discuss these events, as well as ethical and practical challenges faced by archaeologists and museums. Bridging the past and present in this manner will hopefully contribute to an informative experience for visitors, address questions and concerns about heritage in the region, and underscore the significance of some of the world's most important ancient sites.



Berlin, Antikensammlung. Blair Fowlkes-Childs examining architectural sculpture from the sanctuary of Jupiter Heliopolitanus at Heliopolis-Baalbek, Lebanon.

In September 2017 Michael and Blair embarked on an intensive exhibition research trip to the Middle East and Europe. They had the opportunity to examine many possible loan objects and had productive meetings with potential lenders, who were very enthusiastic about the project and generous with their time and expertise. Their visit to Petra was a major highlight.

## ANE Objects on the Road

The Department participated in two major loan exhibitions this past year. A pair of sistra and an ivory vessel are currently featured in *Musiques! Échos de l'Antiquité*, which opened at Louvre Lens in Lens, France on September 13, 2017. After closing on January 15, 2018, the show then traveled to the Caixa Foundation in Barcelona, where it was on view February 8, 2018 to May 6, 2018. The final venue for the exhibition will be the Caixa Foundation in Madrid, where it is on view from June 6, 2018 to September 16, 2018.

For more information, visit: <https://www.louvre-lens.fr/exhibition/musiques/>

A group of our objects from Nineveh were on display in the exhibition *Nineveh: Hoofdstad van een Wereldrijk (Capital of a World Empire)* at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden (on view from October 20, 2017 until March 25, 2018).

For more information, visit: <http://www.rmo.nl/tentoonstellingen/nineveh>

## Friends Events

This year's program started off on September 27, 2017 when the Friends of Ancient Near Eastern Art and The Ishtar Society hosted artist and MIT professor Azra Akšamija. Azra discussed her work on cultural heritage preservation in wartime at the university's Future Heritage Lab, which she directs.

The next offering consisted of a presentation on a documentation initiative, the Digital Library for the Middle East, on November 28. It was jointly hosted with the Friends of Islamic Art and the Friends of Watson Library. [Website: <https://dlme.clir.org/>]

On March 9, 2018, we were treated to a preview of a work in progress by Silas Farley of the New York City Ballet and his dance company, performed in the Assyrian Relief Court. Commissioned by Met Live Arts, the finished work will debut at The Met in spring 2019. The performance was hosted jointly with the Friends of Met Live Arts.



Our final Friends event of the spring, on April 3, was a lively demonstration of fashion and feasting traditions from Late Antique Greater Iran, led by Coleman Fund Fellow Betty Hensellek. Participants tried their hands at drinking from a replica of a Sogdian rhyton commissioned by Betty from a contemporary Iranian artist.



Michael Seymour holds a silver rhyton made by Majid Abedi while wearing a kaftan designed and sewn by Betty Hensellek and her mother Linda Hensellek; Betty Hensellek and Cheryl Bailey watch.

## Open House

On April 25, 2017 we hosted our first ever Open House. The evening highlighted the work of the Department at the Museum and abroad and included cocktails and live music in our galleries. Given its huge success, the event has become an annual staple with the next one taking place on May 16, 2018. We thank Shelby White for her generous contribution to funding the evening's event.



Hadi Eldebek (left) and the Brooklyn Nomads at the first annual ANE Open House

## Teens Take The Met

On May 12, 2017 the Department participated in the biannual Teens Take The Met event. Our external partner was MuslimGirl.Net, who conducted an activity of making bracelets to symbolize prayer beads. Muslim Girl is an online platform for young Muslim women to comment on current events in their own words, and it was an honor to host them in our galleries. We are dedicated to connecting with young audiences through this important work with the Education Department.



Teens Take The Met attendees enjoying the Assyrian relief court



## Outreach Initiatives

The ANE Department continues to focus on outreach to our visitors and bringing new audiences into our galleries. Sarah Graff and Caitlin Chaves Yates welcomed a group of fifth graders from the Center for the Integration and Advancement of New Americans (CIANA) for a tour focusing on fantastic creatures and archaeology. With the help of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), visitors who had recently resettled in the New York area were introduced to the galleries by English and Arabic tours by Sarah and Haider Almamori (2016-2017 Fellow in ANE). We learned that the tour was the first outing in the United States for a young woman from Afghanistan and her toddler, and are honored that we could welcome them to the Museum. The Education Department is working with our Department to develop regularly scheduled tours for refugees from the Middle East and elsewhere.



