



# NMC NEWS

NEAR AND MIDDLE EASTERN CIVILIZATIONS  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO · FALL 2015



IN THIS ISSUE · AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE · HONOUR OF JOHN S. HOLLADAY, JR · SYRIA: A CRITICAL DISCUSSION · PUBLICATIONS & RESEARCH · EPIGRAPHIC DOCUMENTS · THE JEWISH FAMILY · GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

# Message from the chair

The holiday season offers an opportunity to pause and reflect on the activities and events of this past year, and to celebrate the accomplishments of our NMC community. Our faculty and students continue to garner an impressive array of annual awards. In this issue of our fall newsletter we have highlighted several particularly important milestone awards that acknowledge the exceptional lifetime of scholarship and service of three of our senior faculty. Each embodies the distinguished reputation of our faculty, and the high esteem with which they are regarded by their colleagues and the broader scholarly community. A warm and richly deserved congratulations to Professors Aksan, Daviau, and Holladay. This issue also celebrates the launch of the Canadian Society for the Advancement of Turkish Studies (CSATS), and reports on the continuing efforts of the NMC community to respond to the catastrophic devastation of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Finally, we wish to acknowledge the retirement of Dr. Karin Ruhrdanz, Curator of Islamic Decorative Art at the ROM, and thank her for her many years of teaching service in NMC. I hope you enjoy this issue, and will continue to support NMC and its many worthy programs!

— *Timothy P. Harrison, Professor and Chair*



## Awards of Excellence

**Dr. P. M. Michèle Daviau** received the 2015 P.E. MacAllister Field Archaeology Award from the American Schools of Oriental Research at ASOR's annual meeting in Atlanta in November.

The award recognizes Michèle's contribution to ancient Near Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean archaeology through her extensive fieldwork, publication record, and devotion to students. Michèle received her Ph.D from our Department and was an active member of our Graduate Faculty.



The Middle East Studies Association of North America is pleased to present the 2015 JERE L. BACHARACH SERVICE AWARD

to **Virginia H. Aksan** in recognition of her exceptional service to the field of Middle East studies; For her extraordinary work on behalf of MESA;

in leadership (two 3-year terms on the board of directors, including as president), in committee work (Hourani Book Award chair, chair of the Committee on Academic Freedom's North America wing, chair of the Annual Meeting Program Committee, member of the Dissertation Committee, and chair of the Ethics Committee); For her equally impressive commitment to the work of MESA's affiliated societies including the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association and the Middle East Librarians Association; For her tireless work in university administration, in professional unions and organizations, on boards of academic journals, and as an advisor and advocate for an international community of younger scholars. Whenever one of her many communities calls, she answers.



# Walls of the Prince. Egyptian Interactions with Southwest Asia in Antiquity:

## *Essays in Honour of John S. Holladay, Jr.*

It was with great pleasure that Timothy Harrison, (Chair of NMC), presented **Dr. John (Jack) S. Holladay Jr.** with a copy of “*Walls of the Prince. Egyptian Interactions with Southwest Asia in Antiquity: Essays in Honour of John S. Holladay, Jr.*” on December 4th, at the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations’ annual holiday celebration at the UofT Faculty Club. This Festschrift recently published by Brill (2015) is a compilation of papers written by friends, colleagues, and many of Jack’s former students at NMC. It is a modest recognition of Jack’s long and distinguished academic career in the field of Archaeology.

Three current members of NMC have contributions in the volume, in addition to Prof. Tim Harrison, Prof. Ted Banning and Stanley Klassen acting as co-editors.

1. MB II Flat-Bottom Handmade Cooking Pots from Wadi Tumilat: A Useful Chronological Marker or an Indicator of Technical Style? Stanley Klassen
2. Thutmose III’s Great Syrian Campaign: Tracing the Steps of the Egyptian Pharaoh in Western Syria, Part I: From Idlib to Aleppo. Douglas Frayne
3. Anthropoid Clay Coffins of the Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age in Egypt and the Near East: A Re-Evaluation of the Evidence from Tell el-Yahudiya. Mary-Ann Pouls-Wegner

The long list of names in the volume’s Tabula Gratulatoria highlights Dr. Holladay’s rapport with colleagues and those wanting to offer their congratulations on this momentous occasion.

Jack served as a faculty member of the Department from 1968 until his “retirement” in 1996. Jack’s daughter Karen and his grandson Benjamin were also on hand to share in the celebration.

***Congratulations Jack!***



# Syria: A Critical Discussion of Crisis and Destruction

In collaboration with the NMCSU and the NMC GSA, students of the University of Toronto and the Department of Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations organized an event on November 13th, focusing on the humanitarian and refugee crisis, as well as the ongoing cultural destruction in Syria and the Middle East.

