

Interim Performance Report

Grant Number: HK-230973-15

Project Title: Pleiades 3

Project Director: Tom Elliott

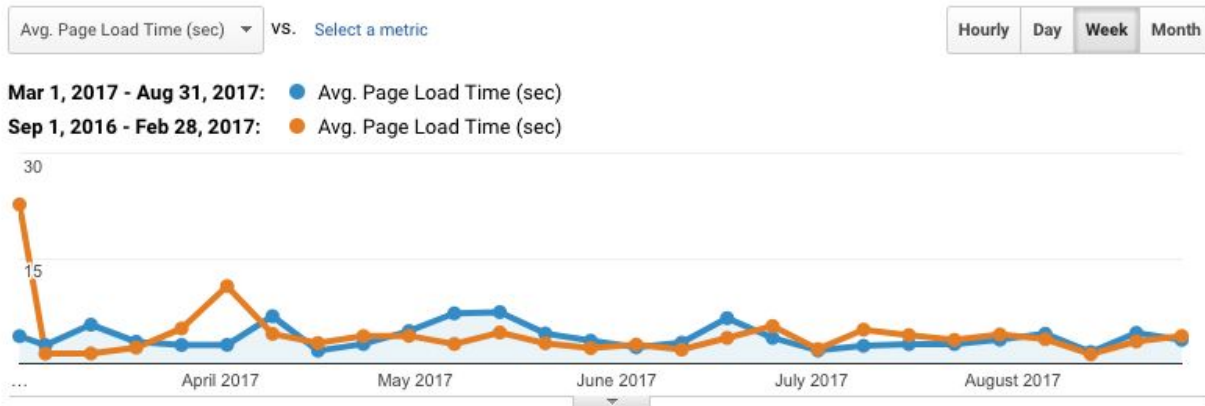
Grantee Institution: New York University

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This report treats activity during the period 1 March - 31 August 2017.

## Performance, Reliability, and Security

Site speed and availability improvements communicated in our previous biannual report have been maintained during the current reporting period (e.g., average page load times in the 2-3 second range as reported by *Google Analytics*). The following graph illustrates the weekly average (in blue). The weekly average for the preceding 6-month period is overlaid in orange.



We have also avoided major outages and degradations. As discussed in prior reports, use of the *Uptime Robot* and *New Relic* monitoring services (as well as those provided by our managed hosting vendor, *tummy.com*) indicate that the only outages seen during the period of performance were brief (less than 10 minutes in duration) and corresponded with intentional maintenance (i.e., routine system and security upgrades). No special activities have been undertaken during this period to achieve these results. They reflect the continuing effectiveness of prior upgrades and enhancements.

Planning for a hardware upgrade (moving from rotating disk storage to solid-state drives) on our production server is well-advanced. We expect implementation during the next reporting period with corresponding performance improvements. Database interactions for both page rendering and content updates should be significantly faster and some server-side cache operations should also improve.

## Software Updates, Community Engagement, Outreach and Pedagogy

In contrast to prior reporting periods, only one software change has been implemented: the resolution of a confusing, intermittent redirect notification for users when they selected a link in our home-page map (Issue 284).<sup>1</sup> A key implication of this relatively small level of subcontractor

<sup>1</sup> See further on the redirect problem: <https://github.com/isawnyu/pleiades-gazetteer/issues/284>

utilization (anticipated in our original budget) is that no "show-stopping" problems have cropped up with the web application. *Pleiades* is running well and contributors and editors are working with it effectively.

Otherwise, our goal has been to allow the community to interact with the changes that have been implemented over the previous 1.5 years and to surface rough edges and unaddressed needs. This approach has been fruitful, such that there are now 126 open tickets on the *Pleiades Gazetteer Issue Tracker*.<sup>2</sup> The all-volunteer editorial college will be working with the community over the next 3-4 months to surface additional concerns and to clarify and prioritize the issues in the tracker so that the final 7-8 months of the grant period can be spent fixing and implementing as many of them as possible, with support from our subcontractor Jazkarta, Inc.

