

The International Review of Ancient Art & Archaeology

# MINERVA

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012

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## Egyptian mummies

Stolen,  
restored,  
on show

## A castle in California

Hearst's  
eclectic  
home

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in Libya

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Tours of  
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Volume 23 Number 1





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Cover: Emperor Lucius Verus photographed by Olivier Roller in the Louvre. Edition of eight prints, 39.4 inches x 59 inches. (100cm x 150cm). For further details visit [www.olivierroller.com](http://www.olivierroller.com)

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Minerva, 20 Orange Street

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Tel: (020) 7389 0808

Fax: (020) 7839 6993

Email: [editorial@minerva-magazine.com](mailto:editorial@minerva-magazine.com)

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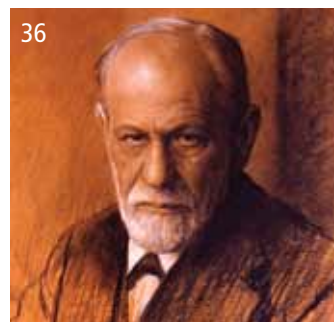
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# A Happy New Year?

After the turbulence of the last 12 months, we hope that 2012 will be a better year for preserving the art of the ancient past



As the New Year begins let us hope that there will be many positive results after all the political upheaval and violence that we have seen in 2011.

In Libya, for example, once a new democratically elected government is in place perhaps there will be the chance to restructure not only the political and social system, but also the way the country's unique heritage is protected and developed.

On pages 14 to 17 you can hear how Dr Paul Bennett, who has spent several decades working as an archaeologist in Libya, drew up plans to preserve and protect the country's major sites and to train the staff to care for them. He is optimistic about the future – the development of these wonderful archaeological sites would attract tourists back to the country (probably more than when Colonel Gaddafi was in power) and with them would come income.

The future is by its nature uncertain, whereas the past is a comfortable haven where hindsight rules and rose-tinted spectacles shield us from too much reality. We feel safe there and imagine what it was like to live in ancient times rather than actually having to live in them.

Perhaps that is why visiting archaeological sites and ruined cities is such a popular pastime – as is evident when you see the number of tour companies that offer trips to antique lands. On pages 18 to 21 we list quite a few of them so, if you are thinking of exploring a new region this year have a look at our travel round-up – some

of the ideas there might appeal to you. We are also offering all our readers the chance to win a fascinating 16-day tour of ancient Anatolia by entering our Prize Draw; see pages 54-55.

We talk to the archaeologist and television presenter Neil Oliver (pp 52-53) and also to Egyptologist and mummy expert Salima Ikram (pp 26-27). While on the subject of mummies, we return to 19th-century Egypt to hear the saga of the discovery of the so-called Royal Cache (pp 22-24) and hear about the newly restored Roman mummy portraits on show at the Ashmolean Museum (pp 28-30).

Nearer to home it seems that recently hardly a year goes by without another ancient hoard of treasure being uncovered by metal detectorists – the Frome hoard (pp 8-10) and the Bredon Hill hoard (p.6) to name but two. We also look at what Pictish art (pp 32-34) and Chinese bronzes (pp 48-50) can tell us about the history of those societies and visit Hearst Castle (pp 44-46) and the Freud Museum (pp 36-39), which both contain fine collections of antiquities. Collectors in the 18th century went to Rome to purchase their latest acquisitions (pp 40-43) today, we go and bid at auction-house sales (pp 56-57).

Last, but not least and bringing us right up to date, we look at some stunning images of Roman emperors taken by French photographer Olivier Roller. They are works of art in their own right with great power and presence – as you can see from the splendidly dramatic image of Lucius Verus on our cover.

**A Happy New Year from everyone at *Minerva*!**

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20 Orange Street,  
London WC2H 7EF  
Tel: 020 7389 0808;  
Fax: 020 7839 6993  
Email:  
[editorial@minervamagazine.com](mailto:editorial@minervamagazine.com)

## CONTRIBUTORS

### Dr Susan Walker



is Keeper of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum. She co-curated *Ancient Faces: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt* when Deputy Keeper of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum. **Portraits from the past** pp 28-30

### Maria Golia



lives in Cairo. She is the author of *Cairo, City of Sand* and *Photography and Egypt* (both published by Reaktion Books) and is working on *A Short History of Tomb-Raiding* at present. **Den of Thebes** pp 22-24

### Richard Marranta



teaches in the Classics Department at Montclair State University and the History Department at Kean University. His novel, *Dragon Sutra*, will be published by the Oak Tree Press this summer. **Talk like an Egyptian** pp 26-27

### Sam Moorhead



is the National Finds Adviser for Iron Age and Roman coins in the Department of Portable Antiquities and Treasure at the British Museum. He is co-author of *The Frome Hoard*. **Coins from Frome** pp 8-10



# in the news

recent stories from the world of ancient art and archaeology

## Boat people



**Dr Hannah Cobb, co-director of the Ardnamurchan Transitions Project, examines the sword from the first, in tact, Viking ship burial found on the UK mainland**

cannon-balls, ceramics and ballast. These remains are from the Yuan Dynasty, which is consistent with dates for the attempted invasions of 1274 and 1281, making it a real possibility this ship was part of one of the attacking fleets.

Ultrasound scans have shown that the hull is still intact and held in place with nails, making it the first wreck of this period to be so well preserved. In order to protect it the site is being covered with nets and there are no plans to remove the material yet. For the time being researchers are hoping to study the remains and extend their search with a view to recovering the entire ship.

Professor Yoshifumi Ikeda says that the find is of major importance to their work and could give a far better picture of boat-building and international exchanges from this period. But this is not the first glimpse we have had of the Kublai Khan invasion, as a decade ago the Kyushu Okinawa Society for Underwater Archaeology found the remains of another ship dating to 1281, but this was in pieces and the excavation had to be done very quickly. The findings from these two sites together will mean that the real story of the Mongol invasion becomes a little less murky.

**Geoff Lowsley**

### VIKING SHIP BURIAL

What was first seen as a fairly modest, if unusual, mound on the Ardnamurchan peninsula in Scotland has now been revealed by a team from the universities of Leicester and Manchester to be something of far greater interest. Five years after it was first noticed, they returned to excavate it under the direction of Dr Oliver Harris and Dr Hannah Cobb. It was then that they uncovered what is the only mainland British example of a Viking boat burial to still contain the remains of the body, the grave goods and the boat, itself. Thought to date to the 10th century this is undoubtedly one of the most important Norse graves ever found in Britain.

As Dr Harris explained: 'This was someone of high status who was wealthy and powerful and very interested in being seen as a warrior' – a claim supported by the discover of a sword, spear and axe with the body.

The presence of the far-flung range of grave goods, including

an Irish bronze ring-pin, a whetstone from Norway and Hebridean pottery, make the tracing of the man's origin considerably more tricky. It is hoped, however, that after further analysis of his teeth, his diet will be revealed and that this, in turn, will tell us where he came from.

Under Treasure Trove rules the finds will almost certainly be claimed by the Crown on behalf of the nation and, ultimately, displayed in the museum that makes a successful case for curating it, but there could be many applicants for this task.

The universities of Leicester, Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow have all played roles in this project, as well as CFA Archaeology and Archaeology Scotland – but as there are some parallels to the Sutton Hoo burial site, the British Museum is very likely to express an interest as well.

So for the time being at least, the future of this remarkable find remains somewhat uncertain.

### MONGOL SHIPWRECK

History tells of two invasion fleets, seven years apart – the second, alone, comprising some 4,400 ships; both thwarted by mighty typhoons. The legends of Kublai Khan's attempted invasions of Japan are among some of the more incredible stories from the nautical past.

Now new evidence is about to surface that might testify as to the veracity of these tales. A team of underwater researchers from the University of Ryukyus in Okinawa, Japan, have found a shipwreck, with a 39ft- (12 metre-) long section of keel, and more than 4,000 artefacts – including anchors,



**Painted scrolls showing Mongol invasions by Fukuda Taika, 1846 (this is a copy of a 1293 work by an unknown artist). Toyko National Museum**

# Environmental check at Malta's Temples

This year Heritage Malta has installed highly sophisticated Envirologger monitoring technology at 10 locations around the site of the Tarxien Temples – a highly important archaeological site dating back to between 3600 and 1500 BC.

The battery-powered monitoring stations are being utilised for research purposes



**Above: the megalithic Tarxien Temples Site on the island of Malta dates from about 2,800 BC**

and also to gain reliable data for scientists, conservators and engineers to ensure the best possible management of the site.

Explaining the benefits of continuous environmental monitoring, Curator Joanne Mallia from Heritage Malta says:

‘Naturally, the materials and structures at this site are affected by the environment, so a protective shelter has been proposed to slow down the rate of deterioration of the stone surfaces and the monitoring equipment will help create an accurate picture of the environmental conditions on site, both before and after the installation of the shelter.’

At Tarxien, the Envirologgers are connected to sensors for measuring wind speed, wind direction, air temperature, ambient humidity, atmospheric pressure, soil temperature and wetness, and water level.

Data is transmitted to a central web logger by the new Envirologger wireless sensor nodes. The data is then ‘pushed’ to Heritage Malta. The entire monitoring and data transmission network is run on low voltage solar power because it is not possible to run cables around the site for fear of negative effects on the ancient stone structures.

The Tarxien Temples site is a recipient of European funds under the ERDF 2007-2013 programme and the installation of an environmental monitoring system will help to protect the site for the benefit of future generations of visitors.

Joanne Mallia reports: ‘We have been



**Above: the Envirologger set in position on the Tarxien site gathers a range of useful data**

extremely pleased with the hardware and the quality of the sensors. The ability of the monitoring system to use solar power is also particularly useful’. (For further information visit [www.envirologger.co.uk](http://www.envirologger.co.uk)).

**Lindsay Fulcher**

# California today – where next?

California is – for better or worse – a trend-setter, even in law. A good example is the *California Resale Royalty Act* of 1976. The provisions of this state law are unique to the United States, but are well established in some European countries. Artists who qualify must be, at the time of sale, a US citizen or resident in California for at least two years. Briefly, a seller (who resides in California or where the sale takes place there) must pay an artist or their estate five percent of the resale price, although certain sales by an art dealer are not considered a triggering event. Artworks specifically noted are original paintings, drawings, sculpture, or glass.

If a gallery or auction-house cannot find the artist in 90 days after the sale, royalty payments are sent to the California Arts Council, which can use the money for Art in Public Places if it is not claimed in

seven years. The limiting factor is that the art must be sold in the artist’s lifetime, or within 20 years of the artist’s death. The art must be sold for more than the dealer paid, with a gross price of over \$1,000 or traded for objects with that market value.

If the legal title to the art remains with the artist, the law does not apply. The law also does not apply if the sale is between dealers during a 10 year period. Clearly law introduces paperwork, but many visual artists suggest that such a law is in keeping with other intellectual property laws, such as copyright. Copyright protected works in many countries are protected for the life of the artist plus 70 years.

On Tuesday 18 October 2011 a group of painters including Chuck Close, the heirs of abstract expressionists Sam Francis and sculptor Robert Graham filed lawsuits against Sothebys and Christie’s in the US

District Court in Los Angeles. The group alleges that the auction houses are not telling the winners that they will have to pay royalties.

Further, the suits allege that the two auctioneers are concealing the location of some of their sellers, who as California residents are liable to pay royalties. The case could not come at a better time for various arts groups who are lobbying for an expansion of a law similar to that in California to the federal level. Particularly if the case gains class action status, it could become a lengthy battle.

The auction-houses claim that the charges are lack merit and that the case will be vigorously defended but critics point out that an expansion of such laws to other states, or the federal level, could have a dampening effect on art sales.

**Murray Eiland**



# The Alberese Archaeological Project



In 2009, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage of Tuscany started an innovative project in the Natural Park of Maremma, a stunning protected environment in the Commune of Grosseto (Italy). The project aims to obtain a better understanding of the 'Romanisation' of Etruria (from 3rd century BC to the end of the 6th century AD) by studying settlements in the area of the mouth of the river Ombrone. The research, jointly led by Mario Cygielman, Elena Chirico, Matteo Colombini and Alessandro Sebastiani, focuses on two

**Above: aerial view of the port of Russellae; above right: marble statuette of Diana Umbronensis; right: bone pin found at the port (courtesy of Paolo Nannini, Soprintendenza ai Beni Archeologici della Toscana)**

sites: the sacred area dedicated to Diana Umbronensis and the Roman cabotage port of Rusellae. The temple is on a hilltop in Scoglietto and, after three archaeological seasons, an area of around 7,535 sq ft (700 sq m) has been uncovered, revealing a sequence from mid-3rd century BC, when the temple was built, until mid-6th century AD, when the site was abandoned after a great fire ravaged the entire settlement.

A sanctuary was added to the original tiny temple of Diana in the 1st century AD and a *temenos* wall was built to enclose a new temple. More rooms and a massive cistern were added but, at the end of the next century, the sanctuary appears to have been abandoned. A new temple was built at early in the 3rd century and, soon after the end of the 4th century, a new phase seems to have started, with the construction of a timber and *pisé* hut after the temple was dismantled in accordance with the Edict of Thessalonica in 380 AD, but, after the fire in the 6th century AD, the site was never occupied again.

As for the second site, the remains of two Roman walls facing the shore on the last bend of the River Ombrone are vestiges of an important economic centre – the cabotage port of Rusellae. At the end of the



second archaeological season, the sequence became clearer: a series of store-rooms were erected in the 1st century AD and refurbished in the Hadrianic period.

Towards the end of the 2nd century, the site boasted the biggest Roman workshop for glass production in Italy as evidenced by five kilns. It is possible that until the mid-5th century the area was used as a Roman emporium. There is evidence of recycling older metal and glass objects, and coins melted in the forge witness the end of monetary economy in this part of Tuscany.

After the workshops were deserted, the site was used as a cemetery and, later, cultivated as farmland. Then, in the mid-6th century AD, the river flooded the area and, as the centuries went by, alluvium deposits accumulated to a height of over eight feet (2.5 metres).

**Nicole Benazeth**



**Left: 5th-century African lamp, showing a face, found in the temple area of the site**

# The Bredon Hill hoard

Worcester was a Roman site, known for the production of iron, and nearby villages have yielded a number of Roman small finds. The same is not true for Bredon Hill, the site of an Iron Age fort which was probably abandoned in the first century AD. There are also Roman remains on the hill, along with standing stones of various dates. However, the recent major find of a coin hoard suggests there is still much left to be discovered.

On 18 June 2011, two detectorists, Jethro and Mark, began searching the area, and the machine registered what turned out to be a nail. When that was removed, the detector was put back in the hole and more metal was registered.

They dug down and found coins and pot sherds and, after removing a large number of coins, replaced the earth and turf and reported the finds and the site's location to the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

Excavation took place under the Worcestershire Environment and Archaeology service, which collaborated for the first time with the PAS and Museums Worcestershire. This revealed that the hoard was housed in a 'Severn Valley Ware' storage jar in the ruins of what was a villa.

The hoard contained 3,874 coins dating from 244 to 282. Interestingly, the pit the vessel was associated with, on the basis of the coin found in the upper lay, suggests that the hoard was buried in 355 to 361. Hoards may be buried as religious offerings but they are also deposited in times of political turmoil and war, with the idea that they can be recovered later.

There may not be a simple solution to the problem, and further research may

not reveal why this hoard was accumulated and buried the way it was. The coins in themselves were not particularly valuable in terms of their precious metal content.

Expressing the turmoil of the age when they were minted, 16 emperors are represented (and also the wife of Gallienus). During this period the *denarius* was highly debased, and could contain only a small percentage of silver.

Most of the coins in the hoard range from one to five percent silver and represent emperors from both the Central Empire and the Gallic Empire.

The Central Empire is represented by: Philip II (244–247) 1; Valerian I (253–260) 1; Saloninus (258–260) 2; Gallienus (253–268) 433; Salonina (253–268) 48; Claudius II (268–270) 352; Divus Claudius (270) 77; Quintillus (270) 23; Aurelian (270–275) 17; Tacitus (275–276) 15; Florian (276) 3; Probus (276–282) 36.

While the Gallic Emperors include: Postumus (260–269) 67; Laelian (269) 7; Marius (269); Victorinus (269–271) 817; Divus Victorinus (271) 1; Tetricus I (271–274) 1,159; Tetricus II (272–74) 485;



Low quality denarius of Probus.



Finds Liaison Officer Richard Henry sorting the hoard.

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Uncertain 212; Copies 42; Illegible 67.

The 3rd century is seen largely as a disastrous time for Rome, when a succession of strong men laid claim to the throne. Some are relatively unknown, while others had time enough to be recorded in the histories and strike coins.

Every hoard that is recovered allows an assessment of relative numbers of coins, whereas individual coin finds cannot yield so much information. For example, the rule of as Roman Emperor Gallienus is well represented in this hoard. He ruled with his father Valerian from 253 to 260, and alone from 260 to 268. He took control of the empire after a succession of weak rulers but, although he won victories, his reign was judged a failure because outlying parts of the empire, Gaul and Palmyra, seceded at this time. Other reasons why ancient chroniclers were hostile to him can be seen on the coins – he portrays himself with godly attributes.

In contrast, Claudius II was venerated. He claimed the title 'Gothicus' before he died of what was likely to have been smallpox. During his short reign he turned his attention towards the Gallic Empire, which at that time encompassed Britain, Gaul, and Iberia. He re-gained Spain and the Rhone river valley in Gaul. Although his brother Quintillus briefly held the throne, it is likely that Claudius named Aurelian as his successor.

It was Emperor Aurelian who finally put an end to the Gallic Empire. With a base of power in Cologne, Postumus established an empire that had no ambition to take Rome. This empire produced very low quality coinage in

great abundance, as is clear from the numbers of coins in the hoard. Emperor Victorinus was himself from Gaul, and his reign was cut short not by the army, but by a jealous husband. Victorinus' mother was able to arrange for a smooth transition for Tetricus I. Her first choice was apparently her grandson, but he was reputedly killed by the army the same day he was appointed emperor. Tetricus I ruled with his son, Tetricus II, until they surrendered to Aurelian. Sources from the Central Empire state that Tetricus agreed to surrender to Aurelian in exchange for his life, and that he left his army to be defeated.

It was claimed that Tetricus quoted Virgil in his letter to Aurelian: '*eripe me his, invicte, malis*' ('rescue me, undefeated, from these troubles'). Father and son were then allegedly displayed at Aurelian's triumph and both made governor of a southern part of Italy.

The coins of Victorinus and Tetricus I/II were apparently issued in great numbers. It has been suggested that from five to six million coins could have been issued per week, a figure may not have been exceeded until the introduction of relatively modern methods of producing coins were introduced much later, during the Industrial Revolution.

After being displayed in Worcester Museum, the hoard returned to the British Museum in November but, hopefully, after the treasure assessment process is complete, it can be put on display again near where it was found. Then, even if the main question, namely, why it was buried, cannot be answered, at least we can enjoy examining the evidence.

Murray Eiland



# Coins from Frome

Sam Moorhead relates the exciting story of how one of the largest Roman coin hoards ever found in Britain was unearthed in Somerset

In April 2010, in a field in East Somerset, metal detectorist Dave Crisp was finding stray Roman silver coins (*siliquae*) from a dispersed Roman hoard when he heard a very faint signal. He had dug down an arm's length when he found some sherds and a few more coins. Once he realised that he had found an intact coin hoard he filled in the hole and reported the find to his local Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officer in Wiltshire, Katie Hinds. But as the find-spot was in neighbouring Somerset, she contacted her PAS colleague in Taunton, Anna Booth, who arranged for local archaeologist Alan Graham to excavate the hoard.

Excavation and recovery took three days, the archaeologists being assisted by Dave Crisp and members of the landowner's family. They dug down to the pot which was 18 inches (45cm) in diameter, also noting that a small black-burnished ware dish had been placed over the top of the main vessel. The 'lid' was seriously damaged; the main container was cracked all over,

**1. Silver *siliqua* of Magnus Maximus (AD 383-8), struck at Trier. This was one of the coins Dave Crisp found prior to the discovery of the main hoard.**  
© Somerset County Council.

**2. Somerset archaeologist, Alan Graham, just before the excavation of the pot begins.**  
© Somerset County Council.

although it maintained its general shape (2). After conversations with Sam Moorhead and Roger Bland in London it was agreed to excavate the coins from the pot in layers, recording the contexts of the coins. Careful recording proved invaluable for interpretation (3).

As the excavators removed the coins, they noticed that the bottom of the pot was waterlogged. A result of the clayey soil, it meant that the coins in the lower levels were more corroded than those at the top. A subsequent geophysical survey showed no discernible archaeological features in the field, but there is a Roman road nearby and other Roman remains have been found in the surrounding region. Sam and

Roger collected the entire hoard the day after the excavation. Back at the British Museum, the coins were found to weigh around 350lbs (160kg). If the waterlogged coins had been allowed to dry out, they would have fused into large blocks so, it was agreed that they needed to be washed and dried to stabilise them; full conservation work could then be carried out later. In a matter of six weeks, Pippa Pearce, metals conservator at the British Museum, had completed the task with the assistance of numerous colleagues.

As the coins were washed, Roger and Sam sorted them by emperor. The coins were nearly all 'radiates' struck in base-silver or bronze between around AD 253 and 291 (4). There were around 14,788 coins of the Central Empire (mostly Gallienus, Claudius II, Aurelian and Probus) (5-6) and 28,377 of the break-away Gallic Empire (mostly Victorinus and Tetricus I and II) (7). However, the most important group of coins were struck for the British emperor Carausius







(AD 286-93) – there are over 750 of his coins, making this the largest group of Carausian pieces ever found. Included amongst his coins are five fine silver *denarii*, amongst the best examples of these coins known. The emperor count took 10 weeks but, by the end, we could state that, with 52,503 coins, the Frome hoard was the second largest ever Roman hoard found in Britain, the Cunetio hoard of 1978 having 54,951 coins (although

stored in two containers, not one). Professional excavation of the hoard has enabled us to consider the position of the coins in the pot. The five silver *denarii* of Carausius were all at the top of the pot, however, we soon discovered that the majority of the coins of Carausius came from Context 16 which was half-way down the pot. Indeed, these Carausian coins are generally later than the other Carausian coins found in other parts of the pot. This

**3. Section drawing of the pot by Alan Graham, showing the different layers of coins. It was in Context 16 that the concentration of the latest coins of Carausius (AD 286-93) were found.**

© Alan Graham.

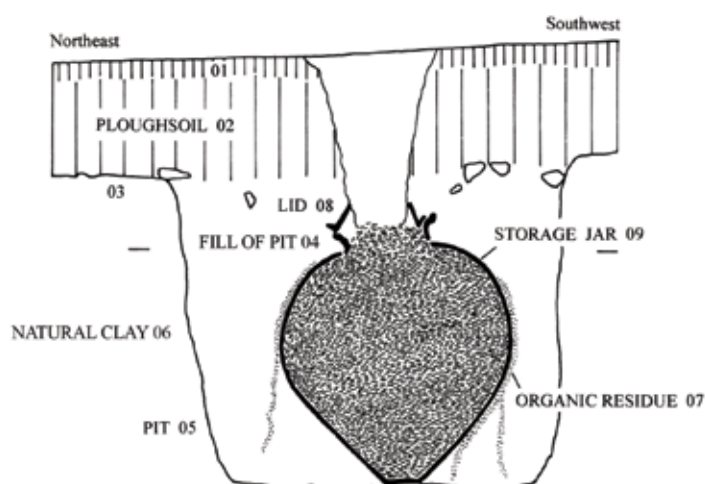
**4. Silver-washed 'radiate' of Aurelian (AD 270-5), struck in Siscia (Sisak in Croatia).**  
© The British Museum  
(Photo: Stephen Dodd).