Featuring lectures by **Dr. Şenay Özden** of the Hamisch Syrian Cultural House in Istanbul, **Dr. Clemens Reichel**, and **Dr. Jens Hanssen** of the University of Toronto.

This event promoted awareness and discussion, while raising funds for two University of Toronto initiatives (University of Toronto 'Scholars at Risk' and 'Lifeline Syria') aimed at helping Syrian Refugees and Scholars.

More information on these very worthy fundraising initiatives and how you can help by donating are available online:

<https://nmccesi.wordpress.com/about/>

## *Turkish Studies in NMC - CSATS Launch*

We are pleased to announce the formal launch of the Canadian Society for the Advancement of Turkish Studies (CSATS), which took place at a reception on September 24th. This special event, held at Hart House, opened with speeches by the members of the CSATS' executive committee, **Dr. Sema Donna Kenan** and **Dr. Mustafa Koç**, followed by an entertaining lecture given by **Prof. Virginia Aksan**, entitled "*Writing the Ottomans onto the World Map: A Personal Journey*". Following the lecture, **Dr. Kenan** reviewed the structure and mission of the Society. Vice Consul of Turkey **Gökhan Toy**, and **Prof. Tim Harrison** (NMC), welcomed everyone, then introduced **Dr. Lütfü Savaş**, the Mayor of Antakya (Turkey), who briefly addressed the audience.

Aside from bringing together people interested in the study of ancient, modern and contemporary Turkish cultures and societies, CSATS is also raising funds to support students at the UofT pursuing careers in Turkish Studies. On this special occasion, **Sharon Mizbani**, one of NMC's outstanding Masters students, was awarded the Canadian Turkish Community Scholarship, created from donations made by the Turkish community in Toronto.



# Research & Publications

During the summer field season, **Dr. Stephen Batiuk** conducted salvage excavations at the Middle and Late Bronze Age site of **Sajoge** within the city of Tbilisi, Georgia.

These excavations, conducted in conjunction with the Georgian National Museum, and funded by a grant from the Brennan Foundation and the University of Toronto Archaeology Centre, represents one of the few Middle Bronze Age settlements in the region, and was being heavily encroached and damaged by modern development.

The project helped highlight the importance of the site to the municipality of Tbilisi, and a preservation program has been devised to help safeguard this important archaeological site.

**The Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies (CIMS)** then held the Annual Symposium entitled *The Function of the Palace in Ancient Near Eastern State Societies*. **Professor Paul-Alain Beaulieu** gave a talk on *“Palaces of Babylon and Palaces of Babylonian Kings”*, and **Professor Clemens Reichel** presented *“Beyond the ‘Big Man’s house’ - the development and function of palaces in early Mesopotamian state societies”*, and also *“Centre and Periphery - the role of the ‘Palace of the Rulers’ at Tell Asmar in the history of Eshnunna (2,100 - 1,750 BC)”*. PhD Candidate **Odette Boivin** presented her research on *“The Palace as Economic Unit in the Sealand I Kingdom”*.

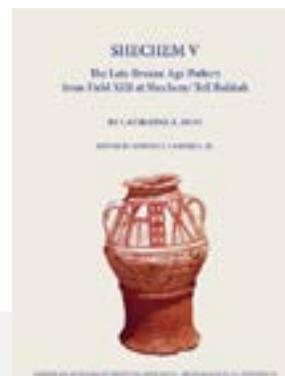
**Dr. Stephen Batiuk** (NMC Senior Research Associate) also presented his research on *“Kura-Araxes and Wine Production: Evidence for Early Bronze Age Qvevri”* at the 2nd International Qvevri Conference, held in the Alaverdi Monastery in Khakheti, Georgia.

*Shechem V The Late Bronze Age Pottery from Field XIII at Shechem / Tell Balâtah*, by Catherine A. Duff, series edited by **Edward F. Campbell, Jr.**

Substantial ceramic and architectural remains attributable to the Late Bronze Age were excavated in Field XIII in 1968 by the Drew-McCormick Expedition. The Late Bronze Age sequence spanning the Late Bronze I, IIA, and IIB contains ceramics from occupational contexts and also from a cache of 850 restorable and complete vessels from a Basement Chamber sealed below destruction debris.

