

POURDAVOUD CENTER LECTURE SERIES



FREED FROM HOSTAGESHIP: IRANIAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE ARSACIDS OF ROME

FEBRUARY 7, 2018 | 4:00 P.M. | 306 ROYCE HALL

JAKE NABEL (GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE)

Over the course of the Julio-Claudian period in Rome (c. 30 BCE–68 CE), several Arsacid princes from the ruling family of the Parthian empire were sent to live at the court of the Roman emperor. Ancient Greco-Roman sources describe these figures as “hostages,” and modern scholars have largely followed suit. While contemporary Parthian evidence is scarce, this talk will draw on later Iranian sources and broader histories of the ancient Near East to consider the Arsacids of Rome from a new perspective – namely, as foster-children rather than hostages. This reinterpretation supports a different view of Roman-Parthian relations in the first century CE, one that departs from the scholarly literature’s usual focus on war and diplomacy between unitary empires and emphasizes instead the interconnection of two royal families through the bonds of fictive kinship.

SPEAKER



Jake Nabel is a Post-doctoral Fellow at the Getty Research Institute as part of a scholar year on “The Classical World in Context: Persia.” He earned his PhD in Ancient History from the Department of Classics at Cornell University in 2017. His research centers on the connections between the Greco-Roman Mediterranean and the empires of pre-Islamic Iran, especially during the Arsacid period (c. 250 BCE–224 CE). He has published and forthcoming work on Roman-Parthian relations, Latin poetry, Seleucid history, and the reception of Alexander the Great in ancient Iranian traditions.

The mission of the Pourdavoud Center for the Study of the Iranian World is to engage in transformative research on all aspects of Iranian antiquity, including its reception in the medieval and modern periods, by expanding on the traditional domains of Old Iranian studies and promoting cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary scholarship.

Advanced registration is requested.

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