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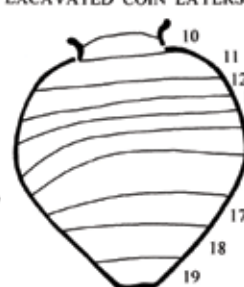
suggests that most of the coins in the hoard came from general circulation, except for the concentrated group which was probably a batch of recently minted coins (*circa* AD 290/1). This might provide a clue to how the hoard was buried. Pottery experts tell us that the grey-ware vessel was not strong enough to be moved with 353lbs (160kg) of metal inside; in fact, it would have been incredibly difficult to move in the first place! So, we can assume that it was buried in the ground before being filled with coins. This meant that smaller containers (eg. pots and saddle-bags) were emptied into the main container after it was *in situ*. Most of the groups of coins came from general circulation, as suggested by the generally homogenous nature of the coins in the hoard. However, half-way through the process, someone tipped in a container full of freshly minted coins of Carausius, the latest coins in the hoard. When the pot was almost full, the five *denarii* were thrown in. The small dish was then placed on top and the hoard buried – the next question was why?

Was it the savings of a rich landowner or a community? Was it a hoard buried by the military? It could have been buried around 290/1 when Maximian was about to invade Britain in an attempt to dislodge Carausius, a mission that failed. It was on high ground, which we have also learnt is prone to water-logging when the field drains are not working. In prehistoric and Roman Britain, 'watery' and



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EXCAVATED COIN LAYERS





'high' places were favoured for religious sites. The only other Roman find from the field is another, later, coin hoard. Was this another offering made in the same 'sacred field' or near to a 'sacred spring'. This is all supposition, but without professional excavation of the hoard, information for such debate would have been much sligher.

In early July 2010, the hoard was announced to the media, BBC coverage broadcasting the discovery across the globe. In Frome, on the morning of the Coroner's Inquest, over 2,000 people passed through Frome Library to see a selection of the coins. Harnessing public support was essential because after the Coroner declared the hoard 'treasure' it would be essential to raise funds to save the hoard for Somerset. Some of the coins were displayed in the British Museum and Victor Ambrus kindly painted a reconstruction image for no charge (7). Roger, Sam and Anna wrote a book on the hoard for the British Museum Press. So, when the main hoard (with its pots) was valued at £320,250 (and the *siliqua* hoard at £2,800) by the Treasure Valuation Committee in October, we were already geared up to start a major fund-raising campaign.

By March 2011, under the leadership of Steve Minnit (Head of Somerset County Museums Service), the required sum was raised. The major donors were The Art Fund, The National Heritage Memorial Fund, The V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the The Headley Trust, along with various other sources of public and private funds from Somerset. The National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Marc Fitch Fund and proceeds from the sale of



**5. Halfway through the excavation of the hoard. © Somerset County Council.**

**6. Silver denarius of Carausius (AD 286-93), struck in London, showing Britannia greeting Carausius with the Virgilian quotation 'EXPECTATE VENI' ('Welcome, O long awaited one'). © The British Museum (Photo: Stephen Dodd).**

**7. Reconstruction artwork by Victor Ambrus of the burial of the Frome hoard. © Victor Ambrus.**



the book on the Frome Hoard (the British Museum Press donates 50p for every copy sold) helped secure £105,000 for the conservation of the hoard. Securing the hoard for Somerset has enabled us to start conserving and studying the coins at the British Museum. Final publication is a few years away.

Conservators Duygu Cleere, Bryony Finn and Ana Tam have already conserved a large number of the Carausian coins, and will soon start to tackle the 8,000 illegible coins. At present, I am identifying the Carausian coins as they are conserved. When Carausius arrived

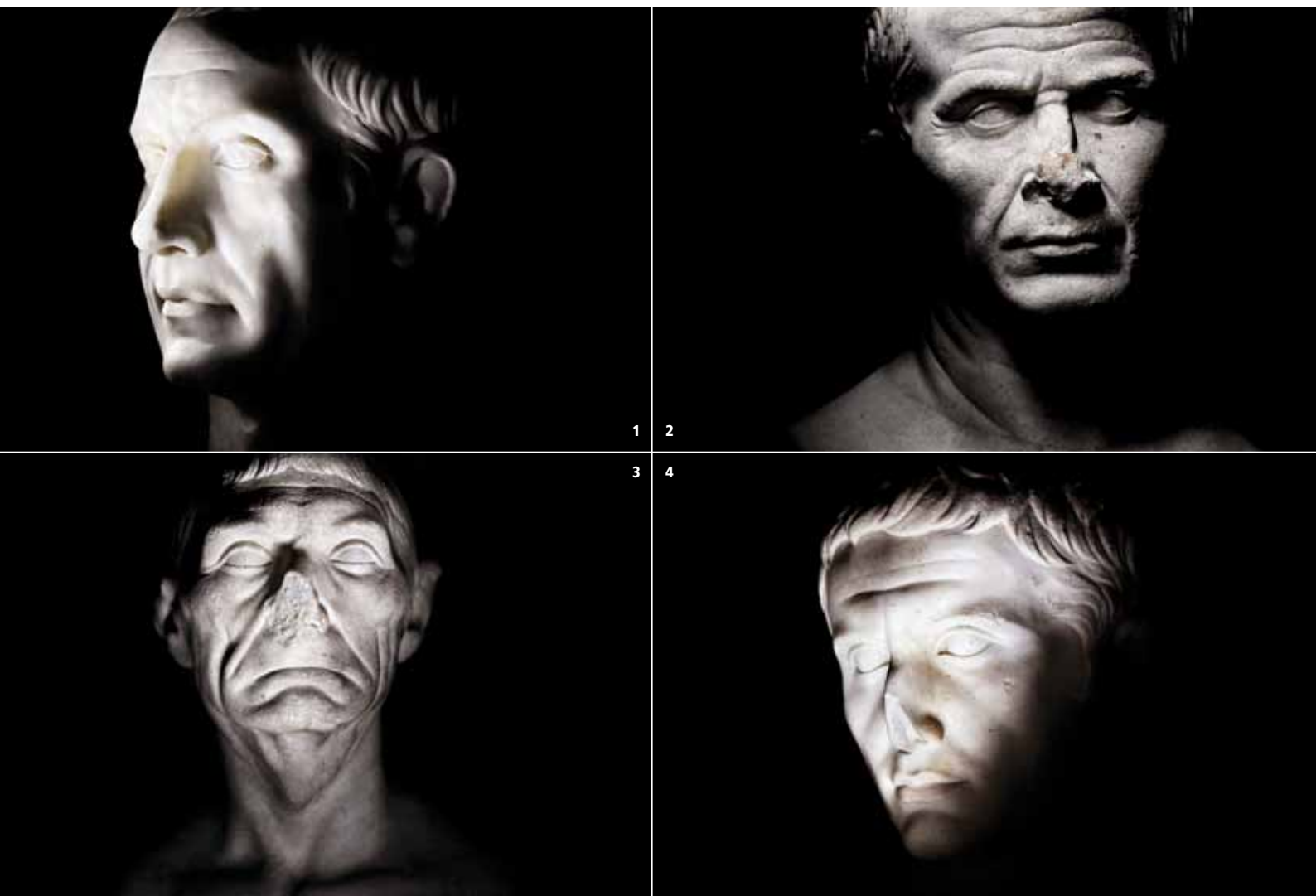
in Britain in AD 286 there was no mint. So, he had to set up his own, one in London and one which we only know as 'C' Mint, its location remaining a mystery. For this reason, he had to rely on an inexperienced workforce who did not produce a standard range of coin issues. This means that there are many different types produced with numerous minor varieties. Several dozen unpublished coins have already been catalogued.

At present, the latest coins appear to date from around AD 290/1, but with other coins yet to be conserved we cannot be sure. However, it is clear that the Frome hoard will help in researching my forthcoming edition of the Roman Imperial Coinage for Carausius and his successor Allectus. The two pottery vessels and some of the coins, conserved at the British Museum by Kathleen Magill, have been on display in the Museum of Somerset. Over the coming years, we will provide updates on our research as we know that the Frome Hoard still has many surprises for all of us. ■

**The Frome Hoard** by Sam Moorhead, Anna Booth and Roger Bland (British Museum Press, 48pp, 50 colour illustrations, £4.99) from [www.britishmuseum.org](http://www.britishmuseum.org)







# Imperial images

**Mark Merrony** is captivated by Olivier Roller's stunning photographs of Roman emperors

There is something timeless about the photography of Olivier Roller. This is partly due to his choice of subject, such as portrait busts of Roman emperors, but is also an expression of his perception of it – capturing the essence of this sculpture, how it was intended to be received in antiquity when it was commissioned.

His extraordinary work is currently on show in three exhibitions, *Roman Emperors and other Figures of Influence* (*Empereurs Romains et autres Figures du Pouvoir*) at the Mougins Musée de la Photographie André Villers, in partnership with the Musée D'Art Classique de Mougins, and the Gallery SpazioNuovo Contemporary Art in Rome.

Roller also finds subjects in the contemporary world, influential figures in the sphere

of French advertising, academia, films, fashion, finance, media, and politics.

That he is a charismatic figure, is clear from his self-portraits in the galleries of the Louvre where, after dusk, clad in a cape he stalks his subjects like a Gothic count. It is perhaps, above all, this aspect of his charisma that transcends his persona into the fine-grained quality of his work.

Julius Caesar, the oldest portrait photographed, presents the exceptional perception inherent in the psyche of the Parisian-based photographer.

It is difficult to gauge the extent of Roller's knowledge, not that this should be underestimated, of the spirit in which sculpture was produced in the Roman period. It is inextricably linked with imperial propaganda – warts and all – *virtus* (virtue) (Caesar, 1

and 2, Anonymous Republican, 3), *pietas* (piety) (Augustus, 4), cruelty (Caligula, 5), *gravitas* (importance) (Titus, 6), depending on the expedient agenda of particular dynasties. What is striking about this work is the extent to which Roller latches on to these ideologies, perhaps to a degree that is unparalleled in modern photography.

His visual interpretation of Antonine and Severan portraits provides an interesting insight into this phenomenon. Roman sculptors of this period were in the habit of creating baroque representations of their subjects by increasingly undercutting the hair and beards of their subjects.

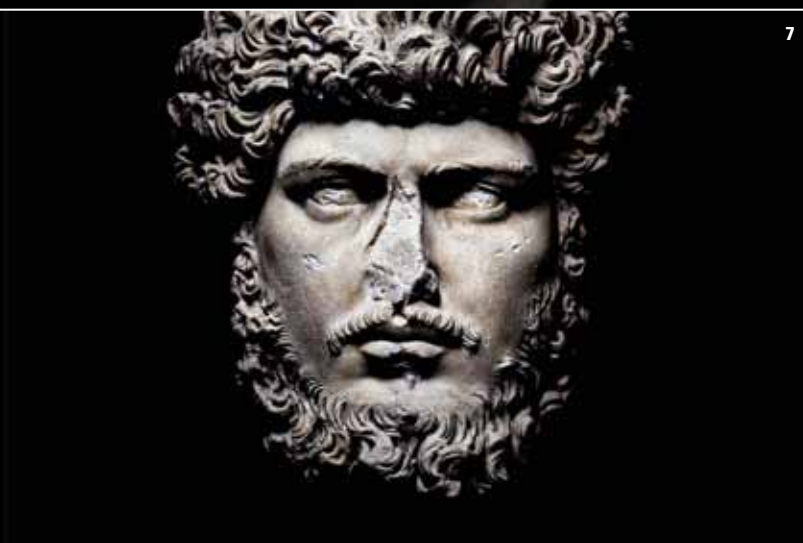
In so doing they were able to project a powerful visual stamp at a distance by producing acute *chiaroscuro* (black-and-white) effects of contrast. The fine sculpture of



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Lucius Verus (7) was produced in the second half of the 2nd century AD with particularly sharp attention to detail in the rendering of individual locks of flowing hair with the chisel and drill to achieve this illusion. It is no coincidence that Roller has managed to replicate the essence of this technical expertise with his innate understanding of the portrait. The end result gives a dramatic *chiaroscuro* effect which transcends more than 18 centuries and becomes a correct visual reincarnation of how the portrait was originally intended to be seen.

His portrayal of emperor Caracalla (8) provides another interesting example that embodies the stylistic change of sculpture in the early 3rd century AD. Gone are the deeply drilled hairstyles, now in vogue is a plastically carved style with curls rendered in clumps. The overall effect is the 'soldier-emperor' portrait with a fierce expression intended to strike terror into his opponents. One of the most notorious of all Roman emperors, who murdered his co-emperor and brother Geta, is expressed in his quintessence.

The distillation of the principal facial attributes of Roman emperors to express their character and personality traits extends to

modern personalities across the social spectrum and this is a particularly interesting aspect of the work of Roller. His focus on the physiognomy of individuals in the modern era has the tendency to blur the distinction between the past and the present.

The essence of the work of Roller has been aptly described by the American art historian Peter Benson Miller: 'Roller probes his subjects at close range, pouncing when the mask slips to reveal the churning humours of the powerful: arrogance, anxiety, doubt, cynicism, fatigue, vanity, ambition and melancholy. His images revivifying Roman busts trace the physiognomy of power to its origins in antiquity'.

Benson Miller further observes that Roller's work parallels the use of physiognomy as a technique in airport security: 'Working from predetermined facial patterns, agents search faces in the crowd for physical traits associated with suspect behaviour and a propensity to violence.'

Perhaps what makes photography so interesting is its manifold nature: the pioneering images of 19th-century people, portfolios of once intact buildings that are now destroyed, the variety of human suffering, the extent to which a moving object can

be varied to adjust its impression of velocity, recording the infinite variety of the natural world. For the writer, the greatest skill in photographic art is the ability to capture the essence of the human psyche.

This is the triumph of the work of Olivier Roller: all aspects intended for public and private consumption in the Roman period – from virtue to terrorism – have been skillfully isolated in their physiognomic entirety to distil the true character of an emperor or the intended propagandist message. Roller's mastery of this phenomenon in personalities of the modern world is also fascinating.

Such telling attention to detail was not lost on the great Roman emperor-philosopher Marcus Aurelius who, in *The Meditations*, 3.11, wrote: 'Nothing has such power to broaden the mind as the ability to investigate systematically and truly all that comes under thy observation in life'. ■

*Empereurs Romains et autres Figures du Pouvoir* is on show at La Galerie Sintitulo, Mougins (until 1 February); the Musée D'Art Classique de Mougins (until 1 April); and Gallery SpazioNuovo Contemporary Art in Rome (until 31 January).



# A new *future*

Now the Gaddafi regime has been toppled **Dr Paul Bennett**, who has worked in Libya for almost 40 years, has high hopes for Libyan heritage and archaeology



**D**uring my long archaeological career I have been extraordinarily fortunate to work part-time in Libya. From my earliest days I fell in love with the people and the archaeology of this extraordinary country and it has been a great privilege for me to have learnt something of her history and heritage.

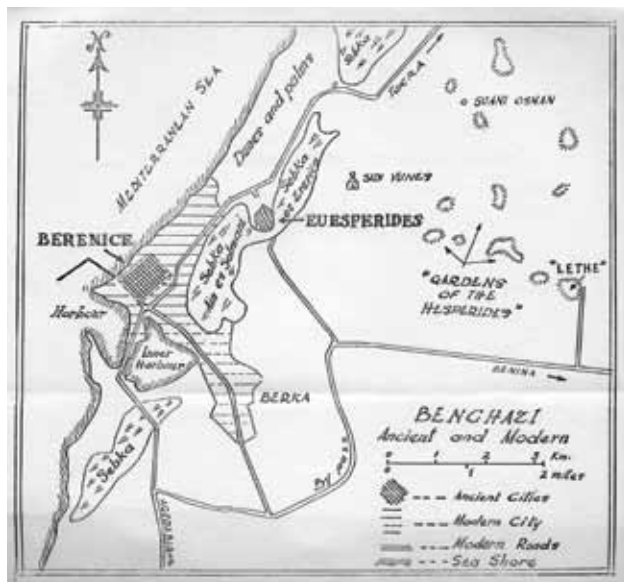
Wonderful research excavations have been carried out by foreign missions but, at the same time, some of Libya's greatest archaeological treasures have been eroded, compromised and destroyed without record by mainly government-funded development and, more recently, by war. Its heritage is facing 'a perfect storm'; namely a poorly trained and equipped Department of Antiquities and a potential tidal wave of new development that could sweep away vitally important archaeological assets or compromise even flagship sites, whose integrity is in the national interest.

In the past three years I have been fortunate to have been involved with a number of projects that seek to promote and protect Libyan heritage and support the revitalization of the Department of Antiquities and it is my fervent hope that they will be considered by the new Libyan government and not simply consigned to the dustbin of history.

Here, I will focus on three of these projects. The first is *The Green Mountain Project for a sustainable future*. The old Libyan government recognised a significant part of the Green Mountain as a protected zone, with the ancient site of Cyrene as its centrepiece. The most important recommendations called for the establishment of protective protocols for archaeology within the development planning process, for the placing of protective buffer zones around the most important sites in the Green Mountain Area (Cyrene, Apollonia, Ptolemais and Tocra), for a World Heritage Management Plan to be drawn up for Cyrene and, above all, for support for all members of the Department of Antiquities – in the form of training, capacity building



# for the *past*?



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and funding. The latter would assist them to become better curators and custodians of Libyan heritage and effective archaeological contractors, undertaking high quality fieldwork in advance of development, within a state-funded archaeological service.

As part of the project, visitor strategies were developed to improve the facilities at all four sites. Spinning off from this, recommendations were made to rehabilitate the near-abandoned, Italian-built villages of Tolmeita, Susa and Tocra, partly in recognition that Ottoman and Italian buildings also formed part of Libyan heritage, but principally to provide new homes for local families and facilities for tourists. A proposal to use abandoned Italian farm and military buildings for tourist centres was also put forward, together with a scheme to use the site of Tocra as a training school for a new generation of Libyan archaeologists and heritage managers. Additional reports were prepared to prevent the building of a new coast road planned to cross the ancient site of Ptolemais; to prevent the bulldozing of the modern town of Shahat; and to survey an area of 10 square miles (25sqkm) to the south of the existing town for the building of a proposed new Shahat.

The second project was a happy accident. Whilst visiting colleagues in Tripoli, I saw some drawings of

**1. Tourists walk through the Arch of Septimius Severus at Leptis Magna in more peaceful times.**

**2. RG Goodchild's map showing the 'Garden of the Hesperides'.**

**3. Mosaic floors at Berenice destroyed by salt-infested concrete used to 'repair' them.**

**4. The theatre of Leptis Magna, which was dedicated in AD 1.**

**5. The splendid Roman Forum at Cyrene.**

the Medina Gadima being worked on by another organization, who had been commissioned to prepare a new *City Code* code for Tripoli, setting out a vision for the rehabilitation of the city. Eventually I found myself appointed to provide a brief history of the city and a blueprint for the recording of standing and buried archaeological remains in advance of the development of the former Jewish quarter of Tripoli, the Hara Al-Kabira and the Hara Al-Saghira and of other vacant sites in the Old City of Tripoli and historic Ottoman and Italian suburbs.

The Medina Gadima is a wonderful ancient city with a great depth of buried archaeological deposits and

a wealth of standing historic buildings. It is an extraordinary fact that one of the Mediterranean's great cities has never had a modern archaeological excavation – its surviving walls, fortifications, gates, ancient street grid, mosques, madrasa, *suqs*, shops, town houses, smaller houses, *hammams*, prisons and hospitals, have yet to be fully studied.

*City Code* sets out a long-term vision for the Old City based on regeneration, to create an internationally recognised ancient city, packed with historic monuments, traditional urban buildings and houses, fortifications and gates, all in good condition. A city with good pedestrian links to public transport and the sea, with a thriving economy based on trade, traditional crafts and tourism, with a rich cultural life that Libyans are proud to live and work in. A *medina* that uses traditional architectural techniques and modern technologies for ventilation and energy generation; sustainable solutions for freshwater and wastewater management; efficient and effective rubbish collection and disposal systems; new and well managed services of all kinds, installed without damaging the integrity of standing buildings or archaeological remains and regulations that restrict the use of the car and promote out of city parking

The third project, *Benghazi*



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**6. The Hadrianic latrines at Leptis Magna.**

**7. The magnificent temple of Zeus at Cyrene.**

*Urban Charter* has a long-term vision for the city where I have done most of my fieldwork. Excavations by the Society for Libyan Studies at Sidi Abeid, and Sidi Khrebish (containing elements of the ancient cities of Euesperides and its successor, Berenice) have allowed me to set down a brief history of Benghazi to remind those reviewing the Charter of the remarkable buried and standing history of the place. The Charter provides an identical set of archaeological protocols to those laid down for Tripoli and The Green Mountain and also states the importance of establishing buffer zones around Sidi Abeid and Sidi Khrebish as essential pre-requisites for long-term protection of the sites.

Greek and Roman Benghazi located one and a half miles apart, were established on a long narrow ridge of fossil dune flanked to the north-west by the sea and to the south-east by a near continuous chain of four lagoons extending north-east to south-west, to connect with an outlet to the sea. These lagoons have been gradually in-filled by natural processes of silting, but from the Ottoman period onwards by a deliberate policy of dumping and over-building. Their in-filling is causing major ground-water problems and the proposed solution put forward is to re-form the lagoons by excavation and to landscape them with gardens and public open spaces, to form a 'green lung' for the modern city, and natural southern boundary to the medina. But Benghazi is also 'A City of Legends', and a future for its past will hopefully link it with other sites as part of a wider heritage trail.

To the north-east and east, in the suburban districts of Coefir and Suani Osman, are a rapidly

diminishing number of limestone depressions in the floor of the plain, formed naturally by underground water systems. These *karst* formations (known as *dolinas*) may singly, or collectively, have been the legendary 'Gardens of the Hesperides' from which Euesperides perhaps derived its name *circa* 570 BC. They are remarkable features, often filled with lush vegetation against a backdrop of an arid plain.

According to legend four female guardians, Aegle, Erytheia, Hestia and Arethusa, protected the golden apples given to Hera by Ge, on the occasion of her marriage to Zeus. The guardians, who possessed powers of sweet and enchanting song, were assisted in their duties by a dragon called Ladon. Although the geographer Scylax (4th century BC) places the 'Gardens' near the Gulf of Phycus (between Ptolemais and Apollonia) he describes it as '... a place 105ft (30m) deep, sunk in the ground and without access, its length and breadth are not less than 1148ft (350m). Dense trees shade it and include the lotus, apples of every kind, pomegranates, pears, blackberries, vines,



myrtles, laurels and ivy. Pliny, on the other hand, places the 'Gardens' '... not far inland from Berenice' and Lucan, describing how the fleet of Cato the Younger was driven into the harbour of Berenice, refers poetically to the nearby Gardens, 'formerly protected by the vigilant dragon, but now poor and stripped of its foliage'. Today, the 'Gardens' are disappearing fast, in-filled with rubbish or bulldozed and overbuilt, yet they hold vital clues for long-term occupation of this part of the Benghazi plain from the prehistoric period to the present day, and the best of them should be preserved as a heritage resource. A second mythical feature linked to Euesperides and Berenice is the River Lethe. The Greeks believed the waters of Lethe (oblivion) were drunk by the souls of the dead to forget all they had ever done, seen or heard. Lucan describes Lethe as near Berenice: *Here Lethe's streams, from secret springs below, Rise to the light, here heavily, and slow, The silent dull forgetful waters flow.* Although there are a number of possible candidates for Lethe, the best







is the Jokh-el-Kebir, around four miles east of Berenice. The depression, which is some 1148ft (350m) long and about 33ft (10m) deep, gives access to a large subterranean cavern where a pool forms the start of an underground river system. It is thought, but has yet to be proven, that the watercourse connects with the Ain Zaiana (the Blue Lagoon), 1640ft (500m) west of the Coefia depressions and into which a freshwater stream is known to discharge.

In addition to the Gardens and Lethe, Euesperides and Berenice are also linked to legendary Lake Tritonis, which the Roman poet Lucan believed was nearby. In mythology, Triton, son of Poseidon and Amphitrite, lived with his parents in a golden palace in the depths of the sea. Triton, with his human body and dolphin tail had a special attribute, a twisted seashell, on which he blew fiercely, or gently, according to whether he wished to agitate, or calm, the sea. Triton's favourite abode was this mythical lake. Its location is unknown, but the Roman geographer Strabo believed that it was near Berenice and that an island with a temple of Aphrodite existed in the lake.