This analysis provides data on the ceramic typological development and the technological processes or chaîne opératoire at a Northern Hill Country site. While mostly domestic in nature, the ceramic assemblage also comprises imported Cypriot White Slip and Base Ring Wares that place the territorial kingdom, governed by the ambitious ruler Lab’ayu, within a wider regional trade system encompassing the Dothan-Jezreel and Beth Shean Valley routes. The findings from this investigation align with recent scholarship that shows the early Late Bronze I was defined by contracted settlement over a protracted period of time, in contrast to the

architectural and ceramic complexity exhibited in the Late Bronze IIA, and to a limited extent in the Late Bronze IIB. This report continues the effort to publish the excavation findings from ten seasons of excavations spanning 1957 to 1972 and originally led by Expedition Director **G. Ernest Wright**.



# News from the Canadian Centre for Epigraphic Documents

As ISIS militants continue to wreak havoc throughout the Levant, our research community continues to work toward safeguarding the region's cultural heritage for future generations. With the largest collection of Iraqi Syriac and Garshuni inscriptions in the world, courtesy of **Professor Amir Harrak's** efforts to catalogue threatened epigraphs, the *Canadian Centre for Epigraphic Documents (CCED)* exemplifies the contribution that digital humanists can make to current interventions in the Middle East. Hosted right here at *NMC*, the *CCED's* holdings include the only extant copies of inscriptions now destroyed by the Islamic State.

As noted by recent coverage in *LiveScience*, *CBS*, the *CBC*, *Fox News*, and *Current World Archaeology*, the *CCED's* work transcends borders and bridges disciplines.

During his recent panel on cultural genocide at the *ROM*, **Professor Clemens Reichel** lauded the *CCED's* Syriac Inscription Project as the most significant of its type anywhere in the world. Indeed, as the *CCED's* collection is more extensive than even that of the National Museum in Baghdad, a professor from the University of Kufa has pledged to use the *CCED's* online materials to enrich his students' understanding of their history and heritage, by partnering with researchers at the British Library and Mount Holyoke College, *CCED Director Colin Clarke* hopes to recover works of unknown Syriac poets and to restore ancient compositions for future audiences before they are lost forever, whether by destruction or by neglect.

The *CCED* works on a budget of zero dollars. To date, its work has relied on the indispensable efforts of volunteers from the information profession. Its mission, to safeguard irreplaceable chapters of world history for our children and grandchildren—and to fund the production of a new solar-powered dehumidification prototype that will revolutionize archival methods in developing nations.



AD.04.03 – St. George and the Dragon  
Syriac Orthodox Church of Mōr Gīworgīs  
Qaraqōš. Nineveh, Iraq  
Syriac, Garshuni, and Arabic  
1866  
Destroyed 2006



# The Jewish Family

The Jewish Law Association hosted “*The Jewish Family*,” in conjunction with the University of Toronto’s *Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies* and *York University’s Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies*.

Presentations included, “*When the Perfect Divine Law Meets the Imperfect Jewish Family*,” by **Harry Fox** “*Your Silence is more Prudent: The Perverse Consequences for Women Attempting to Exercise their Legal Rights*” by **Marinka Yossifon** and “*The Age of Marriage in Jewish Law—Conflicts between Halakhah and Civil Law*” by **Tirzah Meacham**.

Multiple presentations took place which involved a lively debate regarding conflicts between the Halachah and civil law involving gender relations as well as marriage and divorce.

Following the event Professor **Tirzah Meacham** was also featured within *The Canadian Jewish News*.

The event succeeded in accomplishing a focused discussion on themes relating to Jewish family perspectives including Law, history, comparative and philosophical perspectives.



## Retirement:

### Dr. Karin Rührdanz

On November 30th, 2015, **Dr. Karin Rührdanz** retired from her position as Curator of Islamic Decorative Art at the Royal Ontario Museum. A native of Greifswald (Germany) she received her doctorate at the Martin Luther University at Halle-Wittenberg in 1974 with a dissertation on Humanism and tradition in modern Arab painting, followed by her Dr. sc. Phil (Habilitation) in 1985, entitled *The development of Persian manuscript illustration, 14th - 16th century*, with special regard to collections in the GDR.

After her appointment as Assistant and then Associate Professor of Islamic Art at the Wittenberg University between 1974 and 1994, she held positions at Bamberg University (1991-92), the Institute of Advanced Studies in Princeton (1993-1994), the Metropolitan Museum (1994-95), and the Institute of Iranian Studies of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (2005-06), before she joined Royal Ontario Museum in 2007, where she was promoted the Senior Curator in 2012.

A much-liked colleague at both the ROM and NMC, known as much for her uncompromising commitment to academic rigor as for her bone-dry sense of humor, Karin’s departure from Toronto will leave a deep void. A certificate of appreciation was presented on her last day. We will miss her and wish her all the best for the next steps of her life back in Germany.

Mailing label



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