Sarah Graff and students from CIANA explore representations of power in the Assyrian reliefs



Anastasia Amrhein speaks to a group of visitors as part of the Perspectives on the Middle East Series

## Pop-Up Talks

On October 27, 2017 the series of short talks first presented by the ANE Department and our colleagues in Islamic Art as Perspectives on the Middle East, were relaunched as a series called Met Perspectives. The newly revamped series will retain the same format of 10 minute talks followed by lively discussion, but now with speakers from six curatorial departments, including ANE. Each event will focus on a pressing and timely issue—such as immigration, health care, and the environment—through the lens of the Museum’s collections. We look forward to welcoming you to a Met Perspectives event in the near future.

For more information, visit: <https://www.metmuseum.org/events/programs/met-tours/met-perspectives>

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## Cultural Heritage

The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Columbia University  
Joint Cultural Heritage Workshop—Photographic  
Documentation Project

Building on the success of the last regional cultural heritage workshop and photographic documentation training with our colleagues from Iraqi and Syrian museums, we are pleased that the Whiting Foundation awarded another grant for a workshop and training session in 2018. This grant allowed Met staff and those of our Columbia University partners to hold a third regional cultural heritage workshop at the Columbia University Global Center, Amman, Jordan on February 10 – 11, 2018. The workshop remains an excellent way for Met staff to learn first-hand of the current situations in Iraq and Syria, and in turn it helps us formulate our policy of how we can best continue to support our colleagues in the region. Tim Healing once again ably coordinated the project from The Met's side while Aya Al Kabarity organized the program in Amman.

## Arabic Conversation Class

Starting in Fall 2017, ANE has been hosting a regular Arabic conversation class for members of the Department and colleagues from the Department of Objects Conservation and Egyptian Art. As we increasingly turn to projects and colleagues from the Middle East, it has become a pressing need to work on developing Arabic communication skills. The inaugural class was taught by Firas Ibrahim, a native of Baghdad, and was organized by Sarah Graff in her capacity as the curator leading the Department's outreach efforts. Class continues in Spring 2018 as a peer-led study group. We thank Malcolm Wiener for generously funding this important initiative.

## Conferences & Lectures

### **From Antiquities to the Avant-Garde: the Brummer Galleries in Paris and New York**

Anne Dunn-Vaturi participated in a symposium held at the Cloisters and at The Met's main building on Fifth Avenue on October 13-14, 2017, exploring the influence of the early 20th-century art dealers Joseph and Ernest Brummer. Among the many museums that maintained a long-term relationship with the Brummers, The Met houses the largest and foremost collection of works of art with Brummer provenances in any museum in the world.

Anne also gave a talk titled "Piecing Together the Broken Games of the Ancient Near East," at the symposium "Board Games in Pieces," held at the Bard Graduate Center on October 27, 2017.

On November 10, 2017, Yelena Rakic gave a talk titled "Discovering the Ancient Near East: J.P. Morgan and the Lands of the Bible," at a two-day symposium on J. P. Morgan hosted at the Wadsworth Athenaeum. Titled "Morgan: Mind of the Collector," the symposium marked the centennial anniversary of Morgan's posthumous gift of more than 1,350 works to the museum.



## The Charles K. Wilkinson Lecture Series

The Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art is pleased to co-host, year after year, the Charles K. Wilkinson Lecture Series with the Departments of Egyptian Art and Islamic Art. On June 28, 2017 lectures from specialists across these three disciplines explored the theme conveyed by the title *Everything Old is New Again: Recycling the Past*. Kathlyn M. Cooney, Associate Professor of Ancient Egyptian Art & Architecture and Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages & Cultures at the University of California Los Angeles, gave a talk titled “Recycling the Materiality of Death: How and Why Egyptian Coffins were Reused.” Martina Rugiadi, Assistant Curator in the Department of Islamic Art, presented “Afterlives from the Past: Marble Spolia in Ghazni.” Finally, Clare Davies, Assistant Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, specializing in Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey, represented the Ancient Near Eastern Department with her talk “Reflecting Pool: A Hypothetical Exhibition of the Ancient Near East in Modern and Contemporary Works of Art.”