Although there are other candidates such as the pool of Bu Dzira, which has a small island at its centre, the association of the sebkha es-Selmani with the cities (Euesperides and Berenice) and the sea makes the sebkha the most likely location.

One possible site for the 'island' is Sidi Hussein, which even today occupies an outcrop of rock standing above a 19th-century man-made causeway to Berka. In the Greek and early Roman period what is now land was covered by the shallow waters of the lagoon. Sidi Hussein is well known for Hellenistic and

**8. Amphora kiln, one of a battery of kilns, found during redevelopment at Janzur, near Tripoli.**

**9. Excavation on the Sidi Abeid mound (Euesperides) near Benghazi, with encroaching modern development in the background.**

Roman period tombs, and it is possible that the island became an important cemetery accessed only by boat. A fine statue of Aphrodite was found near the Ain es-Selmani in 1902 (presented to the Louvre by a Dr Perrod), and it is tempting to take this as supporting evidence for the identification of the sebkha with Lake Tritonis. Sidi Hussein, together with a partly re-excavated sebkha, would provide yet another link in a chain of legendary sites.

The future of Berenice and Euesperides should become a prism through which issues of national heritage management might be viewed as part of a broader vision of training and capacity building for a new generation of archaeologists, curators, conservators and heritage managers. A significant part of the site remains to be excavated and it might be possible to mount training excavations at Sidi Khreibish.

A new museum dedicated to the history of the 'City of Legends' should form an essential part of this plan. In it, we hope to display the product of past excavations, (most specifically an internationally important pottery collection spanning the period 570 BC to AD 750), together with a remarkable collection of Cyrenaican 'treasure' taken to Italy during the colonial period and recovered for the nation by past Controllers of Antiquities, RM Harrison and RG Goodchild, in 1961.

The treasure, of over 7,000 individual objects, many in precious metals, but also objects of bronze, terracotta and marble was placed in safe storage in the National Bank of Libya, in Benghazi. Sadly, during the early months of the uprising a substantial part of the treasure was stolen from the bank vault and recently

over 500 gold coins and other precious objects, almost certainly from the Benghazi theft, were recovered by Egyptian police following a raid on suspected antiquities smugglers in Alexandria. We can only hope that the arrest will lead to the recovery of the Cyrenaican treasure, so that it might be displayed in a new museum for the benefit of the Libyan people.

Building on these three projects, with colleagues, I am now working on a crucial five-year plan for the development of the Department of Antiquities. As a first stage a database of over 200 major sites has been compiled to provide an overview of the diverse nature of Libyan archaeological heritage in the three provinces of the country. The intention was to choose a large and chronologically varied a sample as time permitted for each of the three areas, selecting sites that are both academically important and visually impressive. The true purpose of the study, however, was to establish a level of condition for each of the sites, including possible threats, so that a more detailed assessment of an individual site, or the assets as a whole, can be attempted.

We are now embarking on the more difficult, but exciting, job of making recommendations for the building of a new, fit-for-purpose Department of Antiquities. With the support of a new Libyan government and assistance from friends all over the world, these reports, particularly the latter, will hopefully help to create a new and exciting future for Libya's past. ■

**From a talk given to the Society for Libyan Studies in London by Dr Paul Bennett on 4 October 2011.**





# *Time* travellers

**Lindsay Fulcher** rounds up some of the best tour companies geared up to transport you back to the legendary sites of the antiquity – in Britain and much further afield

**W**hether in the UK or much further afield whenever I travel I seek out the local museums and ancient sites. Sometimes because of political unrest or even war, I have had to wait for decades to go to a particular place, but judicious timing and sheer determination means that most countries can be visited eventually. There is something

about walking in the footsteps of past generations that fires up the imagination, from the stone circle of Callanish on the Isle of Lewis to the avenues of standing stones of Carnac in Brittany; from the ancient Greek oracle at Delphi to the Egyptian Temple of Amun in Siwa Oasis, where another oracle told Alexander the Great that he was divine; from the Ridgeway, that stretches

from Avebury to Ivinghoe Beacon, to the Processional Way of Babylon in Iraq. Our ancestors raised these stones and temples and trod these diverse paths through the centuries. All those who have a passion for the past and want to indulge their wanderlust can find a tour that will take them to their desired destination. Here are some travel companies that can help.





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### Ace Cultural Tours

Established in 1958, Ace offers 200 different itineraries covering every facet of the arts from archaeology and architecture to music and history. Each one combines three essential elements: interesting subjects, stimulating leaders, and exciting destinations. Ace's archaeological tours stretch around the world from the Roman villa of Chedworth (9) in the Cotswolds to the ancient city of Persepolis (2) in modern-day Iran.

• Ace Cultural Tours (01223-835055;  
ace@acesculturaltours.co.uk;  
www.acesculturaltours.co.uk)

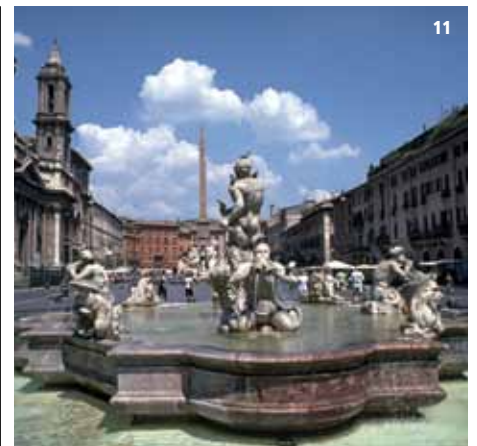
### Andante Travels

This specialist travel company was set up by two archaeologists in 1986. The range of tours from Andante is extensive – unusual destinations include Algeria (3, 6, 10) and Albania (15) and you can choose from: Cave and Rock Art, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Egyptian, Phoenician, Minoan, Greek, Trojan, Etruscan, Punic Wars, Alexander, Roman, Byzantine, Near East, Vikings, Medieval, New World and Islamic World. New tours in 2012 include: *Aboriginal Rock Art of Australia*; *Ancient Mexico*, *The Argolid* and *The Via Flaminia*. A week after 9/11, by chance, I went on a tour of Iran with Andante. There were not many other tourists there which was wonderful – we had Persepolis (2) practically to ourselves.

• Andante Travels (01722-713800;  
tours@andantetravels.co.uk;  
www.andantetravels.co.uk)



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### Ciceroni Travel

Cultural tours, with the accent on private visits to houses and gardens, good food and wine, and comfortable hotels in the UK, Ireland, Italy and the Mediterranean is what Ciceroni offers. Their week-long *Rome and the Grand Tour* (11) is the most popular, although others entitled *Andalucia: Romans, Christians and Moors*, *Petra* (1), *Jerash and the Treasures of Jordan*, and *Sicily, Crossroads of the Mediterranean*, (8) all sound extremely enticing.

• Ciceroni Travel (01869-811167;  
info@ciceroni.co.uk; www.ciceroni.co.uk)





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The motto of this adventurous but experienced tour company is 'Don't just travel – explore!' Set up 30 years ago Explore can take you trekking up mountains, mingling with locals, and discovering long-forgotten cultures in 130 different countries including Armenia, Easter Island, Ethiopia, Greece (12), Turkey (16), Iran, Lebanon, Mongolia, Oman, Tibet, and Cambodia. Explore has taken me to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and Cappadocia – both journeys that took in extraordinary archaeological sites, amazing art and architecture, exotic markets and wonderful wildlife.

• Explore (0844-8751892; res@explore.co.uk; www.explore.co.uk)

## Hebridean Archaeological Tours

To visit wonderful sites and scenery in the Outer Hebrides, contact freelance archaeologist Dave Godwin, who organises private tours for up to six people, led by local



archaeologists and guides, on the islands of Lewis and Harris. These islands have the largest number of stone circles and standing stones in the UK, including the stunning Callanish complex (13, 19). For those interested in archaeo-astronomy Dave can arrange visits to these ancient sites at sunrise, sunset, moonrise and moonset.

• Hebridean Archaeological Tours (01851-830777/ 07850-857774; Davearchtours@gmail.com; www.hebrideanarchaeologicaltours.com)



## Hinterland Travel

Not for the faint-hearted Hinterland Travel will take you to countries that other companies do not reach – Iraq (4, 16, 20,) and Afghanistan for starters. Geoff Hann has been leading tours around the Near East since the 1970s; he has seen regimes come and go, wars start and finish, sites close and open. I went to Iraq with Hinterland Travel six months before the war and saw all the major sites. It was the most memorable journey of my life. Conditions can be extremely basic but if you really want to visit these places it is well worth it. Although it is not possible to go to all those sites today, Geoff reports that most sites, apart from Nineveh, can be visited again. Hinterland Travel also goes to Armenia, Burma, Kashmir, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan.

• Hinterland Travel (01484-719549/ 07717060415; hinterland@btconnect.com; www.hinterlandtravel.com)



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• Martin Randall Travel (020-8742 3355; info@martinrandall.co.uk; www.martinrandall.com)



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Based in Istanbul and specialising in Turkish archaeological tours, Peten Travels promises to take you 'beyond the ordinary' with tours





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which can be off the peg or tailor-made to suit your specific requirements. You can follow *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great* or visit the *Caves and Thrones of the Gods*. Or you can enter the *Minerva Prize Draw* to win a 16-day tour, for two, of the land of the Hittites (22) and Phrygians with Peten Travels; see pages 54 and 55.

• Peten Travels (00 90 212 248 9636; inquiry@petentour.com, www.potentour.com)



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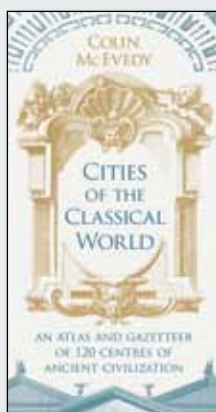
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The discovery of the 'Royal Cache', a crypt in the Theban Necropolis containing the mummies of some of Egypt's greatest kings, captured the imagination of the 19th-century world as much as the opening of Tutankhamen's tomb excited the 20th. Perhaps as early as 1860, Ahmed Abdul Rasul of Gurna (on Luxor's west bank) hit the jackpot, a stash of 50 royal mummies that he and his tomb-raiding family mined for years undetected by the antiquities authorities.

'Officially' discovered in 1881, the Royal Cache offered something even more thought-provoking and astounding than Tutankhamen's lustrous gold: the mummies of Seti I, Ramses II, III, and Thutmose I, II, III among others, a veritable pharaonic hall of fame. These were the men responsible for much of the glory of Thebes and the quantity of funerary objects that accompanied them surpassed treasures described in *Tales of 1001 Nights*. At a time when the first world trade fairs were attracting millions of visitors in London, Paris and Philadelphia, and their Egyptian pavilions were the most popular of all, here was a genuine hall of wonders.

To a public with an appetite for Egypt, the Royal Cache brought the ancients' aspirations for immortality, their achievements and follies to life. It made headlines in a dozen languages. 'There is nothing in history that parallels the dramatic enthusiasm of such a discovery', wrote one commentator, 'the silence of 30 centuries has been broken'. The circumstances surrounding the Cache's finding inspired reams of purple prose and even religious sermons: 'These august personages ... [have been] brought up afresh before the tribunal of human judgment as to their characters and acts'.

In the annals of treasure lore, the Royal Cache was unique for several reasons. First, it showed that high priests had created it around 1000 BC to protect the remains of their kings whose individual tombs had all been plundered. A single, group tomb was easier to guard than separate ones scattered about the necropolis, but it was an unorthodox move that downgraded the resting-place of the pharaohs, from private suites to a dormitory for the dead. The very creation of the Royal Cache marked a watershed in tomb-raiding history, a time when thieves were feared enough to change the



# Den of Thebes

**Maria Golia** reveals how a family of 19th-century tomb-robbers who penetrated the Royal Cache, a pharaonic dormitory of the dead on Luxor's west bank, were both punished and rewarded

**1. Photograph of Maspero, Brugsch, Mohammed Abdel Rasul, with whip, and two other Egyptians at the entrance to the crypt containing the Royal Cache, taken by Edward Wilson in winter 1881. He used it to illustrate his article *Finding Pharaoh* that appeared in *Century Magazine* in 1887.**

**2. Photograph of Amelia Edwards. Courtesy of the Egyptian Exploration Society.**

status quo. Secondly, the 19th-century discovery of the Royal Cache made the Abdul Rasul family a legend in its own lifetime, but it also attracted such scrutiny on behalf of the authorities that they would never again raid with impunity. The very scale of the find and its importance to archaeology meant that the treasure-hunters were about to

become the hunted. The authorities must have been aware of the Abdul Rasuls' activities but for whatever reason had previously chosen to ignore it. The brothers certainly enjoyed notoriety among foreigners as antiquities traffickers.

Several 19th-century travelers published accounts mentioning the brothers, including Amelia Edwards, a British writer and amateur Egyptologist who did not think very highly of them. 'They live together,' she wrote in 1882, 'with their wives and families, in a terrace of rock-cut tombs ... their ostensible calling being that of guides and donkey-masters, their private profession that of tomb breakers and mummy snatchers'. Gaston Maspero, chief of Egypt's Antiquities Service and a friend of Amelia Edwards wrote to her on 4 August, 1881, explaining the circumstances that led him to the Cache. 'Having noted







how Egyptian antiquities of every description were constantly finding their way to Europe, I came 10 years ago to the conclusion that the Arabs had discovered a royal tomb'.

Edwards had heard whispers of a major find in the Necropolis during her 1874 visit to Luxor. Meanwhile Maspero accumulated more concrete proof, including funerary texts and *shabti* from the burial of Pinudjem II (circa 1070-1032 BC) and, in 1877, yet another papyrus, this time belonging to Queen Nedjemet, wife of Herihor, a general and High Priest of Amun sometime before Pinudjem II.

Maspero was certain that an important tomb (or tombs) had been unearthed, but where exactly and by whom? He asked Charles Wilbour, one of his former students, to keep an eye out for royal artifacts and help identify their provenance. A lawyer, journalist, and the first American to obtain a degree in Egyptology, Wilbour wintered in Luxor where he was known as a wealthy and discerning buyer of antiquities. In 1881 he was offered something only a connoisseur might

**3. Engraving of the royal mummies laid out in the central Hall of the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities at Boolak used to illustrate an article by Amelia Edwards, called *Lying in state in Cairo*, that appeared in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in 1882.**

**4. Approach to the entrance of the crypt where the Royal Cache was found. The grey gravel (right) is supposedly that which the Abdul Rasuls emptied from it between 1860-70.**

**5. Bronze plaque of Gaston Maspero. Photograph by Peter Clayton.**



appreciate: a quantity of red leather straps. Wilbour recognised them as 'mummy braces' (straps used to hold the mummy's shroud in place) and on them he could read Pinudjem II's name. He telegraphed Maspero with information regarding those implicated in his purchase namely Ahmed Abdul Rasul and Mostafa Agha Ayat, Luxor's British Vice Consul. Like many antiquities dealers working on behalf of foreign entities, Ayat enjoyed diplomatic immunity. The Abdul Rasuls were not so lucky.

Maspero telegraphed the Luxor police to demand Ahmed Abdul Rasuls' arrest. He also contacted Dawud Pasha, the *mudir* (chief official of the province) in Qena, requesting that he open an official inquiry. Ahmed Abdul Rasul and his brother Hussein were rounded up and taken to the Qena jail to face their nemesis; Dawud Pasha was a classic villain, whose ruthless taxation had reduced many local families to penury. The brothers were questioned 'with vigour' as Maspero put it, in other words, they were tortured.

The Abdul Rasuls were held for two months in a stifling prison, a torture in itself, and yet they did not talk. It is possible that the younger brother Hussein was set free as a concession to persuade Ahmed to cooperate. After this Hussein's name suddenly disappears from contemporary accounts. Ahmed remained obdurate, heartened by his fellow-Gurnans who travelled to Qena to offer testimonies of his upstanding character. 'The notables of Gurna repeatedly gave their solemn word that Ahmed Abdul Rasul was the most loyal and fair-minded Egyptian in the country', wrote



Maspero, 'that he never hunted treasure, and was incapable of trading the most insignificant ancient object imaginable, much less violating a royal tomb'. Ahmed Abdul Rasul was finally released, 'his immaculate honor,' wrote Maspero sarcastically, 'intact'.

When Ahmed came home, there was no rejoicing. Instead, a furious family argument erupted, although its exact terms remain uncertain. Some said the dispute arose when Ahmed demanded a greater share of the proceeds from the family business, having suffered so much to protect it, and his eldest brother Mohamed refused. Mohamed was unscathed by the investigation despite being entrenched in the family business. In Egypt's traditional society, the first-born son holds pride of place, especially when the father is absent. The eldest male is the tactician whose well-being must be ensured and, guilt or not, the younger brothers would have taken the fall, albeit somewhat resentfully.

Whatever took place in Gurna that summer, one thing is sure, a month after his brother's release Mohamed Abdul Rasul mounted his donkey and rode to Qena where he was granted an audience with Dawud Pasha and behind closed doors, agreed to 'tell all'. Amelia Edwards describes Mohamed as 'a spare sullen, silent fellow, avaricious as Harpagon and extortionate as Shylock'. She believes he went to the police 'fearing lest his brother's constancy should fail – fearing, above all, that the reward which Professor Maspero had thought it well to offer should fall into other hands.' But Ahmed had proved his mettle, and any rewards to be had would have ultimately been



shared; the Abdul Rasuls lived and worked together and their survival depended on mutual trust.

But Mohamed's character flaws as perceived by Edwards may be read another way. The was a close-mouthed, tough negotiator, sterling qualities for a tomb-raider. Part of his deal with the Antiquities Service was his appointment as Chief Guardian of the Theban Necropolis, a marriage of convenience that recognised the value of both parties. The Gurnans had sought-after knowledge, enough to exchange for the freedom to stay in business for another century.

That the Abdul Rasuls' knowledge mattered to the authorities may be judged by the measures they were willing to take to obtain it, but also by Dawud Pasha's actions once he realised he would soon learn the tomb's location. He telegraphed his direct superior, Egypt's Minister of Interior, who relayed the intelligence to Egypt's ruler, the Khedive Tewfik. The Khedive ordered several employees of Cairo Museum to act on Maspero's behalf (he was in Paris), including assistant curator Emile Brugsch, and Ahmed Kamel, translator and secretary, who would become Egypt's first Egyptologist.

On 5 July, 1881 Mohammed led the Antiquities Authorities to a shaft in a limestone cliff not far from their Gurna homestead. Brugsch was lowered by rope into a cavern packed with over 6,000 artefacts and dozens of mummies. 'Coming so suddenly into such an assemblage,' Brugsch wrote, 'I thought I must be dreaming'. Luxor was instantly ablaze with news. Fearing a raid, he had the goods packed in less than three days under continuous armed guard, ready for



**6. The mysterious mummy with the crossed arms that travelled from Egypt to America and which was originally labelled 'Nefertiti'. She turned out to be Ramses I and was returned to Cairo in 2003. He is now in Luxor Museum.**

**7. Amelia Edwards and others watch as one of the Royal Cache mummies is unwrapped in the Boolak (Bulaq) Museum in Cairo in 1881.**

**8. Maria Golia at the entrance to the crypt in the Theban Necropolis where the Royal Cache was discovered.**



transport to the safety of Cairo's Bulaq Museum by Nile barge. When the steamer reached Cairo it was met with consternation. Customs officials were uncertain how to process such a cargo. The story that the mummies were classified and duly taxed as 'dried fish' suggests a prosaic end to a magical journey. But for some of the Royal Cache mummies, the journey had just begun.

Assuming the Abdul Rasuls had found the cache as early as 1860, one or more of the mummies may have been sold to a Canadian doctor named James Douglas. Dr Douglas's professional interest in cadavers had forced him to leave America. In the early 19th century, corpse dissection used the bodies of convicts and beggars, but the medical community's demand exceeded the supply. Those willing to exhume freshly buried bodies (or employ others to do so) were dubbed 'resurrectionists' and harshly penalised if caught. Douglas needed cadavers in order to teach anatomy and on two occasions had narrowly escaped arrest. So when, as a remedy for

exhaustion he prescribed himself nine consecutive winters in Egypt, he acquired several mummies with Mustafa Ayat's help, supplied by the Abdul Rasuls. He gave one, an well-preserved specimen with its arms folded across its chest, to his friend, Thomas Barnett, a former taxidermist, and founder of the Niagara Falls Museum.

The mummy with the folded arms, its prize exhibit, was labelled 'Nefertiti', even though a professional peek beneath its wrappings in the mid-1980s had showed it to be male. Then, in 1991, Egyptologist Aidan Dodson noticed the mummy's resemblance to that of Seti I, found in the Royal Cache and wondered if it might be that of Seti's father, Ramses I. The position of the arms indicated a royal burial and the refinement of the mummification suggested a personage of no small means. But it was not until 1999, when the Niagara Falls' Egyptian collection was acquired by the Michael C Carlos Museum, that the mummy was thoroughly examined. Experts determined it was probably old enough to be that of Ramses I, and the curators graciously offered to send him home.

So it was that on 26 October 2003, the royal mummy arrived at Cairo International Airport greeted by a military band and a choir of children singing: 'We are the children of the Nile/Welcome Ramses/ Builder of esteemed Egypt!' After the ceremonies he was air-freighted to Luxor Museum. Not surprisingly official press releases and coverage of the mummy's return mentioned the Abdul Rasuls only in passing. ■

*Excerpt from A Short History of Tomb-Raiding, a work in progress by Maria Golia.*

# Talk like an Egyptian

Renowned Egyptologist and mummy expert Dr Salima Ikram talks to **Richard Marranca** about everyday life and death in Ancient Egypt



Born in Pakistan, Dr Salima Ikram has combined her interest in Ancient Egypt with modern science. She is a professor of Egyptology at the American University of Cairo and founder of the Animal Mummy Project at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. She has also spent time as a visiting scholar at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and has been a consultant at Giza, Saqqara, Abu Sir, and in the Valley of the Kings, as well as co-director of the North Kharga Oasis Survey. Her books include: *Divine Creatures*, *The Mummy in Ancient Egypt* and *Death and Burial in Ancient Egypt*, as well as a series of children's books. While her television credits include *Da Vinci Code: Decoded*, *Tomb Raiders: Robbing the Dead* and *The Real Scorpion King*.

## When did your love of Egypt begin?

I was interested when I was eight, and totally hooked by the time I was nine. I saw the statues of Rahotep and Nofret in the Cairo Museum, and they, together with Tutankhamun's treasures and the Grand Gallery of the Great Pyramid, were a real turning-point in my life.

## You've written books for children. Do you also get the chance to teach them?

I give talks to children and have run workshops for them. They get a huge kick out of learning about mummification.

## What is the most interesting mummy that you have studied?

Very hard to say. With the pharaohs, they are quite interesting as we know so much about them, so it is wonderful to see them 'in the flesh'. As for animals – I am very fond of the 17-ft-long (5m) crocodile from Kom Ombo that was mummified with baby crocodiles in its mouth (to protect them and also to symbolize regeneration), and the dog and baboon ensemble found in the Valley of the Kings – they have so much personality!

## Could you describe the mummification process?

Mummification was carried out in Egypt for over 3,000 years, and it evolved over time and also varied from region to region. The goal of mummification was to desiccate and preserve the body. The process is as follows: as much as possible of the brain is removed via the nostrils with a hooked tool, and the cranium is then washed out with palm wine or salt water. It is later filled with molten resin and linen plugs are inserted into the nose to keep the resin in and help retain the shape of the nose. After this, an incision is made in the left side, above the iliac crest, and the stomach, lungs, liver, and intestines are removed and mummified separately. Then the thorax is thoroughly washed with palm wine and spices.

The body is desiccated and defatted by burying it, and filling the interior cavities with natron, a combination of salt and baking soda. This procedure lasts for 40 days after which the body is dusted off, anointed with oils and unguents, and wrapped in linen bandages while prayers are said and incense is burnt.

The second procedure lasts for 30 days. After this the body is ready for burial. The Egyptians had a strong belief in the afterlife and wanted to preserve the body as it was a vessel for the soul.

## Herodotus gave us one of the few descriptions of the process of mummification. Do you think he witnessed it, or did priests divulge their secrets to him?

Probably priests described it to him. He might have visited an embalming house to carry out his research the equivalent to going to a funeral home.

