



International Catacomb Society

Bridging Disciplines • Supporting Scholarship • Connecting the Public

For Immediate Release

April 30, 2016

2016-2017 Shohet Scholars Awards

The officers and directors of the International Catacomb Society are pleased to announce the Shohet Scholars for 2016-2017.

Nathaniel DesRosiers, (Stonehill College)

Aphrodisias: City of the Gods

This study will examine the religious life of the ancient Roman city of Aphrodisias. The project focuses on the ways that diverse religious groups, including the Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Christians interacted within an urban environment, often adapting their beliefs, architecture, and religious practices as a result of such contact. Although other cities in the Greek-speaking east faced similar challenges, Aphrodisias is striking because it provides compelling evidence demonstrating how these diverse cultures competed with one another through art, architecture, and public donations, resulting in unique and innovative forms of religious expression found only in Aphrodisias.

Sarah Madole, (City University of New York)

New Perspectives on Mythological Sarcophagi and Subterranean Rome

Mythological sarcophagi found in subterranean Rome have long been disassociated from their archaeological and cultic contexts due to the fragmented record and moreover, disciplinary agendas. Therefore this project addresses a neglected subject that pertains to Greco-Roman as well as Jewish and Christian studies. Art historical and religious catacombs scholars traditionally eschew “pagan” sarcophagi, and the typological compendia of individual myths composed by Roman sarcophagus scholars overlook contextual issues. Yet the mythological sarcophagus catalogue remains incomplete, and a contextual study of the sub-group found beneath Rome is lacking, and called for, in recent scholarship. The collation and study of this often-fragmentary material has rich potential and further, will contribute to recent studies on myth and meaning, and the sarcophagus industry in late imperial Rome.

Jodi Magness, (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

“The Huqoq Excavation Project”

Huqoq is an ancient Jewish village located approximately three miles west of Capernaum and Migdal (Magdala) in the Galilee of Israel. A consortium of universities, led by Dr.

Jodi Magness, has completed five seasons of excavations. This fifth season of excavation has revealed further portions of a mosaic floor that decorated a Late Roman – Byzantine (fifth century C.E.) synagogue. The mosaics uncovered in 2013 include a scene of Samson carrying the gate of Gaza upon his back (Judges 16:3), a grouping of men who surround a central figure under an arcade, and a battle scene or triumphal parade with elephants. In 2014, the remainder of the scene containing elephants was brought to light. Details about the on-going excavation are at: <http://huqoqexcavationproject.org/>.

Daniel Ullucci, (Rhodes College)

“Evidence of Physical Offerings by Christians in Roman Funerary Contexts”

This research attempts to show that current models of Christian origins are warped by a positivist attitude regarding the scope and influence of religious experts and their texts. There is a growing body of evidence, textual and archaeological, pointing to the continuance of sacrificial practices (physical offerings) in early Christian groups. Most of this evidence is preserved in funerary settings. Reintegrating this evidence will give a clearer picture of early Christian development. It will also help to show the various ways in which the everyday practices of the majority of ancient Christians did and did not correspond to the theological formulations of Christian experts.

We congratulate these scholars on the quality and impact of their work.

Sincerely,

Jessica Dello Russo

Executive Director
International Catacomb Society

About the Shohet Scholars Program:

The International Catacomb Society desires to support scholars of demonstrated promise and ability who are judged capable of producing significant, original research within the sphere of the Mediterranean world from the late Hellenistic Period to the end of the Roman Empire. Of special interest are interdisciplinary projects that approach traditional topics from new perspectives.

One or more Shohet Scholars will be selected each year and supported for a period of one year. Grants may be made to seed innovative approaches and new ideas or to cover specific expenses or phases of a larger project under the direction of the applicant. At this time, awards in the range of \$2,000 to \$30,000 will be made.

The application deadline for 2017-2018 is **January 15, 2017**.

If you have any questions about the suitability of proposed projects, application procedures, or any other matters related to the Shohet Scholars Program, please contact us at shohetscholars@catacombsociety.org.