



Founded in 1903 the AIA – LA society is one of the oldest AIA chapters in the USA.

## **Member Spotlight**

This is part of an ongoing series of profiles presenting the many talented and diverse members of AIA-LA.

### **Aaron A. Burke**

Aaron A. Burke is the past-president of AIA-LA who handed the reins to Ken Seligson in 2022. In his professional capacity Aaron is professor of archaeology in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at UCLA, and also Kershaw Chair of Ancient Eastern Mediterranean Studies.



Perhaps the most significant change he made as president of our chapter was to increase the number of people participating in its board of directors. In addition to the four officers and immediate past president, he brought in a graduate student liaison, undergraduate student liaison, and public education liaison. A representative from Getty Villa and J. Paul Getty Museum had been involved from time to time, so he worked to make this arrangement a more permanent part of the board. All of those additions helped AIA-LA's interaction with our local communities.



Aaron's archaeological activities have centered around Israel and the Levant. At Jaffa near Tel Aviv he has done considerable work on an ancient Egyptian fortress. He recalls an especially memorable moment happened when his team found a magnificent scarab there. That is a sacred item shaped like a beetle on one side and inscribed with hieroglyphs, etc., on the other. They could be used as a lucky charm or official seal. This particular one at Jaffa was carved with a cartouche of Amenhotep III, which dated it to the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC. And it was huge. Scarabs tended to be .3 to 1.5 inches in size. This one was a full 2 inches wide. 800 beads were found alongside the scarab so it may have been worn as a necklace or cult symbol.

As the most recent past-president, Aaron remains active on the AIA-LA board.

— Interview by Sanford Holst