## Ramses II's mummy shows that he had red hair, hardening of the arteries and problems with his teeth?

Not necessarily – his hair might be red due to discoloration (bleaching) associated with the natron. Also, in this part of the world, I have seen people with dark hair that turns reddish, blonde, and, finally, white as they get older. Although his teeth and arteries were in a poor state.

## Can you say a few things about the new technology and techniques being used in palaeopathology?

All sorts of interesting new technologies that have been used on the living are being tried on the dead, as well as special technologies that can safely be used on the dead. There is some work being carried out on DNA research, also, imaging technologies are improving by leaps and bounds, as are scientists' abilities to test ancient bone and tissue in order to identify diseases.

## What intrigues you most about ancient Egyptian religion?

One of the things that is most curious is the upsurge of animal cults in the Late Period. Egyptologists have various ideas about why this might have happened, but we are still unsure of this and I think that a great deal remains to be understood.

## Was the afterlife an idealised version of life on earth?

Yes, it was the best of this world in every respect that could be enjoyed forever.

## In the Book of the Dead, the deceased's heart is weighed against a feather of truth. That sets a high standard for human ethics, do you think?

Indeed, every individual was called upon to help uphold Maat, or 'the order of the universe', by acting correctly and with integrity. It did not always work, but the ideal was certainly in place.

## Was Akhenaten the first monotheist?

No, it is a misnomer – he was actually a henotheist. He made the Aten the chief god and, himself, the Aten's manifestation on earth. Other deities, such as Hathor, seem to have continued to be worshipped, but the Aten (and Akhenaten) reigned supreme.





**From left to right: Dr Salima Ikram, who has a special interest in animal cults, documenting canid remains in the Anubis catacombs at Saqqara, surveying rock art in the desert at Kharga Oasis and exploring and mapping a tomb in which Ptolemaic ibis mummies are buried.**

### **Was he a mystic or visionary?**

Maybe both, as well as a politician who wanted to rein in the power of the priests of Amun.

### **How did Tutankhamen die – there have been many theories?**

No one knows for sure. He might have had malaria that was reactivated, or he could have died due to complications from a broken leg, or from influenza.

### **Why did that genius of a sculptor leave the head of Nefertiti on the table in Amarna, waiting 3,500 years to be discovered?**

Good question. It was left in the sand. Maybe he figured that as the royal family did not have any power or funding, he would not be paid for the piece and no one else would want it, so he abandoned it. Also, it separated him from the regime.

### **How would Egypt have looked back in ancient times? Was there more rainfall, more greenery then?**

Prior to 3500 BC Egypt was much greener with a vast array of fauna. This decreased by 3000 BC, and then continued to do so until 2000 BC when most of Egypt looked similar to what how it does today, although there probably were more micro-climates in the eastern and western deserts.

### **What was the typical diet in ancient Egypt?**

This depended on rank. Wealthy people ate more meat – beef was preferred, while poorer people depended more on vegetables, fish, and maybe poultry, and pigs, all easy to catch or rear in confined spaces. There were no potatoes, tomatoes, maize or chilies in ancient Egypt; and no oranges or other citrus fruit.

### **What did they drink?**

Wine and beer but what might have been nice for them might not be so well received

now. Beer was weaker than its modern equivalent, and was probably a bit like gruel but the wine was supposed to be good. Some jars are labeled with the vintner's name, the date of production, the domain name, and also the quality of wine. It ranged from very, very, good, to very, very, good, to very good, to good – then there was just wine to make you merry (quickly).

### **Some of the love poems written during the New Kingdom seem so natural and passionate – almost modern. What do they say about the Egyptians?**

I think they provide a lens through which we can see that there was little difference in essence between the ancient Egyptians and people today.

### **How would their music have sounded?**

Probably fairly screechy to the modern western ear.

### **Did women in ancient Egypt have more power than in other parts of the ancient world?**

Much better! More equitable rights in terms of property ownership, divorce, inheritance, and so on. They were still not equal to men, but they were better off than in other places.

### **Can you tell me about the two female pharaohs, Hatshepsut and Cleopatra?**

They were remarkable women, but they were not the only female rulers of Egypt. Quite possibly a woman called Neithhotep ruled/regented in the early dynastic period, Nitokris and Sobeknefru also ruled, and Queen Aahotep might even have led troops in battle.

### **Were the fine, transparent linen robes in the tomb paintings worn by both sexes?**

Yes, by both men and women. The ancient Egyptians were not hung up about their bodies – everyone had one so there was no real reason to be coy about it.

### **Is your work still as exciting as when you first began?**

The biggest thrill is often going into a tomb or seeing something that has been hidden for thousands of years. But there are other eureka moments: when, suddenly, one gets an idea that one can prove and that makes sense of some aspect of ancient Egypt or when doing experimental archaeology and it becomes clear why people did things in a certain way. Ancient Egyptians remain compelling, despite all the time that I have spent with them already.

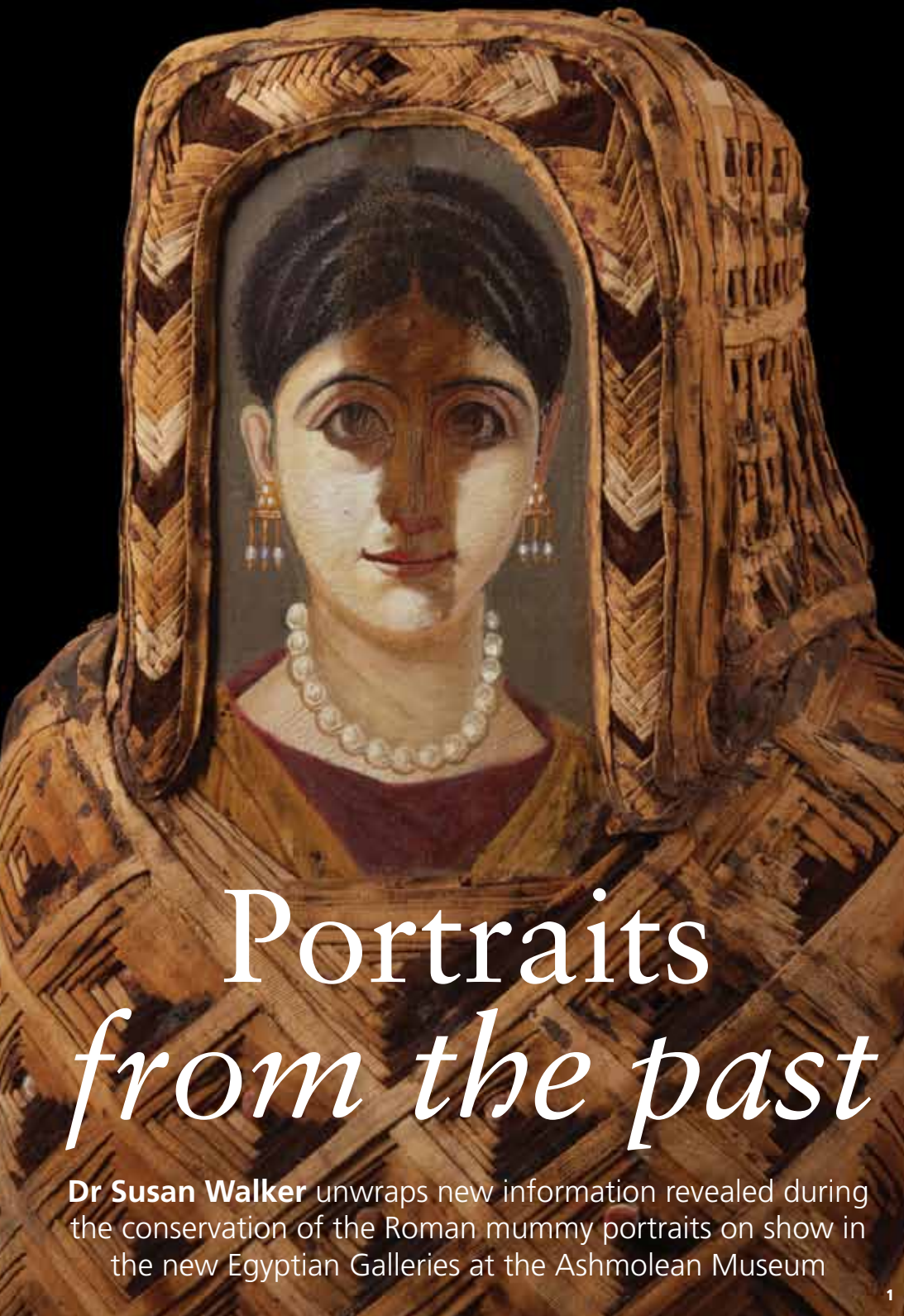
### **What would you most like to discover?**

This is a very difficult question. Intact burials, both royal and elite are always exciting. Texts from the time of Akhenaten dealing with politics and religion would be great. In fact, any court archive would be a spectacular find as it would shed so much light on ancient Egypt. New discoveries of pharaonic activity in the western and eastern desert would also be terrific – and, of course, finding embalming houses with their materials intact would be great fun for me.

### **Were you surprised by all the recent uprisings in Egypt?**

Yes I was, but pleased. Of course, one should not be too surprised. The ancient Egyptians had a ritual to test the ability/acceptability of the king to continue ruling after he had been on the throne for 30 years called the *heb sed*. The king had to run a race and, if he won, it was an indication that he was strong and a good ruler, backed by the gods. He then had to be acclaimed by the gods of Egypt as well as, presumably, the higher level officials, and finally, to a lesser extent, the people. If he faltered or had enough people against him, he was replaced. The first sit-in in history took place in Egypt during the reign of Ramses III. The workers who were constructing and decorating his tomb had not been paid so they put down their tools and went to the temple that issued their pay and sat down until they got it! ■





# Portraits *from the past*

**Dr Susan Walker** unwraps new information revealed during the conservation of the Roman mummy portraits on show in the new Egyptian Galleries at the Ashmolean Museum

**T**he Ashmolean Museum's extensive Egyptian collections, containing the most important pre-dynastic material held in any museum outside Egypt, have recently moved into bright new galleries, thanks to the inspirational support of Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover, KG. The visitor now moves clockwise and chronologically through five rooms, from the Lisa and Bernard Selz Gallery of *Egypt at its Origins*, through the Christian Levett Family Gallery of *Dynastic Egypt and Nubia*, The Sackler Gallery of *Life after Death in Ancient Egypt*, The

**1 and 2. Mummy of a young woman with intact portrait in encaustic on wood. Hawara, AD 130-140. AN1888.532.**

*Amarna 'Revolution'*, to *Egypt in the Age of Empires*. This last area continues into the western end of the Randolph Sculpture Gallery where a display of Ptolemaic and Roman mummies and mummy portraits is set amidst sculpture from Hellenistic Greece and imperial Rome's experience of empire in the first millennium BC.

Visitors will be able to contrast the ways of remembering the dead in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt with the commemoration of individuals in contemporary Mediterranean societies. This display includes three mummy portraits cut from their

mummies, and two still attached. None of these has been on public display for decades – with the exception of the shroud portrait which appeared, then uncleaned, in the exhibition *Ancient Faces* at the British Museum in 1997. They have all been conserved to great effect by Jevon Thistlewood (paintings) and Sue Stanton (textiles) of the Ashmolean's Department of Conservation.

During this process much has been learned of the process of painting portraits and we also have new insights into the archaeological context of the three portraits excavated





3

by Professor WM Flinders Petrie in the Roman cemeteries at Hawara.

The two panel portraits of men (4 and 8) both date to the middle years of the second century AD. The earlier of the two (8) may be dated to the reign of the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius (AD 138-161) on grounds of the subject's very similar hairstyle and squarish physiognomy. The painted area does not extend to the edge of the boards.

During conservation treatment in 2011, microscopic traces of orpiment, an arsenic-based dull yellow pigment, were found to the right and above the head. It may

**3. Mummy of a young woman with encaustic painting on limewood. Hawara, AD 100-120. AN1888.531.**

**4. Portrait of bearded man in encaustic on limewood, AD 160-170. Unknown provenance. AN1922.241.**

be that this portrait was originally set within a yellow frame imitating gold. This would explain the squarish format of the panel and the unusually expansive background. However the traces of orpiment are too small to be certain.

The second male portrait (4) dates to the reign of Pius's joint successor with Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus (AD 161-168). Again, the imperial hairstyle is evoked in this portrait of exceptionally fine quality. Here damage to the painted surface allows us to discern the sketch for the features, just below the proper left eye and in the beard.

Analysis of the paint shows how the artist prepared the wood, almost certainly lime, with gypsum, which shows up under the microscope as sticks of white chalk of oval section. The background was painted grey, and the garments built up in lead white, using the grey ground to create shadows and drapery folds. The face was built up from an orange-pink base coat. Egyptian blue, red and orpiment yellow were used to tint the black hair and beard.

The other three paintings displayed, all of young women, come from the Roman cemeteries excavated by Petrie at Hawara in the Fayum. In Roman times Hawara was the cemetery of the regional capital Ptolemais Euergetis, also known as Arsinoe. Hawara was also the location of the pyramid of the Middle Kingdom king Amenemhat III and his labyrinthine mortuary temple. On both counts this cemetery attracted burials of



4

5



individuals of relatively high status. These mummy portraits are of earlier date, ranging from the middle years of the first to the early years of the second century AD.

The subject of a portrait painted on a linen shroud (7) is now revealed as a pale-skinned young woman with rouged cheeks and pink lips, who most likely lived in the reign of the emperor Nero (AD 54-68). Like many of her compatriots from Hawara, she wears gold ball earrings of a design also recovered from the ruins of Pompeii, and a (newly revealed) necklace of gold beads. Her black hair, banked with curls at the sides, is dressed with a red band decorated with pearls, just possibly the edge of a cap.

Though painted on linen rather than wood, this portrait, recorded by Petrie as 31, is close to several other portraits excavated by Petrie at Hawara in his earlier campaigns of 1887/8: YY, also painted on linen and VV, painted on wood, both now in the British Museum; DD, the named portrait of Isarous, now in the Petrie Museum, London, and P, now in Cairo Museum. A portrait of a glamorous woman wearing jewellery rendered in gold leaf is Petrie OO, now in Berlin. The Ashmolean's painting was probably full-length, though in a wrapped mummy only the head and shoulders would have been revealed.

Working rapidly in the field, Petrie mounted the fragments of painted shroud on two sides of a wooden board, consolidating them with cellulose mixed with sand. The fragments of a white tunic and reddish purple mantle are stuck to the back.

Unfortunately they do not directly join the head and, at the time of writing are considered too



fragile to be remounted in their likely original position. A mummy of very early second-century date (3, 5 and 6) has recently been identified by Paul Roberts as Petrie G. Petrie noted the portrait panel as 'unfortunately nearly half broken away ... remarkable for having gilt breasts placed on the mummy'. It is now impossible to fit the portrait back in its original position, though an approximation can be achieved. Despite its poor condition, the portrait (5) reveals a hairstyle fashionable in the very early second century AD, with a small bun at the crown of the head. Similar styling may be seen in portraits from Hawara in the Ashmolean's Rome Gallery and in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Gold hoop earrings strung with pearls and a pearl and emerald necklace may be discerned.

The mummy (3) is elaborately wrapped in bands of linen designed to create a net of lozenges resembling the net worn by Osiris, god of the underworld. The young woman has been given gilded, three-dimensional breasts and gilded feet dressed in flip-flops, set on a painted foot-case. Linen bands decorated with gilded studs hold the wrappings in place above and below the breasts. Gilded studs also adorn each lozenge of the net, and the effect is softened by a cloth of the fine linen laid over the mummy.

The last of the five Ashmolean portraits, still in position on the mummy, is a tour de force spoilt only by leakage of resin on to the portrait from the mummy or its wrappings (1 and 2). Petrie recorded the portrait as BB. Unlifted, it remains undamaged and in remarkably fresh condition. The subject is a smiling young woman with black hair braided in tiers at the front of the head. She wears gold trident earrings decorated with pearls, and a large pearl necklace. These features, and her purple tunic with faded gilded mantle, are typical of the era of Hadrian (AD 117-138).

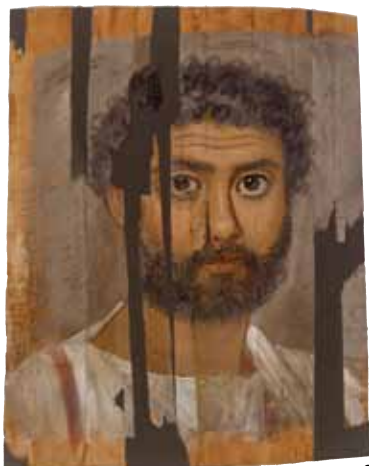
The portrait lies unusually flat in squared mummy wrappings; it was perhaps painted on thicker wood than the customary thin lime – oak or fir were also in occasional use. The pale face is framed by an unusual herringbone arrangement of linen



**6. (Close-up detail of 3) mummy of a young woman with encaustic painting on limewood. Hawara, AD 100-120. AN1888.531.**

**7. Portrait of a young woman. Tempera and encaustic on a linen shroud. Hawara, AD 55-70. AN1913.512.**

**8. Portrait of bearded man in encaustic on limewood, circa AD 150-160. Unknown provenance, AN1922.240.**



wrappings, alternately coloured purple and cream. A similar style of wrapping is found on a portrait of a youth excavated by Petrie and now in Cairo (Petrie E). Again the net of Osiris is realised with painted plaster studs decorating each lozenge.

Each of these portraits clearly conveys the personal appearance of an individual. Between them, the five portraits displayed in the Ashmolean's new Egyptian Galleries give a sense of the social aspirations of the men and women buried in the Fayum in the first and second centuries AD.

The shroud portrait, as we have seen, is one of a group from Hawara reflecting the emergence of the portrait in Roman style in the middle years of the first century AD. We are not absolutely certain of the status of the subjects of mummy portraits, but the evidence of

papyri and mummy labels suggests that they were the descendants of the original settlers of the Fayum, mercenaries drawn from the Greek world of Alexander the Great who fought for the early Ptolemies, and who enjoyed a mixed Greek and Egyptian lifestyle, marrying local women and taking up Egyptian religious practices. In correspondence with the Roman authorities this group defined itself as the 6,475 – perhaps a reference to the number of settlers rather than their Roman descendants. They asked for exemption from the harsh classification of the Egyptian population imposed by the Romans following the annexation of Egypt as a province in the wake of the defeat of the last Ptolemaic ruler, Queen Cleopatra VII, in 30 BC.

In return for undertaking some local administrative duties on behalf of the Roman authorities, the 6,475 were given the status of *katoikoi* (Greek, settler) or *metropolitai* (Greek, city-dweller), and a discount on the poll-tax imposed on all but the Greek populations of Alexandria, Naucratis and Ptolemaic on the Nile.

The reciprocity of the agreement is reflected in the dual Egyptian/Roman nature of the representation of the dead. By the second century AD the communities of the Fayum were flourishing, with many major public building projects completed or under way; by the early third they acquired formal urban status.

The relative youth of the subjects portrayed in all five examples is a poignant reminder of their short life expectancy, calculated at under 40 even at the height of prosperity in the second century AD.

The display is movingly completed by a Ptolemaic coffin, its mummy with gilded mask intact, bearing instructions for assembly and a prayer on behalf of the deceased by the coffin-maker; and a mummy of an infant boy with no portrait. A victim of various medical conditions, like so many of his contemporaries, he died far too young at under two years of age.

Now, thanks to Petrie, a long line of Ashmolean curators and conservators, and generations of generous sponsors, he and his compatriots are not forgotten. ■

**Dr Susan Walker is Keeper of the Department of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.**



# In pursuit of *the Picts*

According to the Romans they were wild, tattooed, northern raiders but **Murray Eiland** finds there is more to the Picts than war-cries and violence



**M**aterial culture is more durable than language. The result is that archaeologically there are masses of finds that have a label attached, demanding the question of how solid that label is. Without language and literature, reconstructing a web of relationships can be based on more guesswork than fact. However, in the case of a Late Iron Age (*circa* 100 BC to AD 100) and Early Medieval (7th to 9th century). British people known as the Picts, there is an extensive inventory of carved stones that offer a tantalising glimpse of their society.

Living in eastern and northern Scotland, a 'tattooed' or 'painted' people is recorded in the area by the Romans. The Latin word *Picti* is first used by Eumenius in AD 297. People who went under that name persisted until about the 10th century yet, somewhat disconcertingly, depictions of people on the stones do not have obvious adornments on their skin. Was this tradition abandoned by then? Were the stones painted? Were the figures tattooed? Many questions still remain.

Picts were long known to the Romans as northern raiders, but it is doubtful that it was used as an ethnic term. No one is sure what the Picts called themselves. For much of that time, according to later sources, the region had many kings, some ruling at the same time. However, many of these later annals record that the king of Fortriu and the king of the Picts were largely synonymous. Recent work suggests that the heartland of Fortriu was the area around Moray.

The issue about how kings were selected raised a number of interesting issues. While Bede noted that the Picts used matrilineal succession as an exception, it seems that in keeping with other kingdoms at the time, kings were not succeeded by their sons, but by their older and more experienced brothers and cousins who had the support of the community. With time this would change, and it appears that the Church played an important role in maintaining the power of kingship within a limited family group.

Much scholarly ink has been spilt on their language, termed Pictish, but it seems that it was related to Brythonic languages spoken by Britons in the south. Although the Pictish language has not survived, there is some evidence preserved in

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**1. Front of a cross slab, Glamis.**

**2. Back of a cross slab, Kirriemuir.**

**3. Incised sculpture of a wolf from Sittenham, Ross and Cromarty.**

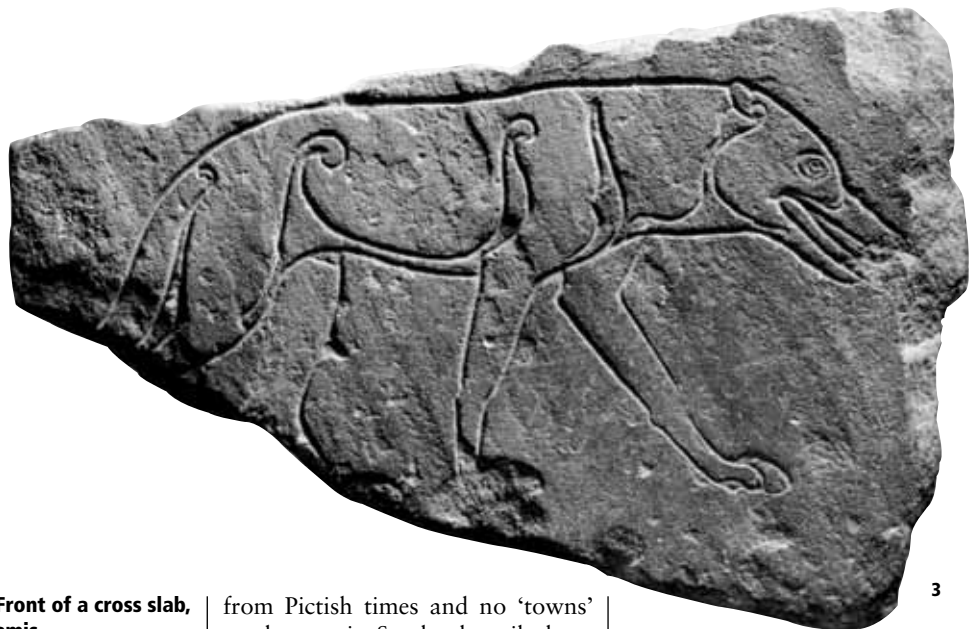
**4. Back of cross slab, Ivergowie, Angus.**

**5. Front of cross slab, Papil, Isle of Burra, Shetland.**

**6. Warriors with symbols, Birsay, Orkney.**

**7. Back of cross slab, Hilton of Cadboll, Ross and Cromarty.**

place names and personal names, although it has been suggested that non-Celtic languages were also used in the area. It is assumed that literacy was not widespread, and that perhaps bards played a considerable role in the society. It seems that the Pictish language did not die out suddenly, but was subsumed into Gaelic; the Picts also shared many aspects of material culture with the Gaels. Cattle as well as horses were clear signs of wealth, and some scenes on the stones depict hunting with dogs and even falcons. It has been assumed that the elite would have been the biggest beneficiaries of meat from hunting. Interestingly, no large settlements are known



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from Pictish times and no 'towns' are known in Scotland until about the 12th century. The early Picts, did not engage in much long distance trade, as there is little evidence of imported wares, such as ceramics, but Gaulish storage vessels and tablewares have been recovered from the north. This may suggest that the Picts were isolated from ideas as well, but this is not the case for while their pantheon resembles that of the Celts, later, they did convert to Christianity.

