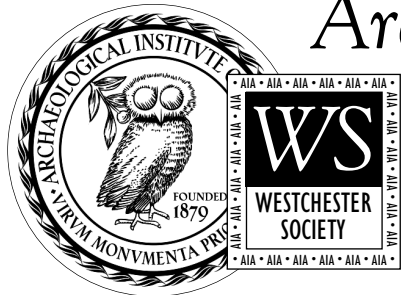




Archaeological Institute of America  
Westchester Society

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**BULLETIN**

Vol. XXXV No. 1 January 2010

## Gladiators: When the Superbowl Was Roman

Date/Time: Sunday, January 31 at 2:00 PM

Location: Manhattanville College, 2900 Purchase Street, Purchase

Speakers: Garrett Fagan, Pennsylvania State University and Steven L. Tuck, Miami University (OH)

### ROMAN ARENAS AND CROWD DYNAMICS

*In popular perceptions, the gladiator is one of the most characteristic symbols of Roman civilization. The popularity among the Romans of arena games – incorporating animal hunts, executions, and gladiatorial bouts – is not in doubt. Explanations thus far offered by scholars for this popularity have rested on anthropological, sociological, or symbological interpretations of the arena's function in Roman culture. Yet even a cursory glance at comparative evidence shows that people beyond the Romans have long found the sight of animals and people pitched against each other in bruising and/or lethal encounters both appealing and intriguing: think of combat sports, the medieval tournament, public executions, bullfights, bear-baiting, etc. Psychological factors offer the likeliest explanation for the transcultural and transhistorical appeal of violent spectacle.*

*In this lecture, he examines the social psychological components of the Roman arena's lure, with a special emphasis on crowd dynamics. In particular, he examines how the physical disposition of the spectators at Roman arenas facilitated the processes of the crowd and lent the events a heightened excitement and emotional pitch. Other factors were at play too – such as sating prejudices or excitement at sports spectatorship – but crowd dynamics served to channel and focus the spectators' energies, and this was an attractive prospect in itself.*

**Prof. Fagan**, has taught at Pennsylvania State University since 1996. He was born in Dublin, Ireland, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He received his Ph.D. from McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, and has held teaching positions at McMaster University, York University (Canada), the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Davidson College, and, the Pennsylvania State University. Professor Fagan has an extensive research record in Roman history and has held a prestigious Killam Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and an Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellowship at the University of Cologne, Germany. He has published numerous articles in international journals, and his first monograph, *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, was published by the University of Michigan Press in 1999. He has also edited a volume from Routledge on the phenomenon of pseudoarchaeology (2005). His current research project is on spectatorship at the Roman arena, and he is also working on a book on ancient warfare.

### DE ARTE GLADIATORIA: RECOVERING GLADIATORIAL TACTICS FROM ARTISTIC SOURCES

*The tactics gladiators used in the arena remain a mystery. Their training was almost certainly oral so no training manuals survive. The extant literary sources are of little help. Written by elite men, many specifically deploring the activities of the arena, they remain silent on the specifics of the contests. Our best sources to recover this lost martial art may in fact be artistic representations of the events in the arena. Because of the enormous public interest in gladiatorial combat, these provide a wealth of images in all conceivable media. They are demonstrably specific concerning the circumstances of arena combat, and transcend generalized images of victory and defeat to show detailed and repeated images of arms, armor, opponents, non-verbal communication, and contexts. The artists certainly had a firsthand knowledge of the events in the arena and created these works for a knowledgeable and interested public. Examining representations of gladiators and their counterparts, venatores, and comparing them with the illustrations from the first western fighting manuals of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, allows us to reconstruct the tactics of gladiators and venatores. Identifiable in the art are certain details such as stance, weapon placement, angle of attack, and tactics. Notable in images of gladiatorial combat is evidence of close work: grappling, throws, and wrestling that were, and remain, integral to military personal combat. This study confirms the notion that gladiators were highly skilled, specifically trained, and determined not just to kill their opponents but to entertain and display virtus*

**Prof. Fagan**, earned his Ph.D. in Classical Art and Archaeology from the University of Michigan and a post-doctoral fellowship at Ohio State University. His areas of specialization are Roman spectacle entertainment, and imperial art, and archaeology, especially ideological display. He has conducted fieldwork, research and study tours in Egypt, England, Italy and Greece. He has published articles on Greek and Latin epigraphy, sculpture, architecture, and the monument program in the harbors of Portus and Lepcis Magna, and his recent publications include "Latin Inscriptions in the Kelsey Museum" (2006, University of Michigan Press). He is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Classics and History, Miami University, where he directs a summer study program in Italy and was named a Distinguished Professor in 2007 and 2008.