The next series of Wilkinson Lectures welcomed the spring season on March 19, 2018 with an appropriate focus on *Gardens, from Paradise to Parterre*. José Galán, Research Professor at The Spanish National Research Council and Director of the Spanish Archaeological Mission at Dra Abu-el Naga, Egypt, presented “An Ancient Egyptian Garden for Eternal Life.” Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis, Assistant Professor and Acting Executive Officer for the MA in Liberal Studies at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York, gave a talk titled “Pots and Plants: Trade, Exchange, and the Creation of Gardens in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near East.” The final talk, “Water from Sand: From Desert to Garden in the Islamic World,” was given by D. Fairchild Ruggles, Professor and Chair of the Joint PhD Program in Architecture and Landscape Architecture in the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

## The Charles K. Wilkinson Lecture Series—Gardens, from Paradise to Parterre



Free with Museum admission

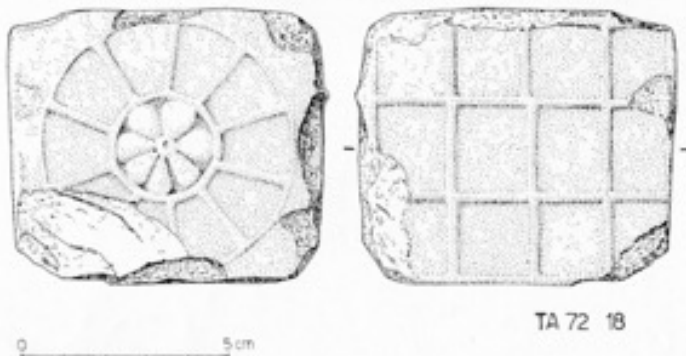
Dr. José Galán, Research Professor, The Spanish National Research Council, Director, The Spanish Archaeological Mission at Dra Abu-el-Naga, Luxor

Dr. Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis, Assistant Professor and Acting Executive Officer, MA in Liberal Studies, The Graduate Center, The City University of New York

Dr. D. Fairchild Ruggles, Professor and Chair, Joint PhD Program in Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

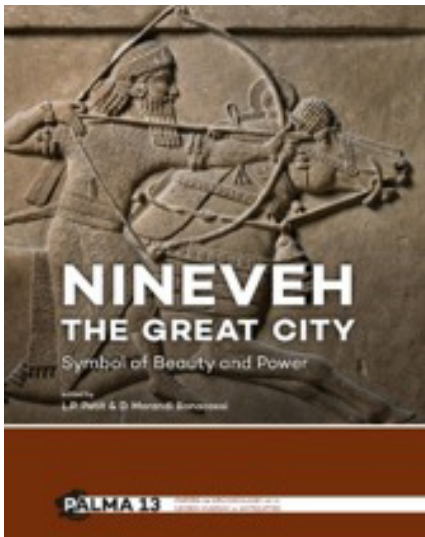
## Publications

Anne Dunn-Vaturi published two articles about ancient board games: “A double-sided board from Tell Afis” in the new journal *Ash-sharq* published by Archeopress (Vol. 1 No. 1, April 2017, pp. 9-17) is about the identification of a broken game of twenty squares, previously described as a cosmetic plate. This article resulted from her contribution to the Board Games Colloquium XVIII held in the Swiss Museum of Games and the University of Fribourg on April 15-18, 2015. Her second paper, “An Egyptian game in Athens” in the *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* (Vol. 15, September 2017, pp. 1-10), discusses an unpublished senet board with a recumbent lion on the edge, showing possible parallels with a series of Neo-Assyrian board games.



Double-sided board. Tell Afis, Syria. Idlib Museum, TA 72.18. Drawing Sergio Martelli

Michael Seymour and Yelena Rakic were both contributors to the exhibition catalogue *Nineveh, the Great City: Symbol of Beauty and Power*, edited by Lucas P. Petit and Daniele Morandi Bonacossi (2018). Yelena's essay is entitled: “Nineveh, Lady Charlotte Guest and The Metropolitan Museum of Art.” Michael's contribution is titled: “The Material Culture of Nineveh in Collections in the United States.”



Nineveh, the Great City: Symbol of Beauty and Power exhibition catalogue edited by Lucas P. Petit and Daniele Morandi Bonacossi (2018)

## Fellows

**Anastasia Amrhein** is an Andrew W. Mellon Fellow and a PhD Candidate in the History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania. Her research during the 2017-18 Fellowship Year focuses on the materiality and cultural meaning of precious metals as media for representing the divine in the first millennium BCE ancient Near East. More specifically, her project aims to reconstruct the fabrication methods and appearance of cult statues—objects that are not preserved in the archaeological record, but are described in texts and illustrated in secondary images. Metal objects in The Met's collection, such as sheeting, plaques, and appliques in gold, silver, electrum, and copper, may be the remnants of the “golden garments” of the gods. Anastasia's study of these objects (in collaboration with Federico Carò, Department of Scientific Research) will elucidate the specific techniques of metalworking that contributed to the cult statue's function as a vital divine presence.