Several saints have been associated with the conversion. Saint Palladius, the first Bishop of Ireland (preceding St Patrick) who died 457/461, has been associated Pictland. The village of Abernethy (Perth and Kinross, Scotland) is identified with Saint Brigid of Kildare (451-525). Bede wrote that Saint Ninian (4th-5th century) converted the southern Picts. Ninian's major shrine was at Whithorn in Galloway. Nothing is known about

his teachings, and there is no certain information about his life. Perhaps the best example is Saint Columba (521-597) one of the so-called 12 apostles of Ireland who was intimately involved in the conversion of the Picts. Adomnán records in his life of that saint that an early standing cross, perhaps the first, was made when the saint marked the gates of the hilltop fortress near Loch Ness.

The reasoning for erecting the monument in that particular place was because this was the northern base of the Pictish king Bridei. This king was a pagan, but the saint desired to secure his cooperation in allowing the conversion of his people. Many of these early saints were from Ireland, and it is certain that the simplest form of Pictish monument, the cross mark stone, was introduced by Irish missionaries in the 6th and 7th centuries.

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The Picts were also influenced by Northumbria. As a rule the monestaries in Pictland seemed less important than in Ireland. The Picts seem to have supported a number of Saints who were largely forgotten later. Saint Drostan, who died in the early 7th century, was the founder and abbot of the monastery of Old Deer in Aberdeenshire, and appears to a variety of contexts in the north.

As is typical with many cultures, religion is one of the most conservative aspects of the society. It is therefore not a surprise that monumental art of the Picts can be found in churches. The main question to address is just what the stone monuments represent? As a rule the symbols that appear on the stones are of a general La Tène style, with contributions from the related styles of Irish and Northumbrian art and in the terminal phase with Anglo-Saxon art.

It has been assumed that many of the symbols used on the stones were also used on monuments made of wood, which have now perished. It is also almost certain that some standing stones represent what must



**8. Back of cross slab, Dunfallandy, Perthshire.**



**9. Back of cross slab, St. Vigean's, Angus.**

**10. Back of cross slab, Shandwick, Ross and Cromarty.**

**11. Back of cross slab, Golspie, Sutherland.**

have been book covers. Sadly, the Reformation in Scotland was even more effective in destroying the past than equivalent events in England. Pictish stones do have a distinctive style, which suggests there was a relatively unified corpus and that there may have been itinerant carvers who travelled from place to place. Christian themes seem to be relatively easy to interpret as they are adapted from manuscripts. David – as a harpist or with a lion – appears on some stones. The former image might indicate the social standing of bards at the time. Images of St Paul and St Anthony meeting in the desert are also found, but the margins and backs of the crosses are decorated with a variety of beasts and intricate geometric figures.

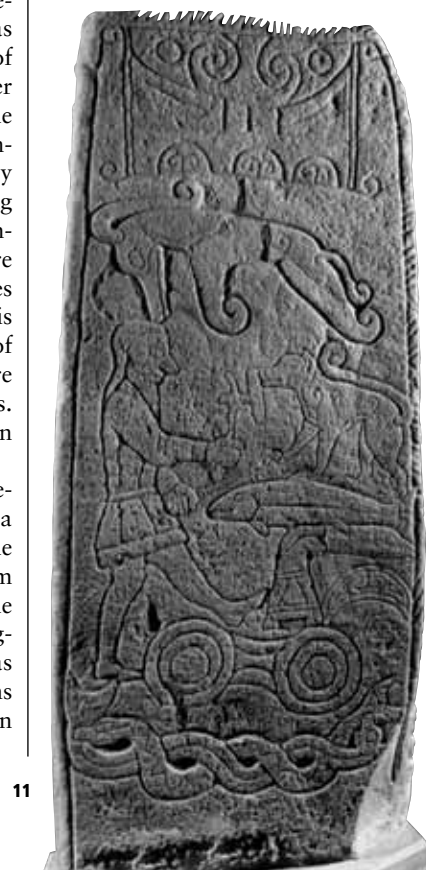
It is easy to suggest that much Pictish art is 'unique', but a careful analysis suggests that it has clear connections with the art of their neighbours. On the other hand there is good evidence, on the stones themselves, that an independent Pictish church developed by the 7th century. However, dating monumental art presents a number of problems, unless they are associated with datable structures or graves. The form of the cross is difficult to date, as few examples of Pictish metalwork survive and there are no contemporary manuscripts. Most stones appear to date between the 6th and 9th centuries.

A well known theme is the horse-man, and it can be regarded as a 'stereotyped heroic image'. The mounted man typically moves from right to left, in contrast with the bulk of medieval art where such figures move from left to right. It has been assumed that later traditions were influenced by reading Latin texts from left to right.

Sadly, without books such as *The Art of the Picts* it is difficult to view these monuments to a past culture. As noted by the authors of the book: 'Meantime the Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, in a fine new building, has consciously chosen to disband the visual and cultural achievement of the Picts, dispersing the monuments as if at haphazard, identifying them by minute secretly disposed labels, inscrutable, 'time-lines', and tiny dots on maps, while larger more eye-catching notices consist of portentous phrases such as 'Gods of the frontier', God of the Book', or atmospheric prose poems, recalling the musings of Hiawatha.' (p. 226). This reviewer would admit that the museum has made a change that has perhaps boosted the numbers of visitors, but which has de-emphasised the teaching aspect of the museum. It is here where such books emerge as of great importance. Scattered across the landscape, it would be difficult to see Pictish monumental art.

A book with precise black and white images allows readers to enjoy the monuments, with thoughtful text, at their leisure. ■

*The Art of the Picts: Sculpture and Metalwork in Early Medieval Scotland* by George and Isabel Henderson (Thames and Hudson, 256 pp, 326 black and white illustrations, ISBN 978 0 500 289631).







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# An archaeologist *of the mind?*

**Ivan Ward** of the Freud Museum and **Lindsay Fulcher** examine the analogy between the analytical methods of the father of psychoanalysis and the excavation of antique lands

Any one who has visited the Freud Museum in north London will have been struck by the extent and richness of the great man's collection of antiquities from Egypt, Greece, Rome, and the Orient. On Freud's desk, for example, stand an array of ancient figurines – gods and goddesses, sages and warriors. As he worked they stood before him – silent witnesses from the past. Ancient civilisation and its artefacts

**1. Ancient Egyptian human-headed ba-bird, gessoed and painted wood, Ptolemaic period, 332-330 BC. H. 5 inches. (12.5cm)**

**2. Portrait of Sigmund Freud by Ferdinand Schmutzer, 1926.**

fascinated Sigmund Freud throughout his life and the procedures of archaeology provided him with one of his favourite metaphors for elaborating his model of the mind and the methods of psychoanalysis.

The question of what is preserved in the mind from our childhood is fundamental to Freud, and one of the central tenets of psychoanalysis is that 'the child is father to the adult'. The archaeological metaphor provided Freud with a

shorthand way to think about the issues of surface and depth, past and present, manifest and latent, adult and infantile, hidden and revealed. It was a common point of cultural reference that readers of his work could easily grasp. Theories about the history of civilization and the development of the human psyche over time were also deeply informed by his Classical education and life-long study of the ancient world.

In his clinical work Freud was





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engaged in an archaeology of his own, digging into minds to uncover hidden experiences, fragments of past lives that he tried to put again into a living context. Like the archaeologist, the psychoanalyst had to work slowly, with great care, gradually uncovering buried 'objects' and reconstructing the relations between them – and in both professions there are long periods of frustration followed by periods of elation and excitement. So, like archaeology, psychoanalysis dealt with uncovering the past, with fragments, and with interpretation or reconstruction. But the importance of archaeology for Freud's work is only part of the story.

In a letter to Martha Bernays, dating from 1885, Freud's love of antiquities is evident:

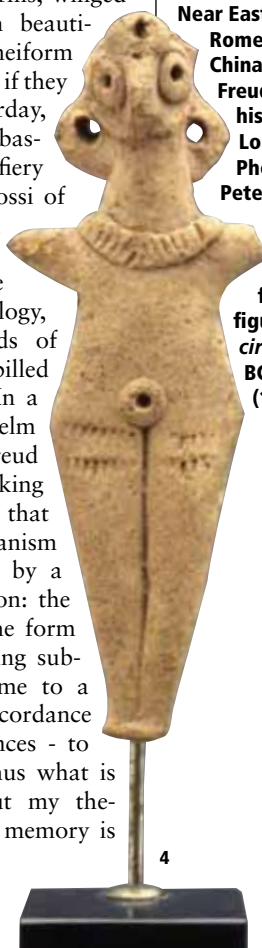
'... yesterday I went to the Louvre, at least to the antiquities wing, which contains an incredible number of Greek and Roman statues, gravestones, inscriptions, and relics ... For me these things have more historical than aesthetic interest ... I just had time for a fleeting glance at the Assyrian and Egyptian rooms, which I must visit again

several times. There were Assyrian kings – tall as trees and holding lions for lapdogs in their arms, winged human animals with beautifully dressed hair, cuneiform inscriptions as clear as if they had been done yesterday, and then Egyptian bas-reliefs decorated in fiery colours, veritable colossi of kings, real sphinxes, a dreamlike world'.

But this private passion for archaeology, especially its methods of excavation, also spilled over into his work. In a letter written to Wilhelm Fliess in 1896, Freud reports: 'I am working on the assumption that our psychical mechanism has come into being by a process of stratification: the material present in the form of memory traces being subject from time to time to a re-arrangement in accordance with fresh circumstances - to a re-transcription. Thus what is essentially new about my theory is the thesis that memory is

**3. A line of figurines – silent witnesses from Ancient Egypt, the Near East, Greece, Rome, India and China – stand on Freud's desk in his study at his London home. Photograph by Peter Aphramian.**

**4. Middle Bronze Age female clay figurine, Syria, circa 2000-1750 BC. H. 4 inches (10cm).**



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present not once but several times over, that it is laid down in various species of indications ... I should like to emphasize the fact that the successive registrations represent the psychical achievement of successive epochs of life'.

Freud elaborated the model suggested by this quotation in the seventh chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 1900 but, even so, it remains somewhat ambiguous. Freud means both that an experience is stored in the brain as a memory in several registrations (such as images, words, tactile impressions and so forth) rather than as a single 'entity', and also that at different developmental stages our memories become reorganised so that we have 'memories' from different stages relating to the 'same' experience. This means, for instance, that a memory of an experience at a later stage might be associated with 'unpleasurable emotions', while the same memory at an earlier registration might be emotionally coloured as 'pleasurable' (or vice versa). Keeping with this example, Freud would assume that something happened in development to



turn the one state into the other, and both of these states are active in the mind of the adult (or older child) even though only one of them is conscious.

In *The Aetiology of Hysteria*, (1896), he reveals his ideas about and pleasure in discovering something that has been long hidden. He sees himself as an 'explorer', and once famously described himself as a 'conquistador'.

'Imagine that an explorer arrives in a little-known region where his interest is aroused by an expanse of ruins, with remains of walls, fragments of columns, and tablets with half-effaced and unreadable inscriptions ... He may have brought picks, shovels and spades with him, and he may set the inhabitants to work with these implements. Together with them he may start upon the ruins, clear away the rubbish, and, beginning from the visible remains, uncover what is buried'.

It is interesting that Freud employs the image of cooperative physical labour to describe what he is doing in analysis – rather than simply talking to people. One of Freud's early patients famously called it the 'talking cure' – but she also called it 'chimney sweeping'!

In the preface to *Studies on Hysteria*, 1895 Freud wrote: 'Thus it came about that in this, the first full-length analysis of a hysteria undertaken by me, I arrived at a procedure which I later developed into a regular method and employed deliberately. This procedure was one of clearing away the

**5. Freud's last home – 20 Maresfield Gardens in north-west London – he died here in 1939. Today, it is the Freud Museum and houses his fine collection of antiquities, rugs, prints, books and, of course, the analyst's famous couch.**

**6. Terracotta winged figure of Eros, Greek, from Myrina, circa 150–100 BC. H. 15 inches (38cm). According to Freud, Eros (love) is one of the two major influences on all human beings; Thanatos (death) is the other great opposing force.**

**7. Greek terracotta winged sphinx, late 5th – early 4th century BC. H. 7 inches (18.5cm). The sphinx played a crucial part in the ancient Greek tragedy of Oedipus, which inspired Freud's most well-known theory, that of the Oedipus complex.**



Freud once described his collecting as an 'addiction' like his addiction to cigars

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pathogenic psychical material layer by layer, and we liked to compare it with the technique of excavating a buried city'.

In this quotation from one of his earliest works Freud employs the archaeological metaphor to describe his method of therapy but it is not as easy to understand as it seems. The metaphor does not quite stand up, since the archaeologist is clearing away debris to reveal and conserve the hidden treasures beneath, whereas the 'pathogenic psychical material' Freud refers to is precisely what is buried, and which he

is trying to destroy or make innocuous in some way.

Freud's passion for archaeology was, however, not just connected with his work. In another letter to Wilhelm Fliess, dated 28 May 1899, Freud writes: 'I gave myself a present, Schliemann's *Ilios*, and greatly enjoyed the account of his childhood. The man was happy when he found Priam's treasure, because happiness comes only with the fulfillment of a childhood wish'.

In *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, 1901, Freud admits: 'In the face of the incompleteness of my analytic results, I had no choice but to follow the example of those discoverers whose good fortune it is to bring to the light of day after long burial the priceless though mutilated relics of antiquity'.

'I have restored what is missing, taking the best models known to me from other analyses; but, like a conscientious archaeologist, I have not omitted to mention in each case where the authentic parts end and my constructions begin'.

He also used the metaphor of archaeology in his actual work with patients: 'I then made some short observations upon the psychological differences between the conscious and the unconscious, and upon the fact that everything conscious was subject to a process of wearing-away, while what was unconscious was relatively unchangeable; and I illustrated my remarks by pointing



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to the antiques standing about in my room. They were, in fact, I said, only objects found in a tomb, and their burial had been their preservation; the destruction of Pompeii was only beginning now that it had been dug up' (*Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis*, 1909).

'[The] analytic work of construction, or, if it is preferred, of reconstruction [of the patients forgotten years], resembles to a great extent an archaeologist's excavation of some dwelling place that has been destroyed and buried or of some ancient edifice ... Just as the archaeologist builds up the walls of a building from the foundations that have remained standing, determines the number and position of the columns from depressions in the floor, and reconstructs the mural decorations and paintings from the remains found in the debris, so does the analyst proceed when he draws his inferences from fragments of memories, from the associations and from the behaviour of the subject of the analysis. Both of them have an undisputed right to

**8. Athenian, black-figure terracotta lekythos, Archaic Period, circa 490-470 BC. H. 6 3/8 inches (16cm). Depicted on it is the scene where Oedipus answers the riddle of the Sphinx on the way to Thebes, then goes on to fulfil his tragic destiny.**



reconstruct by means of supplementing and combining the surviving remains. Both of them, moreover, are subject to many of the same difficulties and sources of error'.

'The analyst, as we have said, works under more favourable conditions than the archaeologist since he has at his disposal material which can have no counterpart in excavations, such as the repetitions of reactions dating from infancy and all that is indicated by the transference in connection with these repetitions ... Here we are regularly met by a situation which with the archaeological object occurs only in such rare circumstances as those of Pompeii or of the tomb of Tut'ankamun. All of the essentials are preserved; even things that seem completely forgotten are present somehow and somewhere, and have merely been buried and made inaccessible to the subject'.

These two quotes from the same work late in his life sum up Freud's difficulties with the archaeological metaphor. In fact, we are back with the question we started with – how far, and in what way, is the psychological past preserved in the present, and how does it reveal itself to us today? The second issue – for psychoanalysis – is how far the analysis of the past can bring relief to people suffering from emotional pain and other psychological difficulties.

In a letter to Stefan Zweig (1931) he tried to analyse why he loved collecting: '... I have sacrificed a great deal for my collection of Greek, Roman and Egyptian antiquities, have actually read more archaeology than psychology, and that before the war and once after its end I felt compelled to spend every year at least several days or weeks in Rome, and so on'. Freud once described his collecting as an 'addiction', like his addiction to smoking cigars (which caused his fatal cancer of the jaw).

Travelling to ancient lands also gave him great pleasure although it could be clouded by dark thoughts, as can be seen in *A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis*, 1936.

'My longing to travel was no doubt also the expression of a wish to escape from that pressure, like the force which drives so many adolescent children to run away from home. I had long seen clearly that a great part of the pleasure of travel lies in the fulfilment of these early wishes – that it is rooted, that is, in

dissatisfaction with home and family. When first one catches sight of the sea, crosses the ocean and experiences as realities cities and lands which for so long had been distant, unattainable things of desire – one feels oneself like a hero who has performed deeds of improbable greatness. I might that day on the Acropolis have said to my brother: 'Do you still remember how, when we were young, we used day after day to walk along the same street on our way to school, and how every Sunday we used to go to the Prater or on some excursion we knew so well? And now, here we are in Athens, and standing on the Acropolis! We really have gone a long way!'

This essay recounts a journey to Athens which Freud made with his brother Alexander (who was 10 years younger than Freud) some 35 years earlier. In it he tells how the opportunity unexpectedly presented itself for the brothers to travel to Athens, but instead of feeling pleasure they were both plunged into a gloomy mood, and made their travel arrangements with little enthusiasm. When they finally arrived on the Acropolis Freud had a strange experience – what he called a 'de-realization'. The thought came into his head 'So it really does exist! I can't believe it!'

Freud analyses both his depression at the prospect of going to Athens, and his feeling when he got there, in terms of guilt about 'going further than one's father'. He does not mention it in this essay but, in terms of his theory of the Oedipus complex, that ultimately means the phantasy of (re)possessing the mother. This is the prize for the hero who performs 'deeds of improbable greatness' – to return once more to the place from whence he came. In this case the mother is represented perhaps by Athens (named after the goddess Athene), or Greece itself as 'the cradle of civilization', or by the limitless sea ('la mer') which silently beckoned to him from the horizon.

Freud died in his study at 20 Maresfield Gardens on 23 September 1939. He was cremated and his ashes were interred in a Greek urn from his own collection. ■

**Ivan Ward is Deputy Director and Head of Education at the Freud Museum, 20 Maresfield Gardens, London NW3 5SX (020-7435-2002; [www.freud.org.uk](http://www.freud.org.uk)).**



**Peter A Clayton** looks at the origins and collectors of some of the finest pieces of Classical sculpture to leave Italy



# Digging and Dealing in 18th-century Rome

**T**he 18th century in Western Europe saw the dawning of The Age of Enlightenment – the Classical world became alive as never before through newly published editions of ancient authors who, as well as detailing historical events, also mentioned the arts. Pliny, for example, writes about artists and sculptors in Books 35 and 36 of his *Natural History*, often identifying the creators of major works of art. The awakening intelligentsia began to make connections between what they read and the newly discovered sculpture that they saw.

This was an age of travel that opened up the world of antiquity before the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1798 had penetrated

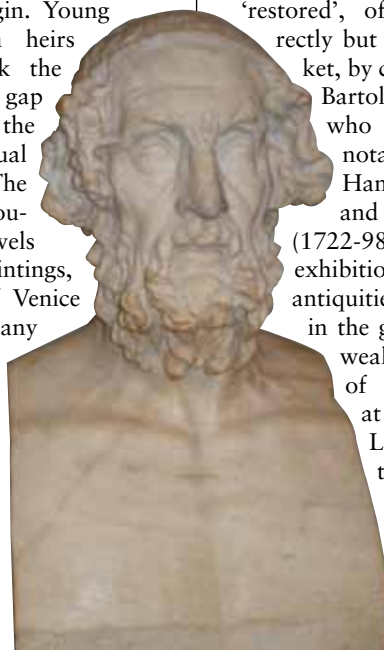
**1. Gavin Hamilton by Archibald Skirving. National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.**

**2. Charles Townley in his Library at 7 Park Street by Johann Zoffany. Towneley Hall Art Gallery and Museum, Burnley. He is depicted with his friends and his favourite pieces (now in the British Museum: Myron's *Discobolus* (left foreground); and on his desk *Clyte* (11).**

**3. Blind Homer, 2nd century BC. Roman copy of Hellenistic original H. 22 inches (56cm). Photograph by Peter Clayton.**

the mysteries of that ancient land, and before the sculptures of the Parthenon in Athens were rescued by Lord Elgin. Young aristocrats, often heirs to fortunes, took the equivalent of a gap year, seeking the delights, both visual and sensual, of The Grand Tour. As souvenirs of their travels many bought paintings, glorious views of Venice by Canaletto (many of which are still displayed on the walls of England's stately homes today) were very popular, as were pieces of sculpture

from the extensive ravaging of ancient sites that was taking place. Imperfect or damaged statues were 'restored', often totally incorrectly but to satisfy the market, by clever sculptors like Bartolomeo Cavaceppi who were employed notably by Gavin Hamilton (1723-98) and Thomas Jenkins (1722-98). Salons for the exhibition of these prized antiquities were designed in the great houses of the wealthy, such as that of Charles Townley at 7 Park Street in London (2, 10), or the fine sculpture gallery designed by Robert Adam at







Newby Hall in Yorkshire, home of William Weddell.

Rome was the focal-point of The Grand Tour and England was seen as 'The New Rome' riches were being recovered in vast quantities from the city and nearby villas in the surrounding countryside. Many of the Popes had taken an interest in the antiquities found on their vast papal estates, particularly represented in the Vatican in the Museo Pio-Clemente. Some, such as Sixtus V (1585-90) had gone further – retrieving and re-erecting Egyptian obelisks carried to Rome by the

**4. In the Antiquaries Shop by Jacques Sablet. Private collection, Rome. The dealer's exaggerated presentation of the ancient torso has much of one of Gilray's caricatures about it.**

**5. The Apotheosis of Homer. British Museum. circa 150-120 BC. H. 3.8ft (1.15m). This unusual piece is signed by the artist, Archelaos of Priene, just below the figure of Zeus at the top. It was bought by Alexander Day from the Colonna family, then, acquired by Thomas Jenkins.**

**6. Bust of Pericles, the Athenian general and statesman in the Peloponnesian war, died 429 BC. 2nd century AD, after a lost original, circa 440-430 BC. H. 22 inches (56cm). From Hadrian's villa, Tivoli.**

emperors in antiquity. Few of the travelling cognoscenti were intrepid enough to venture far south of Rome to the malaria-ridden areas of southern Italy, where the treasures of the buried cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum were beginning to be discovered in quantity in the Villa of the Papyri, excavated 1750-62.

Gavin Hamilton(1) and Thomas Jenkins were the major players in the antiquities trade in Rome and from the area round about, notably finds from the ancient city and port of Ostia. Jenkins, who was born in Rome in 1722, trained as a painter in England before returning there in 1753, while Hamilton appeared on the scene in 1756 after which their careers in the Eternal City ran closely together. Of the two, Hamilton was more the archaeologist and digger, while Jenkins saw himself more as a connoisseur.

Unfortunately, having visited southern Italy with James 'Athenian' Stuart in 1748, Hamilton not only caught the Roman art bug but also malaria, recurring bouts of which were to kill him in 1798. From 1756 he absorbed all things Roman, including an Italian mistress, Margherita Giuli, initially his housekeeper, who bore his children

and who cared for him in his last illness. Hamilton by inclination was a painter of no mean quality with a love of Classical subjects as can be seen in his *Andromache mourning the death of Hector* (now in the Paul Mellon Collection). He never produced a painting unless commissioned, but this was not financially viable so he turned to the more lucrative trade of dealing in antiquities. Initially he supplied pieces from noble family collections in Rome to wealthy English patrons, principally Charles Townley. But there was a restricted supply and





soon he realised that while excavation in the 'cavas' of the Roman Campagna could prove profitable it could also be extremely costly, and he hankered to return to his painting. While most of his activities might be termed as 'treasure-hunting', in later life, Hamilton did at least document his excavation, notably at Gabii in 1792, a source of many sculptures and inscriptions. Giuseppe Cades portrayed him in his *Leading a Party of Grand Tourists to the Archaeological Site of Gabii*.

