

PICTURING THE PAST

IMAGING & IMAGINING THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

PROGRAM & ABSTRACTS



BREASTED HALL, THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
1155 E 58th Street, Chicago IL 60637
SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 2012
1:00 PM–6:00 PM

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM

SATURDAY MARCH 10, 2012

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1:00–1:10 | GIL STEIN , Director of the Oriental Institute, Welcome and Introduction |
| 1:10–1:15 | CAROLE KRUCOFF , Head of Public Education, Oriental Institute, Agenda for the Day |
| 1:15–1:45 | JACK GREEN , Chief Curator, Oriental Institute, “Restoring the Past: A Brief History of Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East” |
| 1:45–2:15 | EMILY TEETER , Research Associate, Oriental Institute, “The Documentation of Egyptian Reliefs and Inscriptions” |
| 2:15–2:45 | MICHAEL SEYMOUR , Research Associate, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, “Three Images of Babylon” |
| 2:45–3:00 | Break |
| 3:00–3:30 | ERIC CARLSON , Professional Freelance Illustrator, “Illustrating Life and Death at Early Bronze Age Sites in the Dead Sea Valley, Jordan” |
| 3:30–4:00 | DONALD SANDERS , President, Institute for the Visualization of History, “The Past, Present, and Future of Virtual Heritage” |
| 4:00–4:15 | Break |
| 4:15–4:45 | Panel Discussion |
| 5:00 | Reception |

ABSTRACTS & BIOS

JACK GREEN (Chief Curator, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

Title: “Restoring the Past: A Brief History of Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East”

Abstract: Images play an integral role in the study and understanding of the past, both in terms of constructing and interpreting archaeological knowledge from the ground up, as well as providing graphic support within books, magazines, museums, and archaeological sites, as well as on television and the Internet. In recreating a vision of a time and place that no longer exists, such images help communicate ideas that are difficult to describe in words. They also evoke atmosphere and emotion, inspiring wonder and fascination in the past. Drawing upon the content of the exhibit *Picturing the Past*, this lecture provides a brief history of reconstructed images of ancient architecture and daily life of the Middle East, exploring aspects of their creation and impact upon public and scholarly audiences.

Bio: Jack Green, Ph.D. (aka John D. M.) is Chief Curator of the Oriental Institute Museum and a co-curator of the exhibit *Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East*. He is also a research associate at the Oriental Institute. He received his Ph.D. from University College, London (2006), and was curator of the ancient Near East collections at the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, from 2007 to 2011. He is also co-editor and major contributor to the Tell es-Sa'idiyeh (Jordan) Cemetery Publication Project of the British Museum.

EMILY TEETER (Research Associate, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago)

Title: “The Documentation of Egyptian Reliefs and Inscriptions”

Abstract: Because James Henry Breasted, an Egyptologist, was an early member of the Department of Semitic Languages and the first Director of the Oriental Institute, it is not surprising that much of the university’s scholarly emphasis was devoted to the documentation of Egyptian reliefs and inscriptions. Teeter discusses Breasted’s early motivations for documentation and the development of different systems for recording that culminated in the “Chicago House” method of epigraphy for making accurate copies of the decoration that appears on the walls of temples and tombs. She also notes how the University of Chicago broadened its scope of work through collaborations with other organizations to record and publish monuments in the Nile Valley.

Bio: Emily Teeter, Ph.D., is a Research Associate at the Oriental Institute and co-curator of the exhibit *Picturing the Past*. She is the editor of the exhibit catalogs *The Life of Meresamun: A Temple Singer in Ancient Egypt* and *Before the Pyramids: The Origins of Egyptian Civilization*. Her most recent books are *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt* and *Baked Clay Figurines and Votive Beds from Medinet Habu*.

MICHAEL SEYMOUR (Research Associate, Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Title: “Three Images of Babylon”

Abstract: Babylon has enjoyed a rich, if not always positive, tradition of representation in Western art. This lecture considers three of the most famous images in this tradition: Bruegel’s Tower of Babel paintings, Rembrandt’s “Belshazzar’s Feast” and Degas’ “Semiramis Building Babylon.” The images and their makers exemplify the variety of approaches to the ancient past available to artists, and something of the changing cultural contexts for Babylon’s artistic representation. The episodes the paintings depict are drawn from biblical and classical sources, yet the intellectual background to each work is quite different and each embodies a distinct form of engagement with the distant past. In examining these artistic approaches it is also possible to reflect on some of the aims and values underlying archaeological reconstruction, and to consider this very particular form of visualization in its broader historical context.

Bio: Michael Seymour, Ph.D., is a Research Associate in the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art. He was formerly Project Curator in the Department of the Middle East, British Museum, and was co-curator of the museum’s 2008–9 exhibition *Babylon: Myth and Reality*. He is also co-editor of the journal *Iraq* and archaeological consultant to the World Monuments Fund at Babylon. His first single-author monograph, a history of Babylon’s reception and representation in Western culture, will be published later this year by I. B. Tauris.