Silver and gold foil disk depicting a worshipper before an enthroned deity/cult statue. Urartian, 8-7th century BCE. Gift of Norbert Schimmel Trust, 1989 (1989.281.20)

**Caitlin Chaves Yates** is continuing for a second year as an Andrew W. Mellon Post-Doctoral Curatorial Research Fellow. She is expanding last year's work on the archaeological collections housed in the Department, with a specific focus on the integration of contextual and archival data into The Met's database. Having completed work on the Ctesiphon and Nippur excavations last year, she has shifted her archaeological archiving focus to the 1930s excavations at Qasr-i Abu Nasr, Iran. She presented a paper on the history of the ANE Department's involvement with archaeology at the annual meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research in November. As part of her fellowship, Caitlin also recently attended the Digital Art History Summer School in Spain, co-sponsored by University of Malaga and University of California Berkeley, where she learned about applying new technologies and new ways of thinking to art historical questions.





View of Qasr-i Abu Nasr before beginning excavations in 1932

**Betty Hensellek** is a PhD candidate in the History of Art at Cornell University, whose research revolves around the material culture of Central Asia and Iran in the first millennium CE. She was awarded The Sylvan C. Coleman and Pam Coleman Memorial Fund Fellowship to work on her doctoral dissertation, “The Age of the Polychrome Kaftan: a Sartorial System of Late Antique Central Eurasia” at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. We are pleased to report that her fellowship has been renewed for the 2018-2019 academic year. Betty’s dissertation project investigates the social function of a particular garment type, the kaftan, across the vastly different socio-political landscapes of Eurasia ca. 400-1000 CE. In her first year at The Met, she plans to complete two chapters concerning the kaftan’s role in banquets and the hunt. In the following year, she will continue working on her dissertation alongside a project re-evaluating the Central Asian silk fragments in the Met’s collection. In addition to her dissertation, Betty is working on several article projects about both Sogdian wall paintings and Sasanian silver vessels.



Betty Hensellek in front of a Sasanian monument in Kermanshah, Iran. March, 2018.

**Miriam Said** (Frances Markoe Fellow, 2016 – 2017) received a Mellon Curatorial Internship award from the History of Art Department at the University of California, Berkeley to extend her tenure in the Ancient Near Eastern Art Department. During the Fall 2017 term, Miriam examined a first millennium BCE plaque featuring the Mesopotamian demon Pazuzu (L.2004.8, on loan from Nanette B. Kelekian) as one of the primary case studies for her third dissertation chapter, “Translating the Body into Space: Apotropaic Wall Plaques and Free Standing Figurines.” This work will investigate the relationship between personal and household protection and explore how phenomenological approaches may help modern scholars better understand the intersection between the senses of sight and touch and the ritual agency of such objects. Miriam presented preliminary research for this chapter at the American Schools of Oriental Research Annual Conference in November 2017.



Stone plaque with image of Pazuzu. Mesopotamia. 8th–6th century B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Lent by Nanette B. Kelekian (L.2004.8)



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## Welcoming Researchers

The Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art welcomes and encourages researchers to make use of its collections. In order to facilitate this work we have recently created a Research Request Form and Researcher Guidelines which we hope to make available on the Met's website in the near future. Object research will now be systematically recorded in our collections management database so that we can better document work on the collection. We are also in the process of creating a dedicated space for the study of objects when researchers do visit us, as well as a room to house the Department's extensive archives for the use of staff and researchers.

## Staff Updates

Daira Szostak has been promoted to the position of Collections Specialist, fulfilling all Collections Management related duties for the Department. In this capacity, she now oversees the care and maintenance of the objects, galleries, and storage spaces. She is responsible for all incoming, outgoing, and long-term loans. In her previous role as Research Assistant, she was working on cataloguing the permanent collection and digitizing the Herzfeld Archive. The archive consists of various documents belonging to Ernst Herzfeld, a prominent German archaeologist active in the early 20th century (see Daira's article on the Timeline of Art History [[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/herz\\_2/hd\\_herz\\_2.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/herz_2/hd_herz_2.htm)]). Both projects have been incorporated into her current job as ongoing elements of the effort to document and share the collection with the public.

Tim Healing resigned from the Department in March 2018 to pursue a focus on cultural heritage work. We thank him for his many years of dedication to ANE and wish him well for the future.

## ANE Department Staff

Curator in Charge  
Kim Benzel

Associate Curators  
Sarah Graff  
Yelena Rakic

Assistant Curator  
Michael Seymour

Research Associates  
Anne-Elizabeth Dunn-Vaturi  
Blair Fowlkes-Childs

Collections Specialist  
Daira Szostak

Assistant for Administration  
Monica Eisner

Principal Departmental Technician  
Shawn Osborne