Many of the sculptures on offer to Grand Tourists, however, came from old established Roman family collections as well as from new excavations. Both Hamilton and Jenkins realised that the continued source of major pieces from excavations could only be finite, and that they would have to turn to noble families buying pieces from the Barberini collection and the like.

In a letter dated 12 July 1776 Hamilton wrote 'another year will very properly exhaust the Campagna of Rome, & prices will go very high'. It was a problem that was becoming acute as more and more visitors arrived and the market grew. The fashion in Britain was to present ancient sculpture in an appropriate setting designed to reflect the owner's connoisseurship, education and standing – provenance was not as important then

**7. Jennings's Dog** 49 inches (120cm). Jennings bought his life-size dog from Cavaceppi for 40 scudi, having been incorrectly told that it was by the Greek sculptor Pheidias, so it was initially known as 'Alcibiades' Dog'. It was sold at his sale to Charles Duncombe of Duncombe Park, Yorkshire, for £1000, and then from the Duncombe Estate by Lord Feversham in 2001. The Houston Museum, Texas, wanted to purchase it for \$950,000 but the application for an Export Licence was deferred to enable the British Museum to mount a campaign to match the asking price. With the aid of The Heritage Lottery Fund, The Art Fund, the British Museum Friends and other private donors, the money was raised, with the final £662,297 coming from public response. Photograph by Peter Clayton.

**8. An Excavation of an Antique Building Discovered in a Cavea in the Villa Negrone** by Thomas Jones. Tate London. This villa, located between Santa Maria Maggiore and San Giovanni Laterano, was originally in Papal possession but was sold to a merchant, Giuseppe Staderni in 1784 who in turn sold the entire collection of antiquities from the site to Thomas Jenkins. Remarkable coloured frescoes and fine pieces of sculpture were found and subsequently dispersed to various collections in the Vatican, Berlin, Potsdam, Poland and England.

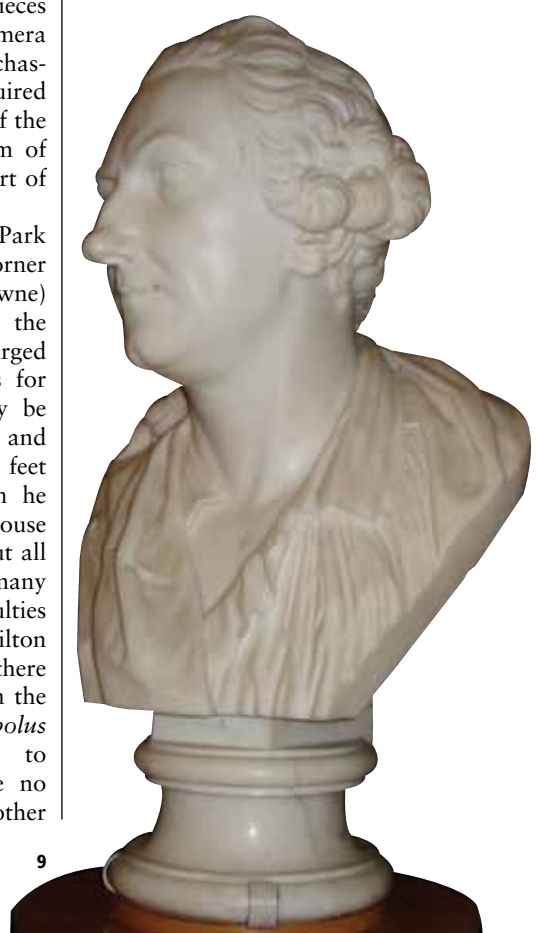
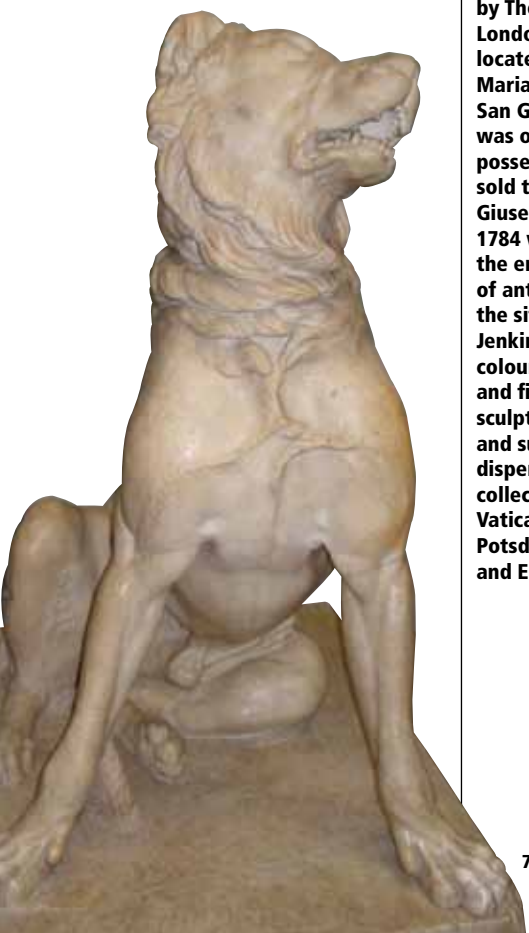


as now. The continued supply of splendid pieces to his patrons, notably Charles Townley and the Earl of Shelburne, was the main source of Hamilton's livelihood, but he had to contend with his contemporary and rival Thomas Jenkins. Things were made more difficult for both of them because of the interest expressed in newly found pieces by the Vatican's Reverenda Camera Apostolica and the Pope's purchasing prerogative, plus the required payment of at least one-third of the profits, as well as the problem of obtaining licences for the export of antiquities from Italy.

While Townley lived at 7 Park Street, just around the corner at Shelburne (later Lansdowne) House in Berkeley Square, the Earl of Sherburne was being urged by Hamilton that the statues for his proposed sculpture gallery be 'increased from 16 to 19, large and middling, eight of which are 7 feet of thereabout'. The collection he said 'will make Shelburne House famous not only in England but all over Europe...'. To acquire so many statues could lead to difficulties with the Pope, but both Hamilton and Jenkins reasoned that if there was a similar statue already in the Vatican, such as the *Discobolus* ('discus-thrower') ascribed to Myron, then there would be no objection to releasing another

similar one which was invariably substantially restored.

Jenkins soon realised that his livelihood lay more in dealing than digging, which was largely carried out by Hamilton. Both men corresponded amiably, but Jenkins regarded himself as more the connoisseur and did not concern







himself with much digging, preferring instead to acquire objects from Hamilton. One major source of sculpture was from Hamilton's dig in 1769 in the Pantanello at Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli. Literally meaning 'little bog', this area lies outside the present main villa site on private land and its ancient function is still not fully understood. It was the subject of new investigations in 2010, initially by geophysical ground survey carried out by the British School at Rome, hoping to define its area and purpose. The area was by far the largest single source of sculpture in 18th-century excavations – the British Museum has at least a dozen pieces of sculpture from the site (6), and Townley's bust of Hadrian also came from there.

More intent in the interpretation of the pieces and their origin Jenkins would visit sites with clients to show them where some of their purchases came from. He took Townley to Monte Cagnolo to show him where his (Townley's) statue of Actaeon being torn by his hounds came from (now in the British Museum). He was very concerned with moulding the taste of his clients, even encouraging them to visit other collections so that they could see that their pieces were superior, or to advise on better presentation. Jenkins wrote a number of letters between 1758 and 1778

**9. Bust of Charles Townley by Christopher Hewetson, Rome, 1769. H. 21 inches (53cm). Photograph by Peter Clayton.**

**10. The Townley Marbles in the Entrance Hall and Dining Room of 7 Park Street by William Chambers. British Museum. Many of the pieces shown can be spotted in major collections.**

**11. Clyte, found near Naples, circa 40-50 AD. H. 20 inches (50cm). Photograph by Peter Clayton.**



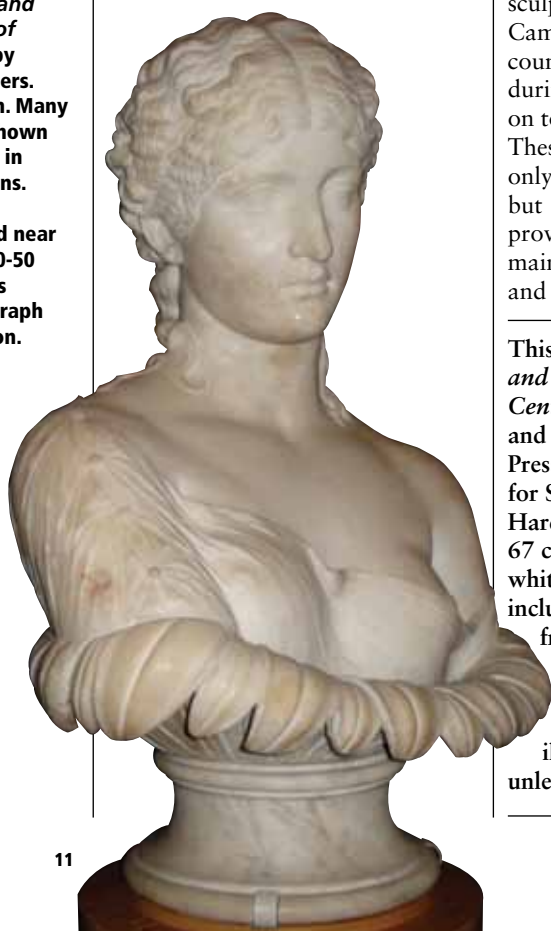
about current finds and excavations to be read aloud at meetings in the rooms of the Society of Antiquaries of London. He had been elected a Fellow in 1757.

The French invasion of Rome in 1798 brought a number of pieces from ancient families on to the market as they feared that they might be confiscated, some even hid pieces in walls to escape prying French eyes. Many busts of *Blind Homer* exist (3), but the detailed relief of *The Apotheosis of Homer* (5) is exceptional and was bought from the Colonna family by Alexander Day, himself essentially a painter and

art dealer; then it came to Townley via Jenkins. Another major collector and antiquarian was Henry Jennings, a friend of Townley's who kept a list of Jennings' marbles. When, in 1778, Jennings' collection came to auction, it fetched the then enormous sum of £2,916.65 and Townley bought a number of the pieces. Jennings' prize piece was a sculpture of a seated Molossian hound, a hunting-dog and earned him the sobriquet 'Dog Jennings'. As he, himself, had noted that 'a fine dog it was, and a lucky dog was I to purchase it' (7).

Much of the splendid antique sculpture from Rome and the Campagna that arrived in English country houses and stately homes during the 18th century, has come on to the art market in recent years. These pieces are highly prized not only for their quality and style, but also for their often impeccable provenances dating back to the two main diggers and dealers, Hamilton and Jenkins. ■

This article is based on *Digging and Dealing in Eighteenth-Century Rome* by Ilaria Bignamini and Clare Hornsb Yale University Press for The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies In British Art, 2010. Hardback. Vol. 1. xxiv + 408pp, 67 colour plates, 245 black and white illustrations. Vol. 2. 214pp, includes transcripts of 423 letters from Hamilton and Jenkins mainly to Townley, and a few other collectors. Two volumes in slip-case, £45. All illustrations are from the book unless otherwise stated.





**Murray Eiland** visits Hearst Castle, the vast eclectically-styled mansion that once belonged to the great publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst



California is more often noted for its climate than its links to the Classical past but an extended tour of 'Hearst Castle' in San Simeon might cause you to revise this widely held opinion. Owned by the National Park Service since 1957, but accepted with much reluctance, this palatial property now attracts about a million visitors a year. This



**1. The castle is built in a Mediterranean style and most of its ancient art collection comes from this region.**

**2. Although William Randolph Hearst was a generous host he had a pay-phone installed for guests who came to stay at the castle.**

**3. The setting in San Simeon is one of great beauty, within sight of the mountains and the ocean in the distance.**

comes as a surprise to many, as it is located in an out of the way area approximately 250 miles (400km) from both Los Angeles and San Francisco and 43 miles (69km) from San Luis Obispo.

The site on which the San Simeon Castle would be built was purchased in 1865 by George Hearst, a wealthy mining engineer who bought extensive ranch-lands in California and Mexico. In 1919 his only son, William Randolph Hearst (1863-1951), inherited the land from his mother and commissioned the San Francisco architect Julia Morgan to, 'build a little something'. As with so many of Hearst's projects, it grew to an immense size and, by 1947, the complex had a total of 165 rooms, comprising 56 bedrooms, 61 bathrooms, and 19 sitting-rooms. Set in 127 acres of gardens, which included pools and sports facilities, it also housed a huge collection of art amassed from all over the world.

This was true to form as the



# A castle

Hearst family had a history of thinking big. George Hearst (1820-1891) acquired and exploited the Comstock Lode of silver and gold and became one of the wealthiest men of his time but his son, William, took a different path. George acquired a newspaper called the *San Francisco Examiner* as repayment of a gambling debt. In 1887, shortly after his return from







# in California

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Harvard, William persuaded his father to relinquish control of the paper and, in thrall to the publishing business, went on to acquire the *Morning Journal* in New York in 1895. William seemed to have an innate sense of what would appeal to American readers and rapidly became successful. At his peak, nearly one in four Americans read a Hearst paper. This was also because he hired the best writers of the day, including Mark Twain and Jack London and published articles that attacked financial corruption, even involving companies in which his family held an interest.

**4. The 'Roman pool' offers a rather Art Deco interpretation of Classical themes.**

**5. Hearst amassed a large collection of antiquities, like this elegant Greek black figure vase.**

**6. The so-called 'Gothic study' where Hearst spent most of his time ensconced when he was at the castle.**

Hearst's papers were also noted for their sensational stories and is sometimes credited with pushing America into a war with Spain in 1898. He quickly added numerous other newspapers, as well as magazines, to his expanding empire.

Hearst's residences reflected his varied interests: his sumptuous castle in San Simeon was a shrine to the Classical world and also housed

his Italian and Spanish works of art; Wynton, his eight-storey, gothic, Bavarian-style villa in Northern California, received much of his collection that had originated in Germany, while silver objects were often sent to St Donat's, his castle in South Wales.

William Hearst loved to travel. He first toured Europe with his mother when he was 11, and returned there



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on a regular basis throughout his life. He started by collecting small objects, such as coins and stamps, beer steins and pieces of porcelain, no doubt encouraged by his mother, who was a collector in her own right. When, in his 30s, he began to collect seriously, he said that he constantly had to remind himself not to spend money on a profusion of little things, but to save for the larger items. He bought paintings, sculpture and antiquities – the library of San Simeon is home to 155 ancient Greek vases (5).

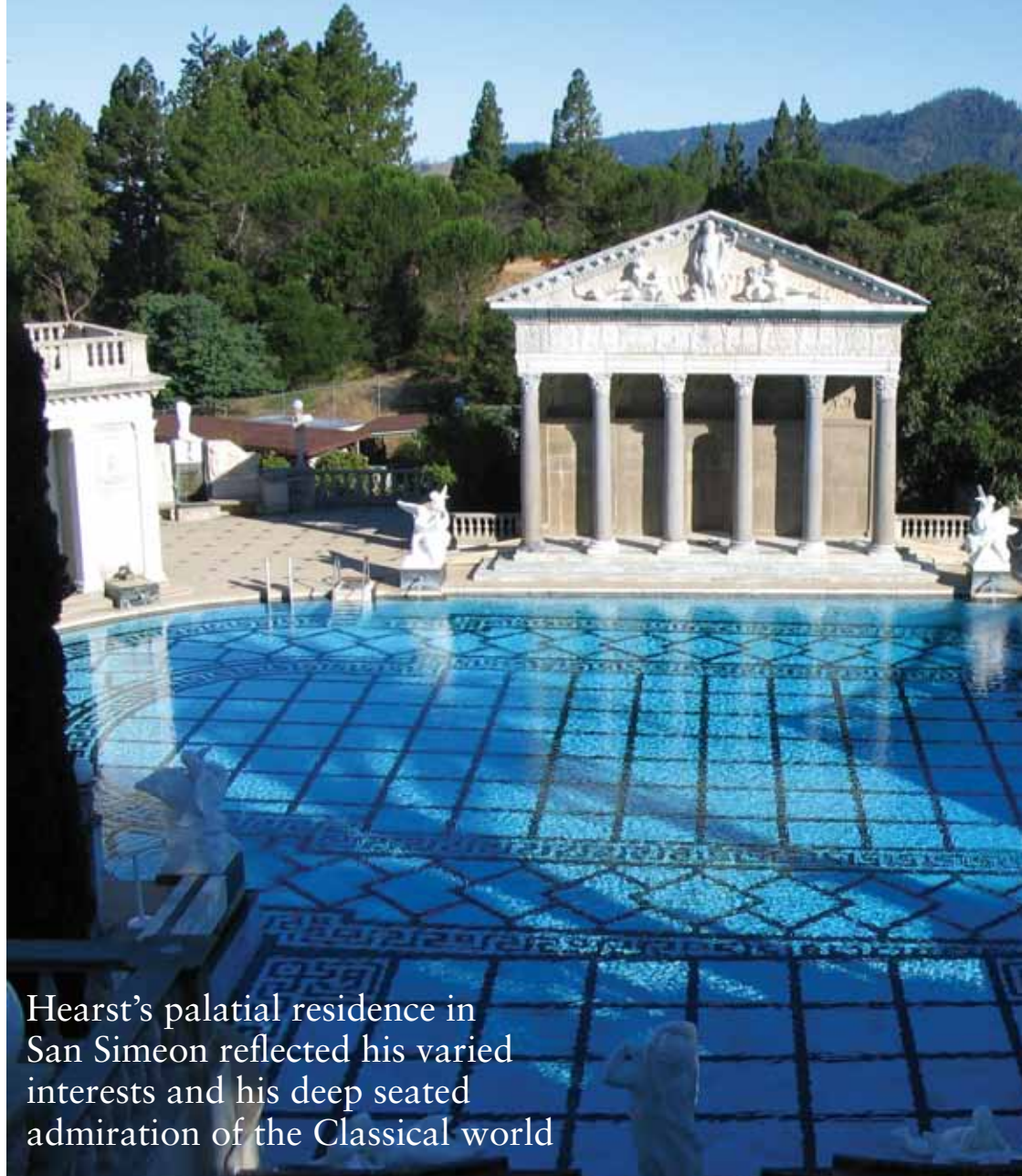
Some regard San Simeon as little more than a pastiche, a collection of architectural postcards from various places in Europe that captured Hearst's fancy and, when you visit it, you can see why.

The castle complex is made up of a main structure and three smaller guest houses. In style, they are all Mediterranean Revival, a combination of Spanish and Moorish style architecture. The main house is built to look like a cathedral, and the other buildings resemble a European village. It seems that part of the inspiration for the complex came from the Panama Pacific International Exposition held in San Francisco in 1915, which Hearst partially bankrolled. The tower of the Church of Santa María la Mayor, in Ronda, Spain, served as inspiration for the towers of the Castle, Hearst disliked the rough-hewn look of most Spanish colonial architecture.

He wanted his great house to reflect various different styles. He bought old ceilings – some of them very decorative – that, in turn, dictated the decorative style of the room they crowned. Hearst wanted to preserve European culture. He opposed American involvement in the First World War and the creation of the League of Nations, as according to his editorials, although Europe had a rich material culture, only America offered a stable social structure. This did not stop him, however, from acquiring a real castle in Wales.

After seeing photographs in *Country Life* magazine in 1925, he bought St Donat's in the Vale of Glamorgan. Located about 15 miles (25km) west of Cardiff, it was built in the 12th century, then, modified during succeeding centuries. Hearst extensively refurbished the castle, even bringing electricity to the area.

Famous guests who came to stay there included: Charlie Chaplin,



Hearst's palatial residence in San Simeon reflected his varied interests and his deep seated admiration of the Classical world

**8. The Roman theme of the castle is reflected in the Neptune Pool by four 17th-century, Italian bas-reliefs on the sides of the colonnades.**

**9. The ornate ceiling, one of many in the castle, influenced the room created beneath it and is reflected in the elaborate fireplace and carved panelling.**

Douglas Fairbanks, John F Kennedy, and George Bernard Shaw who, when he saw Hearst's Welsh castle, exclaimed: 'This is what God would have built if he had had the money'. St Donat's was requisitioned for use by British and American troops during the war and is now owned by Atlantic College, a prestigious international boarding-school.

In Hearst's Californian castle, he had unlimited scope for imaginative design. Nowhere is this more clear than in the tiled indoor pool that follows designs such as the Baths of Caracalla in Rome (4). Hearst's bath was a *tepidarium*. The mosaics appear to be adapted from the 5th-century Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna, without the religious motifs. The cubes, which are one inch square, are mostly blue or orange and the night sky is rendered in blue and gold cubes that form a stylised star pattern. The statues decorating the pool, made by Carlo Freter working in Pietrasanta in Italy, are rough copies of ancient Greek and Roman statues. Situated

near the east side of the building is the statue of Apoxyomenos (*The Scraper*), an athlete scraping oil and dirt off his body with an antique tool called a strigil. It is based on a bronze original by Lysippos, one of the greatest sculptors of the Classical period who lived during the 4th century BC. The original has been lost, there are, however, many copies, including a Roman one in the Vatican Museum although it does not have a strigil. Hearst's copy, of course, has one.

Both the Californian house and garden are littered with objects from antiquity. The entrance to the main house boasts a Roman mosaic, while the fountain, designed by Julia Morgan, showcases the Egyptian lioness deity Sekhmet (10), a warrior/healing goddess. Crowned with the solar disk and the *uraeus*, she is a protectress of the pharaohs, is sometimes called the daughter of the sun god Ra and is associated with the goddesses Hathor and Bastet. In the garden stands a finely carved sarcophagus on which various





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deities and the Nine Muses are depicted. These include Polyhymnia (the muse inspiring sacred hymns), Euterpe (lyric poetry), Thalia (comedy), Melpomene (tragedy), Erato (love poetry), Calliope (epic poetry), Terpsichore (dance and choral song), Urania (astronomy), and Clio (history). The deceased man is shown as Apollo (sun god) alongside Minerva (goddess of wisdom).

Invitations to Hearst Castle were highly sought after during the 1920s and 1930s. Celebrities – filmstars and politicians – could fly into the private airfield or take a private train-car from Los Angeles. Famous guests included: Charlie Chaplin, Cary Grant, the Marx Brothers, Charles Lindbergh, Joan Crawford, Clark Gable, James Stewart, Bob Hope, Dolores Del Rio, Calvin Coolidge, Franklin D Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill.

House guests were often left to their own devices during the day, as Hearst was busy but, in the evening, they were expected to attend a formal dinner. They remarked that

**10. Dating from the New Kingdom, this majestic Ancient Egyptian lion-headed goddess, Sekhmet, can be found seated by a fountain on the South Esplanade of the castle.**

**All the pictures are courtesy of Hearst Castle@California State Parks.**

just about the only thing they had to pay for were telephone calls, as their host had coin-operated phones installed in his castle.

It is ironic that today Hearst is best known today as the inspiration for the film *Citizen Kane* made in 1941. He used all the resources available to him to limit performances of the film, which ensured that it was not a financial success, but today it is regarded as one of the most influential ever made and has twice been ranked number one in the American Film Institute's *100 Greatest Films of All Time* (1998 and 2007). In it Charles Foster Kane, an enormously wealthy media mogul who built a vast palatial estate called Xanadu, was played by Orson Welles. At the beginning of the film Kane dies, uttering the mysterious word 'Rosebud'. A reporter tries to discover what this might mean but although, through interviews, he finds out about Kane's life he cannot solve the mystery.

The reporter suggests that in life he was a man who had everything he wanted, then lost it. Rosebud, he muses, was possibly something he could not get, or something he had and lost. At the end of the film we discover what Rosebud is – it is the name of Kane's childhood sled, that has

been burnt by staff while tidying up Xanadu after his death.