ERIC S. CARLSON (Professional Freelance Illustrator)

Title: “Illustrating Life and Death at Early Bronze Age Sites in the Dead Sea Valley, Jordan”

Abstract: Visual reconstructions of the past often serve as a major bridge of communication between the archaeological community and the general public. Through these images archaeologists express descriptive, interpretive, and often theoretical information. Illustrations are usually seen and critiqued in their final form, however, and little attention has been paid to the actual process by which they are generated. A recent collaborative project in the Dead Sea Valley of Jordan involving archaeologists from University of Notre Dame, Indiana; the University of Pennsylvania; and the Department of Antiquities, Jordan, produced a series of images depicting Early Bronze Age mortuary features, walled cities, and scenes of daily life. Throughout the course of the fieldwork, the illustrator worked closely with other archaeologists to encourage communication and visual thinking among the team. A set of procedures was developed for the construction of the final images that relied upon intensive dialogue and multiple revisions.

Bio: Eric S. Carlson, M.A., is an archaeologist and freelance illustrator who currently lives in Missoula, Montana. Mr. Carlson has worked as an on-site illustrator on multiple projects in Jordan and Ireland, including excavations at Dhra' and el Hemmeh and projects on islands off the Connemara Coast. He is involved with ongoing collaborative illustration projects with the St'at'imc community in southern British Columbia Canada, and with the National Park Service in Alaska. Selected publications: E. Carlson, A. M. Prentiss, I. Kuijt, N. Crossland, and A. Adolph, *Visually Reconstructing Mid Fraser Canyon Prehistory: Redefining a Process*, 2010, SAA Archaeological Record, Vol. 10, No. 1, 29–33.

DONALD SANDERS (President, Institute for the Visualization of History, Williamstown, MA)

Title: “The Past, Present, and Future of Virtual Heritage”

Abstract: Understanding the distant past isn't easy; we weren't there. The discipline of Virtual Heritage emerged in the 1990s to remedy that situation by demonstrating the many benefits of building interactive, 3-D, computer-generated visualizations of historical settings, events, and cultures. Virtual Heritage professionals pursue their re-creation goals because of the new insight that invariably results when visualizing the past from the point of view of the ancient inhabitants. After all, the past happened in 3-D; so that's the way it should be studied. Sanders discusses some of the archaeological sites and problems he has worked on using virtual reality for hypothesis testing, digital publication, and museum display, with a focus on the Northwest Palace, Nimrud, as an exemplar. He also hints at a paradigm shift about to hit archaeological fieldwork, data analysis, and dissemination.

Bio: Donald H. Sanders, Ph.D., is trained and educated as an architect, architectural historian, and archaeologist. He is the President and Founder of Learning Sites, Inc., and the Institute for the Visualization of History, Inc., both world leaders in virtual heritage. These companies have pioneered the use of virtual-reality technologies for interactive research, display, teaching, and publication of information about the past. He has been an invited keynote speaker, session chair, and panelist at numerous international venues.

SUGGESTED READINGS & RESOURCES

Abt, Jeffrey. *American Egyptologist: The Life of James Henry Breasted and the Creation of His Oriental Institute.* University of Chicago Press. 2011.

Allen, Susan. *Tutankhamun's Tomb: The Thrill of Discovery; Photographs by Harry Burton.* The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 2006.

Blascovich, Jim, and Jeremy Bailenson. *Infinite Reality: Avatars, Eternal Life, New Worlds, and the Dawn of the Virtual Revolution.* Harper Collins. 2011.

Breasted, James H. *Egypt through the Stereoscope: A Journey through the Land of the Pharaohs.* Underwood and Underwood. 1905. Reissued in 2010 by the Oriental Institute.

Finkel, Irving L., and Michael J. Seymour, editors. *Babylon: Myth and Reality.* The British Museum Press. 2008.

Green, Jack; Emily Teeter; and John A. Larson, editors. *Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East.* Oriental Institute Museum Publications 34. The Oriental Institute. 2012.

Larson, John A. *Lost Nubia: A Centennial Exhibition of Photographs from the 1905-1907 Egyptian Expedition of the University of Chicago.* Oriental Institute Museum Publication 24. The Oriental Institute. 2006.

Molynieux, Brian L. *The Cultural Life of Images: Visual Representation in Archaeology.* Routledge. 1997.

Moser, Stephanie, and Sam Smiles, editors. *Envisioning the Past: Archaeology and the Image.* Blackwell. 2005.

Rezaeian, Farzin. *Persepolis Recreated.* Sunrise Visual Innovations. 2004.

Iran: Seven Faces of a Civilization. Sunset Visual Innovations. 2007.

Incredible Isfahan: Discovering Persia's Past. Sunset Visual Innovations. 2011.