This work will be complemented by moving more of the organizing and record-keeping documents used by the Editorial College into public view. They are presently managed in Google Docs, shared only among members of the Editorial College. Over the course of the fall semester, agenda and project information will be moved to publicly readable GitHub wiki pages within the "Pleiades Gazetteer" repository that already houses the project Issue Tracker.<sup>3</sup>

The reporting period did see significant work from subawardee Duke University's Ryan Baumann. His work on the *Geocollider* reconciliation tool for *Pleiades* culminated in July 2017, as planned. The *Geocollider* -- a web application that facilitates third-party alignment of lists of placenames and locations to the *Pleiades* gazetteer -- went online in June 2017 and was enhanced with support for the *OpenRefine* data cleaning tool in July.<sup>4</sup> Elliott will likely redeploy *GeoCollider* to the main *Pleiades* server following the disk storage upgrade slated for later this fall.

In April 2017, Elliott co-led a one-day "*Pleiades* contributor workshop" at New York University's Institute for the Study of the Ancient World in collaboration with ISAW Librarian for Collections and Services, Gabriel McKee. The workshop introduced 15 ISAW community members (graduate students, visiting scholars, and research staff) to the *Pleiades* editorial process. No grant funds were spent on this activity.

McKee is an established *Pleiades* contributor, focused on adding and enhancing content in *Pleiades* that bears on the cataloging and discovery of books and other resources in the ISAW library collection. To date he is responsible for the addition of published information resources describing 49 ancient places that had not previously been treated in *Pleiades*, as well as scores of improvements (both published and in review) to existing entries. McKee's work supports not only the improvement of *Pleiades*, but also the development of alternate discovery mechanisms

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<sup>2</sup>

<https://github.com/isawnyu/pleiades-gazetteer/issues?q=is%3Aissue+is%3Aopen+sort%3Acreated-desc>.

<sup>3</sup> Pleiades Gazetteer Wiki on GitHub: <https://github.com/isawnyu/pleiades-gazetteer/wiki>.

<sup>4</sup> An introduction to Geocollider: <https://pleiades.stoa.org/news/blog/introducing-geocollider>. On OpenRefine: <http://openrefine.org/>.

for library content, i.e., a map-based browser of ISAW's holdings.<sup>5</sup> We previously omitted to report the first step in this work, which entailed the submission to, and subsequent approval in September 2016 of, a proposal to the Library of Congress to add the *Pleiades* gazetteer to its list of authorized sources for subject heading terms.<sup>6</sup> In August 2017, McKee and Patrick Burns (Assistant Research Scholar for Digital and Special Projects in the ISAW Library) attended DH2017, the annual conference of the international Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations to present a poster entitled "Mapping Linked Data Subject Headings in the Library Catalog."<sup>7</sup> No grant funds were spent on this activity.

This process of community engagement will be further enhanced in Boston in January 2018 when Elliott (PI) and Sarah Bond (a *Pleiades* Associate Editor and Professor of Classics at the University of Iowa) co-lead a workshop at the Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America entitled "Turning Spatial with *Pleiades*: Creating, Teaching, and Publishing Maps in Ancient Studies." Bond and Elliott will be attending the meetings on their own institutional budgets, but Elliott may elect to use grant funds to support attendance by presenters or participants who express financial need (in accordance with the approved grant budget and narrative). Additional, informal meetings will be held during the conference with prospective and active *Pleiades* users.

The day following the Boston conference, Elliott, Gabriel Moss, Elizabeth Robinson, and other representatives of the *Pleiades* Editorial College will be visiting the Aga Khan Documentation Center at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to discuss possible synergies and collaboration around geo-historical content related to early Islam.

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<sup>5</sup> A demonstration version of the ISAW Library New Titles Map:  
<https://diyclassics.github.io/isaw-new-titles-map/>.

<sup>6</sup> On *Pleiades* URIs in MARC records: <http://isaw.nyu.edu/library/blog/MARC-Pleiades>.

<sup>7</sup> On the DH poster:

<http://isaw.nyu.edu/news/isaw-library-participates-in-the-annual-conference-of-the-international-alliance-of-digital-humanities-organizations>.