Hearst was hard hit by the Depression. He had to scale back on his projects, and he sold off many of his treasures, numerous small things he had collected, starting in 1937, even selling to the general public through Gimbel Brothers department store. By the end of the first year, he had raised \$11million. The 1941 catalogue offered about 20,000 objects including paintings by van Dyck, Charles Dickens's sideboard, George Washington's waistcoat, and Thomas Jefferson's Bible. According to Hearst lore, he did not fire any of his employees during this time, as he assumed the Depression was a phase and wanted to be ready for the recovery.

Some psychiatrists classify collecting as an compensatory urge. *Citizen Kane* suggests that Kane's vast estate was created to fill a void left by a lack of childhood fulfillment. As for Hearst, he enjoyed his castle and his collection and delighted in seeing his guests enjoy them too and, on his death, he left San Simeon to the public. The castle and collections at San Simeon represent a flowering of culture in an area of outstanding natural beauty which is just what Hearst intended. ■



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# Chinese Bronzes in Bath

Curator **Michel Lee** finds that warfare, trade and religion all influenced Chinese bronzes when he examines some choice objects in the metalware collection of the Museum of East Asian Art

**F**ounded by Mr Brian McElney in 1993, the Museum of East Asian Art in Bath (1,2) is the only organisation in the UK dedicated solely to the arts and cultures of East Asia. The bulk of the collection of nearly 2,000 objects was assembled by Brian while he was living in Hong Kong. His passion was for East Asian art, in particular Chinese ceramics and jades, but about a quarter of the collection consists of metalwares ranging in date from about 1600 BC to the 20th century. The majority of these objects originate in China, but there are also fine examples from Tibet, Mongolia, Japan and Vietnam. They not only demonstrate the evolution of metallurgy in China, but also how China's interaction with other peoples left its mark on the Middle Kingdom.

The earliest metal object in the museum's collection is a bronze *jue* vessel (3) dating from the 16th to

15th century BC, the early Shang Dynasty. A later version of the same type of container, on the right in the illustration (3) dating from the 12th century BC, shows a more advanced casting technique and an evolving shape. The Shang (16th century – circa 1050 BC) is the second dynasty in Chinese history, the earliest dynasty whose existence can be proven through archaeological evidence. This dynasty is noted for its bronze ritual vessels.

Bronze was a highly prized material for the ancient Chinese and containers made from it were used for making offerings of food and wine to royal ancestors. It was believed that ancestor spirits could intercede on behalf of the living if the correct sacrifices were offered. Bronze vessels belonged to the ruling elite and the size of the container often indicated the rank of the owner and the larger the vessel, the higher the rank.

These *jue* vessels were used for



**1. The Museum of East Asian Art at 12 Bennett Street, Bath.**

**2. Visitor viewing a Tibetan Buddhist bronze display at the museum.**

**3. Early Bronze Age *jue* (on the left) that was used for alcoholic libations to royal ancestors. It dates to the early Shang Dynasty (16th century – circa 1050 BC), the earliest Chinese dynasty that can be confirmed through archaeology. H. 5.8 inches (14.8cm). Bronze *jue* (on the right) dating to the 12th century BC. The technological advancement in bronze casting is evident when compared to the previous example. H. 7.9 inches (20.3cm).**

warming wine. In contrast to other early bronze forms in China, *jue* had no Neolithic precedents made from ceramic, despite being the oldest surviving vessels made from bronze that we know of today. The earlier of the two *jue* in the museum's collection is particularly interesting, because there are remnants of gold foil attached to the body with lacquer (5). This example represents one of the earliest uses of gold in Chinese history. Unlike neighbouring peoples on the periphery of the Central Plains and most other ancient cultures, at this time the Chinese did not consider gold as the most prestigious material. Jade and bronze were more highly prized for amulets, ornaments and ceremonial vessels indicating a person's wealth and status. Gold was used merely decoratively and did not become a symbol of excellence until







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late in the Spring and Autumn Period (722-481 BC).

An examination of the metalwares of the Museum of East Asian Art (MEAA) also illustrates how China interacted with its neighbours. The Eurasian steppes were inhabited by various hunting and herding peoples between 1500 BC and the second century AD. Today, the material legacy they have left behind consists mainly of small bronze artefacts including personal ornaments, horse tack and weapons. Many of these pieces were made by semi-nomadic peoples, but others were made in northern China, where they would have been traded with neighbouring herding peoples, or used by Chinese who had adopted certain aspects of the Steppe cultures.

The Museum of East Asian Art is home to an important collection of these bronze pieces (4, 6, 7) often known as 'Ordos bronzes', named after the location where they were first discovered. These were part of the FA Nixon collection. Nixon, a British postal official working in northern China from the 1920s, was fascinated by these small bronzes and, by the time he left the country in 1949, his collection numbered thousands and was the largest of its kind.

One element of the Nixon collection included nearly one thousand Mongolian 'Nestorian crosses', dating from the 13th to 14th centuries. These cruciform seal-like objects



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have been attributed by some scholars to a small handful of Christian Mongol tribes converted in the 10th and 11th centuries. Most of these crosses were later donated to the Hong Kong University Museum and Art Gallery. But when Brian McElney purchased some of FA Nixon's personal effects at a Hong Kong auction, it included over 200 small bronze objects that had been discovered in a box the collector had kept, literally, under his bed. These were mostly of the Ordos type but also included eight 'Nestorian crosses' (6). This group of bronzes was donated to the MEAA by Brian McElney when it was founded and one of the garment plaques from the group, depicting four recumbent wild asses, was adapted as the museum's logo (7).

During the second half of the 4th century BC, warfare in Central Asia, attributed to the campaigns of Alexander the Great, pushed various militant groups of semi-nomadic tribes east, as far as the northeastern borders of China. Although the Eastern Zhou (770-221 BC) kings were the figureheads of the empire, in fact, China was split up into several states, each with

its own king vying for power. This tumultuous period of Chinese history is known as the Warring States Period (475-221 BC). Although considered barbarians by people in the Central Plains, the pastoralists located on the northern and western borders had active interaction with the Chinese states that included trading as well as fighting. Goods and ideas were transferred across borders, and

even the sedentary people of the Central Plains adopted some aspects of nomadic culture. Horse riding cultures from the west brought with them mounted warfare, and the Chinese states had to adapt their martial methods in order to confront the semi-nomads. The types of

**4. A selection of Ordos-type bronzes in the museum's collection. These date to between the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. They were made by the sedentary people of the Central Plains, as well as their semi-nomadic neighbours to the north and west. Largest piece H. 1.8 inches (4.5cm).**

**5. Detail of the gold foil (3). It is one of the earliest examples of the use of gold in Chinese history.**

**6. Bronzes formerly in the F.A. Nixon collection. Four of the five 'Nestorian cross' in the museum's collection are pictured here, with two bird-form bronze pieces. Largest piece H. 2.4 inches (6cm).**

clothing and accessories more suited to warfare on horseback began to be adopted by Chinese states in order to counter the incoming waves of mounted invasions.

An example of how these changes permeated into Chinese society is shown by a pair of gold bridle fittings in the shape of bears (11) dating from the 3rd century BC. Nomadic cultures throughout North and Central Asia were very particular about the types of metals used to adorn both their horses and their own clothing, as the type of metal used indicated the status of the owner. Solid gold ornaments were for those of the highest status, and plain bronze ornaments were for those of common status.

These fittings were probably made in the northern Chinese state of Yan (present-day Hebei Province). By this time, the Chinese were following the nomadic convention of using solid gold only for objects made for those of the highest status but it is also possible that these Chinese-made objects were produced to be traded with their barbarian neighbours in the north.

Through trade, China had a vast cultural influence on her neighbours, particularly during the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907), which is considered one of the golden ages of Chinese history, a time of great commerce and openness that allowed the arts, sciences and culture



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to flourish. This influence was seen in neighbouring countries, such as Korea and Japan, and the Tang empire's political influence spread as far as Herat in western Afghanistan.

But this was a two-way process as China, in turn, absorbed outside influences. The inhabitants of Chang'an (present-day Xi'an) the most populous and cosmopolitan city at the time, included Persians, Central Asians, Japanese, Koreans, Vietnamese, Tibetans, Indians and other ethnicities that practised a variety of religions, such as Buddhism, Nestorian Christianity, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Islam.

It was under these circumstances that the gilt bronze pendant (9), possibly a horse bridle plaque, was created. Far from being Chinese in style, the overall shape of the plaque is in the shape of an acanthus leaf, a common motif from ancient Greece that was introduced into the exotic repertoire of the Tang via the Byzantine Empire. The equestrian figure in the middle of the plaque is poised in the position of a Parthian shot, a military manoeuvre made famous by the Parthians of Iran and was employed by horse riding cultures

**7. Ordos bronze, 6th century BC. It was adapted to be used as the logo of the Museum of East Asian Art. H. 1.9 inches (4.8cm).**

**8. Reflective side of Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) mirror. The figure represents Zhunti, 'Mother of Buddhas', which may have origins with the Hindu deity Chundi, a mother deity. D. 4.5 inches (11.5cm).**

**9. Decorative back of mirror (8). The character 'Li' is at the nine o'clock position.**

**10. Gilt bronze pendant from the Tang Dynasty (618-907). Its style was influenced by cultures to the west of China, as far away as ancient Greece. H. 2.8 inches (7.2cm).**

**11. Gold bridle fittings in the shapes of bears, 3rd century BC, and made in the northern Chinese state of Yan. H. 1.2 inches (3.1cm).**

throughout Eurasia. The Parthian shot allowed a feigned retreat in which the rider would turn around backwards on their mounts and shoot at the pursuing enemy.

Religious beliefs were also entering China from its neighbours in the west, as can be seen through a rather crudely cast mirror

(8, 9) in the museum's collection that dates to the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368). Mirrors in China were used for cosmetic, ceremonial and magical purposes. Even today, many Chinese homes will place a mirror above their doors to ward off malevolent spirits. The earliest bronze mirror so far discovered in China is from the Neolithic Qijia culture (2400-1900 BC). They continued to be used into the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), though their popularity started to wane with the importation of Western glass mirrors.

The back of the mirror in question (9) is decorated with a band of flower-heads, each separated by two opposing bird-like creatures with tendril tails. The surname Li, which can also mean 'plum', is cast on the nine o'clock position on the decorative band. The intention of casting this character on the back is not known but may indicate either the owner of the mirror, or the person who commissioned the object.

Chinese mirrors displayed in museums today usually show only the decorated undersides, as the plain, reflective sides are usually corroded and have lost their reflective properties. Bronze mirrors did not give a sharp reflection like modern mirrors, but one that was softer – achieved through regular polishing; sometime with the addition of a silver coloured alloy coating on the reflective surface. Like most mirrors of this type, this example has a knob in the centre of the back through which a cord was strung to assist in holding the mirror.

What makes this mirror highly unusual is its reflective surface (8). Although the reflective surfaces of Chinese mirrors are usually left unadorned, this example has been incised with an 18-armed Buddhist deity. The deity represents Zhunti (Japanese: Juntei), known as 'Mother of Buddhas'. She is a *bodhisattva*

– an enlightened being who chooses not to enter Nirvana, the ultimate state of being, until all sentient beings have become enlightened and liberated from the cycle of birth and rebirth. As many aspects of Indian

culture and beliefs entered China with Buddhism, Zhunti's origin may be related to the Hindu mother deity, Chundi. Encircling her image, around the front edge of the mirror are incised Ranjana letters, a Brahmic script, or Lantsa letters, its Tibetan variant.

These scripts are closely associated with Mahayana Buddhism in East

Asia and the esoteric Vajrayana Buddhism practised in the Tibetan Buddhist world. The meaning of the inscription still needs to be confirmed although it may be the Zhunti mantra. A mantra is a prayer-like incantation that is capable of causing transformation. The faithful believe that reciting the Zhunti mantra, as little as 200,000 times to as much as 1,000,000 or more times, will grant the devotee both material and spiritual benefits.

China's cultural and political influences on its neighbours have been the subject of countless books and articles and, of course, this was not a unidirectional relationship. Premodern China was influenced by cultures as far away as Greece at various times over the past five millennia. Through the museum's metalware collection, we can begin to see how this interaction was fostered through warfare, trade and religion. ■

The Museum of East Asian Arts,  
12 Bennett Street, Bath Avon BA1  
2QJ ([www.meaa.org.uk](http://www.meaa.org.uk))



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11



# Celts, *Coast* and ‘post



Archaeologist, historian, writer, broadcaster – and pin-up – Neil Oliver tells **Lindsay Fulcher** why he has always enjoyed digging into the past

**W**ell-known as presenter of BBC television's *Coast*, *A History of Scotland*, *A History of Celtic Britain*, and *A History of Ancient Britain*, Neil Oliver traces his interest in the past back to his grandfather, who had survived the first World War. He had a piece of shrapnel still lodged behind one ear, and an 'Action Man' trigger-ready, partially paralysed hand which fascinated the five-year-old boy. Neil started asking questions but his grandfather wouldn't talk about his wartime experiences so he went to his father instead.

'I was originally interested in where my family came from. Both my grandfathers survived the First World War. I found that amazing and it sparked my interest in history – and archaeology'.

His natural curiosity led him into a practical investigation of the past. 'I was always a digger of holes,' he recalls, 'I started in the garden, aged about seven, hoping I could get to the centre of the earth!'

Other interests that he traces back to his early life include the coastline of his native Scotland. 'During the summer holidays we didn't go abroad,' says Neil, 'we went to Ayr which is by the sea. My dad is passionate about the west coast of Scotland. I love the sea – it captured my imagination – when I was about 15 I wanted to be a lighthouse-keeper'. Today he is patron of the Association of Lighthouse Keepers and his best-known television documentary series to date is *Coast*, which combines history, natural and man-made, with dramatic, breath-takingly beautiful aerial views of the British coastline.

Never far away from Scotland, Neil lives in Dumfries with his wife Trudi and their three young daughters, but when I ask him about his deep Celtic roots – surely it's embedded in his DNA – he casts doubt on the very word 'Celt'.

'What does being a Celt mean? It's a thorny issue. It's more a way of thinking or behaving than belonging to a genetic group or bloodline. Along the west coast of Britain



# -Billy Connolly hair'

there are lots of people who describe themselves as Celts.'

When Neil had a DNA test he discovered that his mother's ancestors had been in Scotland since the Ice Age, but that his father's predecessors were relatively recent arrivals: 'They came from west Europe during the Neolithic period, about 10-12,000 BC.' But, despite this, he has his doubts about what genetic testing can tell us.

'It's a nascent science,' he explains, 'the problem with genetic-testing is that Britain has been colonised by the same people again and again. The first people walked over to north-west Britain after the last Ice Age; they came across what is now the North Sea from Germany, Jutland, and Scandinavia. These people have been arriving in successive waves for thousands of years.'

'What is called the Celtic is, I think, more cultural than racial, a shared set of ideas, religion and artistic style'.

Neil presented evidence for this point of view in his television series, *A History of Celtic Britain* earlier this year but his first television series tackled archaeology of a very different kind.

While Neil was studying archaeology and medieval history at Glasgow University he and fellow student Tony Pollard discovered that they both had a passion for the Zulu Wars. It began after they watched the classic 1964 film *Zulu*, starring Stanley Baker and Michael Caine.

'We schemed to go to Rorke's Drift and dig the Anglo-Zulu battlefields', he recalls. 'We went there in our holidays and found bits of military uniform, like buttons, and spent bullet-cases from the battle on 22 January 1879 – which was very exciting.'

It was this which, eventually, led to Neil's first television series *Two Men in a Trench* (2002-2003), in which he and Tony visited British battlefields, from Culloden to Edgehill, and recreated the battles using state-of-the-art archaeological techniques.

'I never aspired to work in television,' says Neil, 'after I left university, I was a freelance archaeologist. I didn't fancy becoming an academic – the digging appealed to me more – but it was difficult to make a living, so I changed direction. I did a journalism course and worked for a newspaper for a year. This was 1995, the internet had arrived and I could see it was the way to go.'

Then a job as a researcher in television came up and Neil was on his way to becoming a presenter of his many popular documentary series from *Coast* to his latest *The*



Neil Oliver is best known as presenter of *Coast*, a documentary television series that examines the history, natural and man-made, archaeology, and geology of the coastline of the British Isles; he also presents archaeological/historical programmes

*History of Ancient Britain*, the book of which has recently been published. In it Neil tries to uncover what life was like here, on the islands of the Britons, from the Ice Age to the Romans. Following, sometimes literally, in the footsteps of our ancestors, he encounters Cheddar Man, the so-called Red Lady of Paviland and Amesbury Archer, the hunter of Star Carr and Lindow Man. What preoccupies him greatly is the mind-set of our ancestors.

'I would like to go back to Neolithic Orkney, around 3,000 BC, when they started raising stone circles. I want to know why they were doing it. At a certain point they stopped burying bodies and started cremating them instead, sending them back from earth to the heavens in the smoke. I wonder what they were thinking?'

All bar one of his television series to date have been based in the British Isles but his latest project takes him further afield to Africa, Antarctica, America, and Japan, and away from archaeology.

'In my next series, called *Lost Explorers*, I follow the lives of four great Scotsmen: Thomas Blake Glover, William Spears Bruce, David Livingstone and John Muir. Glover went to Japan, Spears Bruce was in Antarctic and Muir, who championed conservation in California, are not very well known. Livingstone, of course, is a household name but what is not so commonly known is that he fought for the abolition of the Slave Trade. Today, in Malawi, he is remembered and revered almost like Mandela. Muir stopped the felling of the giant sequoias in Yosemite National Park and enthused successive generations of Americans with the ideas of conservation – he was a most articulate spokesman'.

Neil, too, is a charismatic communicator and, it turns out, a bit of a pin-up with quite a following among the ladies, as that journalist and most ascerbic of critics, AA Gill revealed in his *Sunday Times* column:

'In Dublin a couple of weeks ago ... I went out to lunch and took ... a Scots chap with post-Billy Connolly hair who presents *Coast* on the telly. He [had given] a very good speech, on the sense of place. They loved him and clapped with both hands. When I got back, I mentioned I'd had lunch with Neil Oliver, and everyone I said it to replied: "Oooh, I really love him. I really, really love him." Girls got proper swoony and clammy. Whole rooms of women would sway like plum bowers at the mention of his name and the thought of his tonsure. I was astonished: he may well be the male Joanna Lumley. He is also, annoyingly, incredibly interesting about the sorts of things I'm interested in. We had a very convivial lunch...' Praise indeed from a man who can upset the whole population of Norfolk and the Isle of Man.

But, but with his long, dark luscious locks (which, rumour has it, are insured for £1million), I don't see Neil as a Joanna Lumley equivalent more as the male twin of Bettany Hughes. 'I'm happy with that,' he says. But, although he is passionate about his subject, he does not have Bettany's missionary zeal to spread the word. 'I would,' he says, 'be as happy talking to one person about my subject, as speaking to thousands'. This would not please Neil's many fans, however, unless they were that one person. ■

*A History of Ancient Britain* by Neil Oliver is published in hardback by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, at £20, ebook £10.



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Mosaic at  
Halepli Bahce  
in Sanliurfa





Stone face  
at Hattusa



The Hittite  
monument,  
Eflatunpınar



Inscribed wall at  
Yazılıkaya, Midas

### How to enter

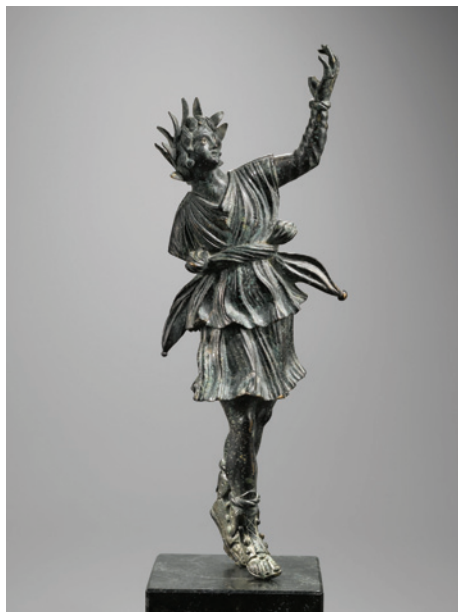
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2. Employees of *Minerva*, Media Circus, Peten Travels and Clear Media and their families cannot enter the Prize Draw.
3. One winner will be chosen in a random draw of qualifying entries after the closing date.
4. The prize is not transferable and no substitutions will be allowed.
5. The tour package is for two people sharing; single supplements apply.
6. All competition entries must arrive by 29 February 2012.

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**Lot 107: Roman bronze figure of a dancing *Lar*, circa 1st century BC/AD. H. 9ins (£109,250).**



**Lot 283: Greek marble figure of girl with a bird, circa 4th-3rd century BC. H. 35ins. (£540,50).**



**Lot 95: Roman marble head of a youth, circa 1st century BC/AD. H. 6½ins. (£30,000).**

## More than a game of marbles

A Greek marble bust made the top price at Bonhams

In ancient times Greek and Roman sculpture was found in parks and squares, in temples and cemeteries and within many of the homes of the affluent too. This love-affair with Classical sculpture continues today as Bonhams Antiquities Sale on 5 October 2011 made clear – in an auction that topped £1.4m.

Top item in the sale at £118,850, was Lot 96, a Greek marble bust of a goddess, circa 3rd Century BC, possibly Aphrodite but more likely to be Artemis. She is depicted with her head inclined to the left, her oval face with sensitively carved features has her deep-set lidded eyes with the original inlaid marble eyes remaining.

An image of a household god, Lot 107, representing the Roman deity, *Lar* sold for

£109,250. The bronze figure of the god shown dancing, dates to the 1st Century BC/AD. The *Larii* were family gods, protectors of the house, and images of them were placed in household shrines or *lararia*. They are usually depicted with attributes of cornucopia or a rhyton in the raised hand, and a libation bowl, such as a *patera* or *phiale*, in the lowered hand.

Drawing on Greek art and the traditions of Rome's past, Augustus linked the cults of the *Larii* to that of the 'Genius of the Emperor' between 12 BC and 7 BC and it is likely that this bronze dates to that period. Lot 128, an attractive Roman portrait of an African youth in dark grey marble, sold for £106,850.

Another very strong Greek sculpture was that of a young girl holding a bird, which

would have stood in a cemetery. Lot 283, dating from circa 4th-3rd century BC would have commemorated the buried child and stood on a grave. It sold for £54,050. Such poignant depictions of young girls shown holding a bird were popular in funerary and votive sculpture from Classical Greece.

Finally, Lot 95, a Roman marble head of a Polykleitan youth, circa 1st century BC/AD sold for £30,000. It is a later copy of a type by one of the greatest of Greek sculptors, Polykleitos of Argos. The boy's head is downcast and tilted to the left, his short hair clustered in curls over his head, with lidded eyes and slightly parted lips.

Bonhams ([www.bonhams.com](http://www.bonhams.com)) will hold their next Antiquities sales in London on 25 April, 23 May and 24 October 2012.



**Lot 96: Greek marble bust of a goddess, circa 3rd century BC. H. 14ins (£118,850).**





**Lot 145: Roman bronze portrait head of a man, circa 3rd century AD. H. 14½ ins. (£457,250)**



**Lot 115: Greek marble head of a girl, circa late 3rd-2nd century BC. H. 9½ ins. (£313,250).**



**Lot 77: Greek gilt-silver phiale *mesophalos*, c. late 6th-5th century BC. D. 7¼ ins. (£193,250).**

# Heads you win

A Roman bronze portrait head led the way at Christie's South Kensington

Christie's South Kensington Antiquities sale held on 6 October realised a total of £3,491,988, selling 79% both by lot and value. The top lot (145) of the sale, was a life-size Roman bronze portrait head of a man dating from *circa* second quarter of the 3rd century AD. Portrayed, with high cheekbones, his narrow lips pressed together and short, crossed military-style hair, he was sold to an anonymous buyer for £457,250.