## AIA NOVEMBER SPEAKER... *IN THE NEWS* ZEUS' ALTAR OF ASHES

News from the Archaeological Institute of America's annual meeting held in Anaheim, CA – Jan, 2010

By *Bruce Bower*

**ANAHEIM, Calif.** — Excavations at the Sanctuary of Zeus atop Greece's Mount Lykaion have revealed that ritual activities occurred there for roughly 1,500 years, from the height of classic Greek civilization around 3,400 years ago until just before Roman conquest in 146. "We may have the first documented mountaintop shrine from the ancient Greek world," says project director David Romano of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Ritual ceremonies were conducted in a part of the open-air sanctuary called the ash altar of Zeus. It now consists of a mound of ash, stone and various inscribed dedications to Zeus, the head god of Greek mythology. Romano's team has found no evidence of a temple or structures of any kind on Mount Lykaion.

Work conducted over the past two years at the ash altar of Zeus has unearthed material from many phases of Greek civilization. Finds include pottery of various types, terra cotta figurines of people and animals, and burned bones of sheep and goats. Chemical analyses have revealed traces of red wine on the inside surfaces of some pottery fragments, Romano says. His team reported initial evidence of ritual activity at the ash altar of Zeus in 2007. The new discoveries indicate that ancient Greeks kept returning to the sacred site for a remarkably long time.

[http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/54964/title/Zeus\\_altar\\_of\\_ashes](http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/54964/title/Zeus_altar_of_ashes): Zeus' altar of ashes

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### AMERICAN HISTORY SYMPOSIA – FREE Institute of History, Archaeology, and Education, Inc. *THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION IN NEW YORK*

**Date:** Saturday, March 6

**Time:** 9:00 AM

**Location:** Manhattanville College, 2900, Purchase Street, Purchase, NY

New York and the Hudson River Valley in particular played a critical role in the American Revolution that is often overlooked. The Yankee-Red Sox rivalry has precedents in the telling of the story of the American Revolution. For too long Massachusetts writers have made Massachusetts the cosmic center of the confrontation. Now it is time for New Yorkers to have their say. Hear and meet the scholars who are telling the New York story. See the displays of the historic organizations that preserve and tell the New York story. Share ideas on how to bring this knowledge back to the classroom.

9:15 Britain and the American Revolution : A Reassessment, *Ray Raymond*, USMA, SUNY

10:15 The American Revolution in the Hudson River Valley *Jim Johnson*, Hudson River Valley Institute, Marist College

11:15 The POWs of Occupied New York City, Ed Burrows, Brooklyn College

1:30 An Object of Great Importance: Teaching about the Hudson River during the American Revolution, *Chris DiPasquale*, author and middle school teacher

### *SLAVERY IN NEW YORK*

**Date:** Saturday, March 13

**Time:** 9:00-4:30

**Location:** Manhattanville College, 2900, Purchase Street, Purchase, NY

*Gone with the Wind* defined slavery for generations of Americans. Now we know better. Slavery wasn't something that simply occurred somewhere else with people we could look down on as morally inferior to the righteous abolitionist North. In recent years scholars have been working more successfully to publicly alter the traditional image of slavery in America by showing it was part and parcel of New York State history for over two centuries. Hear this story. Meet these scholars. Bring back to your classroom new insights, experiences, and contacts on slavery in New York State.

9:00 Welcome and Program Overview: Peter Feinman, IHARE

9:15 Traveling the NY African American Experience, *Sherrill Wilson*, Urban Anthropologist

10:15 Plantation on the Hudson, *Thom Thacker*, Site Director, Philipsburg Manor, Union Church, and Kykuit

11:15 Afro-Dutch Foodways in the Atlantic World. *Fred Opie*, Marist College

1:30 Slavery, Rebellion, and Revolution: An American Assessment, *A. J. Williams-Myers*, SUNY New Paltz

### 2010 UPCOMING SCHEDULE

February 21, 2:00 – *The Last Days of Pompeii: Decadence, Apocalypse, and Redemption*, *Kenneth Lapatin*, J. Paul Getty Museum, at Manhattanville College

March TBD

April 18, 2:00 – *Trading Patterns as Seen through Words for Tea and a 9th-Century Shipwreck*, *Victor Mair*, University of Pennsylvania, TBD

May 10, 7:00, TBT *Pamela Webb*, *Bryn Mawr*, at Kendal on Hudson, Sleepy Hollow

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**Lectures are free to AIA Westchester Society members. A donation of \$5 from non-members is welcome.**

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