The next high achiever was a Greek marble head of a young girl (Lot 115) from the Hellenistic period, *circa* late 3rd to 2nd century BC, which went to a private buyer in the States for £313,250. Her hair is arranged in a 'melon' coiffure with a plait encircling her head, she has an oval face and her lips are slightly parted. The idealised beauty of this portrait, with its uniform features, is typical of the art of the Hellenic era – only hairstyles and dress vary and identification is only possible if there is a dedicatory inscription.

Third on the list of the top five sellers is

an Attic, black figure, neck amphora with lid (Lot 80), attributed to the long nose painter and dated *circa* 520 BC. One side show Herakles delivering the Erymanthian Boar to Eurystheus, King of Mycenae. On the other side, a helmeted warrior facing left holding a spear and circular shield decorated with a swan is depicted with an archer wearing a pointed cap standing behind him and a bearded attendant to the left and a younger man to the right. This wonderful piece changed hands for £205,250.

Remaining in Classical Greece, next we come to a parcel gilt-silver phiale *mesophalos* (lot 77) that sold for £193,250. This shallow, thin walled bowl with gilt *omphalos*, from which radiate two bands of lotus blossoms, alternating with almond-shaped lobes, is likely to be from Thrace or Northern Greece.

Completing the top five is a fine Attic, red-figure *stamnos*, attributed to the Peleus painter, from *circa* 440 BC. The obverse shows Prometheus, who brought the gift of fire to mankind, surrounded by three



**Lot 80: Attic black figure amphora, circa 520 BC. H. 18½ ins. (£205,250).**



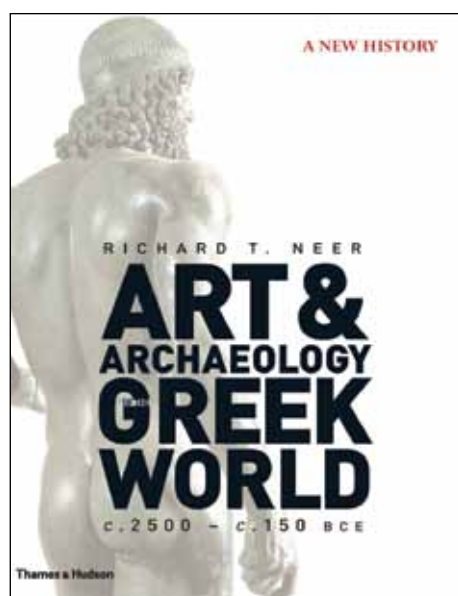
**Lot 84: Attic red figure *stamnos*, circa 440 BC. H. 18½ ins. (£139,250).**

bearded satyrs, while the reverse show three youths. This extremely fine vase reached a respectable £139,250.

Georgiana Aitken, Head of Antiquities, Christie's London said: 'We are delighted with the strong results achieved for Christie's October Antiquities sale, which realised a total of £3.49 million, exceeding pre-sale expectations.

'This concludes a strong year for the category in London, achieving a total of £8.74 million in 2011 – an increase of 10% on 2010 results. It is also the highest yearly sale total for Antiquities in London since 2002, with Christie's achieving 71% market share for the season, reconfirming our position as clear market leaders. The sale-room welcomed bids from the room and across many telephones, with 28% of lots sold or directly underbid online. Particularly strong bidding was seen for important pieces with excellent provenance, exemplified by the Werner Collection, which more than doubled the low pre-sale estimate and was approximately 97% sold by lot.' ■





**Art & Archaeology of the Greek World:  
A New History, c. 2500 – c. 150 BCE**  
*Richard T. Neer*

Thames & Hudson, 23 January 2012  
400pp, 548 illustrations, 432 in colour  
Hardback £35

This sturdy volume is not only a handbook of Greek art and archaeology but almost an encyclopaedia, illustrated by a plethora of colour and monochrome photographs, maps, plans, drawings and some reconstructions of sites and temples. There is also a useful chronological overview of the whole period covered from 3rd millennium to 2nd century BC – a span of some 2,000 years – and further smaller ones at the beginning of each new section.

Richard T Neer, who is David B and Clara E Stern Professor in Humanities, Art History and the College at the University of Chicago, has published widely on Greek vase painting, sculpture and architecture.

His latest book follows a chronological time scale examining not only the 'what' and 'how' of changing styles, but also approaching the 'why' of the evolution of those styles. It puts archaeological evidence into its broader cultural, historical and social context. As we move from the clean, abstract figures of Cycladic art to the hieratic *kouroi* and *korai*, with their mysterious archaic smiles, and the idealised marble and bronze gods and goddesses of Praxiteles, we see how Greek artistic style was influenced by the development of trade and technology, an expanding world-view and changing religious beliefs.

We can not only trace the evolution of the decoration of painted pottery from simple geometric designs to the sublime red and black figure work several centuries later, but also discover how marble and bronze

statues were actually made. Familiar works of art are shown alongside less well-known pieces and recent discoveries, such as an astonishing bull-leaping fresco from Egypt, a spectacular marble sarcophagus from northern Anatolia, a bronze statue of an athlete found in the sea off Croatia, and tomb paintings from ancient Macedonia.

This is the perfect reference book for both teachers and students of Classical civilisation and, although its 14 chapters are designed to correspond to the 14 weeks of an American college semester, it is a gift for a lecturer in the United States or elsewhere.

*Lindsay Fulcher*

**The Viking World.**

*Edited by Stefan Brink, Neil Price*

Routledge, 2011

744pp, black and white illustrations

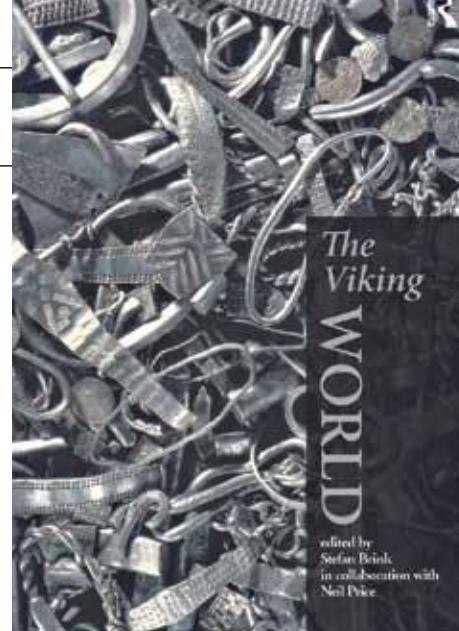
Paperback, £32.99

There are a number of publishers who are producing books that make an effort to be comprehensive. The current book, part of a series by Routledge, is designed to give a comprehensive and academically rigorous introduction to the subject. Happily, it does just that, presenting new scholarship and summaries of old debates in chapters that have a clear focus. While not designed to be read cover to cover, it presents an obvious first stop for anyone interested in a particular facet of the field.

What is particularly welcome is that each chapter has a detailed bibliography, and that with a range of different authors, many different viewpoints are presented. Setting the scene are several papers that suggest how difficult it is to pin down who the Vikings were. Burial evidence from the late Iron Age is sparse.

Part of this relates to the fact that cremation burials were the norm. However, it is assumed from what remains that by about AD 500 a new political system was established, that based on a warrior elite. While previous studies focused on the more romantic notions of this elite, this book challenges these stereotypes. For instance, there is the persistent conception of the strong Viking woman, yet many written sources suggest that marriages could be far from happy and that political alliances cemented by marriage may not have been solid. Further, there were many relationships, such as those with concubines, that suggest women were far from equal partners.

The same is true about notions of democracy in a band of warriors. This may have been more or less true, but there were also thralls. However, it is clear from what literary sources remain that there were servants who performed different functions in



a large household. People could also promise servitude in exchange for a debt. At the other extreme, warriors could pledge fealty to a ruler. In the latter case, it seems that while he was elevated by being proximate to a ruler, he was anything but free. Another commonly made observation is that the Viking maintained social cohesion through gift giving. This was certainly true when the Vikings scourged Europe in the 8th century, but by the middle of the 11th century, they made coins. Were coins viewed only for their monetary value, or did the shift represent something more significant?

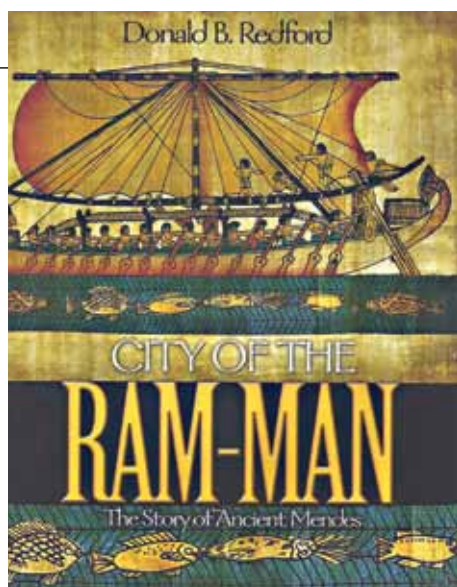
While at first most of the silver coins were from the Near East, a century later, most were from Germany or the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. At the same time, recent excavations in market places suggest that coins were used there for everyday transactions, and suggest that by the 11th century most coins were from Christian lands. This may have signalled the integration of the Vikings into wider European society. The rise of specialist cargo ships in the 10th century can then clearly be seen in context. Much of the book also deals with the impact the Vikings had upon many areas, from England through Normandy and further east into Byzantium.

North America was also explored. However, the evidence suggests Vinland was a short term interest. Considering what limited goods were available in the New World, and the very limited Viking settlement in Greenland, the trade with Europe was essential, while Vinland was not. It was Europe, after all, which yielded metals, cloth, wine, spices, and luxury items. These are the things that the Vikings wanted, through war, or increasingly with time, trade. The literature reflects the former, archaeology preserves much evidence for the latter.

While not dealing with the lives of the Classical past, this book gives an excellent overview of an age and a people who shaped Europe. There are many popular books about Vikings, as a rule presenting one dimensional caricatures. A book such as this one, while difficult to explore, offers many rewards.

*Murray Eiland*





### City of the Ram Man: The Story of Ancient Mendes

Donald B Redford

Princeton University Press, 2010

264pp, black and white illustrations

Hardback £24.95

This book is aimed at a general reader as well as a specialist, and views Egyptian history through the lens of one city. Not only are the finds – many of which were made by the author – placed into context, but the important city of Mendes in the Nile Delta is integrated into Egyptian history. The end result is the presentation of a span of almost five thousand years, focussing upon material culture. This could be the longest span of continuous occupation in all of Egypt. As the site is today the largest tell in the Nile Delta, roughly two miles (3km) long, there is much to say. The name of the city, Mendes, was adapted in antiquity from the Egyptian name of the city (Djedet). It rose to fame during the 29th dynasty and became, briefly, the capital of Egypt, but even under the early Pharaonic period it was already a powerful regional centre.

The chief deities of Mendes are well known. Herodotus records that the main deity, represented by the head and skin of a goat. Rams were not usually sacrificed in the city, and sheep were used instead. However, once a year a special ram is offered, after which, according to Herodotus, it is mourned and buried in a tomb. The ram, Banebdjedet, was a personification (the *ba*) of Osiris and the fish goddess Hatmehit was also worshipped here, as was their child ('Horus the Child'). These three gods were central, but there is little straightforward about ancient Egyptian religion. As an example: 'One of the most interesting and significant aspects of the god of Mendes, which originated at least as early as the New Kingdom and comes to the fore in the first millennium, is that of the Ram quadri-frons, 'four faces on one neck'. The psychology of language of ancient Egypt conveyed the notion of plurality by the number three,

totality by the number four.' (p. 134). The ram, therefore, had four avatars, the Lord of Heaven, the Great Living One Re: Light/Flame (Re), Air (Shu), Earth (Geb) and Flood (Osiris).

When appreciated in this light the ram embraces all of creation, and is far more significant than it would at first appear. However, it is understood that there were other regional deities that waxed and waned in importance with time. Egyptian religion continued to exert a profound effect on the rulers of Egypt. No where is this better evidenced than by the Ptolemies. In about 280 BC Ptolemy II Philadelphos visited Mendes, offered homage to the site, and oversaw its reconstruction. He is acting just like the other Pharaoh.

The story of the city ends when rebellion and a change in the delta led to a shift of the port. By the time of the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, Mendes was a shadow of what it was. The Christian presence in the city is attested, but no monumental structures survive. In short, this book should be on the shelf of anyone interested in ancient Egypt, and may also be usefully given to anyone who is curious about how ancient history can be teased out of material remains.

*Murray Eiland*

### Roman Britain: A New History 55 BC – AD 450

Patricia Southern

Amberley, 2011

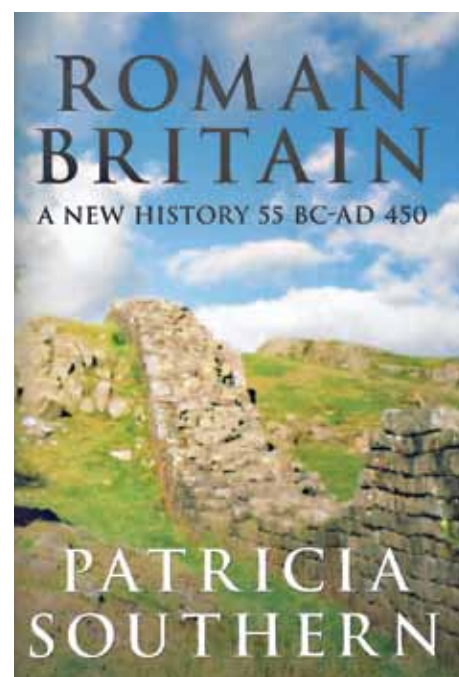
480pp, 57 colour and 33 black and white illustrations

Hardback £25

Considering this is the latest book of a prolific writer, it should be saying something new. It is a book targeting a wide audience, so it must be well written and have a clear structure. It easily passes the first test; the second test is more tricky.

Does the author cover material that is not usually found in the public domain? The answer to this is clear, as he has assimilated information from texts as well as the latest archaeological finds. While many previous studies on this subject have been written, this is one of the few that pays special attention to civil settlements. Of course, the book goes into detail regarding the invasion of Britain by Caesar (55 and 54 BC), and outlines the rebellion of Boudicca (AD 60 or 61), but the author pays particular attention to the nature of Roman rule, which was not always savory.

He tells us that 'One of the scams outlined by Tacitus, in describing how Agricola (AD 40-93) rooted out abuses of the Britons, concerned the requisitioning of grain as part of their tax payments. The soldiers would direct the British farmers to take their grain



to impossibly distant places, and then perhaps accept payments for relaxing their directives, while still accepting the grain, so the food supply was assured, the soldiers got rich, and the Britons paid twice.' (p. 102).

Not surprisingly, corruption was an enemy that was never entirely eradicated from the Roman system, but there were efforts to combat it. One example is the appointment of *legati iuridici* to Britain. These officials, appointed by the Emperor, were first recorded by the time of Vespasian in the later 1st century AD. It was likely that these officials were first appointed when the governor was on a military campaign, and could not be expected to worry about local legal issues. Over time they had a role in developing new towns, including establishing the rights and obligations of inhabitants. It is important to realise that the network of civilization, from roads through public buildings, represented a now vanished social network that in the case of Britain is not well served by surviving by documents.

When Alaric sacked Rome in AD 410, it must have been clear to all outlying regions of the Empire that Rome could no longer offer protection. Constantine III, who declared himself Western Roman Emperor in AD 407 was concerned about centralising increasingly weak power, and as a result Britain had to fend for itself. When he was executed in 411, a number of petty rulers succeeded him, but Roman culture and a degree of contact survived via the Church.

Many people already know the history, it is the detail and the structure in which it is presented that is so entertaining. Anyone with even a basic interest in the past may have a hard time putting this book down.

*Murray Eiland*



## UNITED KINGDOM.

### BIRMINGHAM

#### *Larger than Life: Colossal Coins*

A selection of some key pieces from one of the world's finest collections of Roman, Byzantine and Medieval coins will be projected on a large scale into the gallery space. This is a rare chance to view these little pieces of art in a whole new context, far more akin to how we approach painting or sculpture.

#### **The Barber Institute of Fine Arts**

+44 (0) 121 414 7332 ([www.barber.org.uk](http://www.barber.org.uk)). Until 18 January.

### OXFORD

#### *Unwrapped: The Story of a Child Mummy*

This unusual exhibition brings together an almost 2,000 year old mummy found by Egyptologist Flinders Petrie in 1888, with the work of contemporary artist Angela Palmer. Designed to coincide with the opening of the museum's new Ancient Egypt and Nubia galleries there is a chance to see the child mummy, alongside glass sculptures of the body, plaster replicas and a film of the scans taken to determine how the boy died.

**The Ashmolean Museum** +44 (0) 1865 278 002 ([www.ashmolean.org](http://www.ashmolean.org)). Until 4 March.

## UNITED STATES

### MALIBU, California

#### *Modern Antiquity: Picasso, de Chirico, Léger, and Picabia in the Presence of the Antique*

With similar intentions to the recent Gormley exhibition at the Hermitage, and the Mougins Museum of Classical Art, France, the Getty Villa is juxtaposing seminal modern art works alongside the Greek and Roman pieces which influenced them. Concentrating on stories, bodies and objects the



exhibition highlights what drew these 20th-century artists so strongly to the Classical past.

**The Getty Villa** +1 (0) 31 04 40 73 00 ([www.getty.edu](http://www.getty.edu)). Until 16 January.

### NEW YORK, New York

#### *New Galleries for the Art of the Arab lands*

A newly renovated and reinstalled suite of 15 galleries houses one of the most impressive collections of Islamic art. The new organisation of over 1,000 items according to their geographical provenance is used to show the breadth of the material and how it reflects cultures over a span of 1300 years.

#### **Metropolitan Museum of Art**

+001 (0) 21 25 35 77 10 ([www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)). Ongoing.

#### *Wonder of Age: Master Painters of India, 1100-1900*

This major loan exhibition dispels the notion of the anonymous master in Indian art by concentrating on 40 named painters. Each one is

represented by five or six works and arranged chronologically. The emphasis is on the development of style through artistic lineage rather than dynastic periods.

#### **Metropolitan Museum of Art**

+001 (0) 21 25 35 77 10

([www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)).

Until 8 January.

#### *The Game of Kings: Medieval Ivory Chessmen from the Isle of Lewis*

One of the highlights of the British Museum, it is rare that any of the 70 original Isle of Lewis chessmen, found in 1831, are loaned. But 30 of the iconic pieces, carved from walrus ivory in the 12th century, are now in New York, displayed as if in the endgame of a famous chess match. The exhibition is accompanied by gallery talks, workshops and, of course, a chess tournament!

#### **Metropolitan Museum of Art:**

#### **Cloisters Museum and Gardens**

+001 (0) 21 29 23 37 00

([www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)).

Until 22 April.



#### *Dead Sea Scrolls: Life and Faith in Biblical Times*

With apt timing that coincides with the publishing of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the internet for public view, this exhibition brings together the largest collection of artefacts from the Holy Land outside Israel. Quite apart from 500 previously unexhibited items, there is the chance to see the scrolls, themselves, as part of the retelling of the story of religious traditions and beliefs.

#### **Discovery Times Square**

+001 (0) 86 69 87 96 92 ([www.discoverytsx.com](http://www.discoverytsx.com)). Until 15 April.

### TOLEDO, Ohio

#### *The Egyptian Experience: Secrets of the Tomb*

Through over 150 objects spanning 3000 years, the Ancient Egyptians' approach to life and the afterlife will be uncovered. The visitor will meet a series of historical figures and explore their past through tomb evidence, inscribed biographies and personal possessions. Loans from

major American institutions are displayed alongside the permanent collection and give a holistic approach to this fascinating subject.

**The Toledo Museum** +1 (0) 41 92 55 80 00 ([www.toledomuseum.org](http://www.toledomuseum.org)). Until 8 January.



### HOUSTON, Texas

#### *Tutankhamun: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs*

The power, opulence and majesty of the life of Tutankhamun are reflected here with over 100 items from the tombs and temples of the most famous Pharaoh, and his successors. Highlights include a replica of the boy king's mummy, his golden sandals, and a 10-foot quartzite statue of him.

#### **The Museum of Fine Arts Houston**

+1 (0) 18 88 934 48 88 ([www.kingtut.org](http://www.kingtut.org)). Until 15 April.

### WASHINGTON, DC

#### *Anglo-Saxon Hoard: Gold from England's Dark Ages*

The only US appearance of this, the largest Anglo-Saxon gold hoard ever found. Over 100 items from the Staffordshire Hoard will be on display, among these are many military items, including gold and garnet sword fittings, decorative elements for helmets and crosses.

#### **The National Geographic Museum**

+1 (0) 20 28 57 75 88 (events.[nationalgeographic.com](http://nationalgeographic.com)). Until 4 March.

#### *Antico: The Golden Age of Renaissance Bronzes*

The first monographic exhibition in the US devoted to the 15th century Italian sculptor and goldsmith. With nearly 40 of his pieces drawn together, it is a rare chance to see over three-quarters of his known works. As part of the story of Antico's influences, some statues from antiquity are shown alongside his bronzes, along with comprehensive explanations of some of the incredible methods this artist used to achieve his distinct gilding and patination.





**The National Gallery of Art**  
+1 (0) 20 27 37 42 15  
(www.nga.gov). Until 8 April.

#### **Silk Road Luxuries from China**

This new permanent gallery focuses on the impact of trade on the arts of China, particularly from the 6th to 8th centuries. It was during this time that new techniques and materials started to be pioneered, and many exceptional objects and tablewares are on show and an elaborate stone burial couch.

#### **The Smithsonian Institute**

+1 (0) 20 26 33 10 00 (www.si.edu). Ongoing.



### **DENMARK**

#### **COPENHAGEN**

##### **In the Shadow of the Pyramids**

Egyptologist Flinders Petrie is the focus of this exhibition, which draws on new knowledge and ideas to connect items from the museum's own collection with those housed at the British Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, among others. With the chance to get close to some of Petrie's own finds, such as statue fragments and parts of tomb and temple walls, visitors can hope to connect with the story of Egyptian archaeology's most famous and intriguing figure.

##### **The NY Carlsberg Glyptotek**

+45 (0) 33 41 81 41 (www.glyptotek.dk). Until 25 March.

### **FRANCE**

#### **PARIS,**

##### **The Forbidden City in the Louvre – Emperors of China and Kings of France**

With 130 major loans to France from China, this exhibition is not only a milestone in heritage relations between the two countries, but a chance to see some of the most impressive Oriental lacquerware, paintings, vases, militaria and calligraphic material. The Louvre's gallery space is used innovatively to trace the contemporary lines of French and Chinese rulers, with a particular focus on the relations between the nations.

**Musée du Louvre** +33 (0) 1 40 20 57 60 (www.louvre.fr). Until 9 January.

##### **In The Kingdom of Alexander the Great: Ancient Macedonia**

A selection of 500 artworks trace the history of Ancient Macedonia from 15th century BC to the Imperial Roman age. There is a special focus on tombs and burials over time and what light this sheds on the artistry of the ages.

##### **Musée du Louvre**

+33 (0) 1 40 20 57 60  
(www.louvre.fr). Until 16 January.

##### **The Gauls: A Stunning Exhibition**

This hands-on exhibition introduces the visitor to a range of cultural interpretations of the Gauls, before reaching the excavated material from the collection. Having been invited to experience some of the archaeological methods involved and the work done, as well as immersing yourself in the reconstructions of the tombs, it is possible to reappraise any preconceptions you may have had of the Gallic civilisation.

**Cité des Sciences** +33 (0) 8 92 69 70 72 (www.cite-sciences.fr). Until 2 September.

### **GERMANY**

#### **BERLIN,**

##### **Roads of Arabia: Archaeological Treasures from Saudi Arabia**

Having already been shown in Paris, Barcelona and St Petersburg, this exhibition makes its only stop in Germany. The history of the Arabian Peninsula is presented with a holistic display of archaeological material, from a 6,000 year old grave stele, through Egyptian-style monumental architecture, Roman glass, early ceramics and, then, on into the Islamic period.

**Pergamon Museum** +49 (0)30 20 90 55 77. From 26 January until 9 April.



#### **HANNOVER,**

##### **Who with Whom? The Gods of Olympus**

The relationships, tasks, actions and adventures of the Classical pantheon are analysed in this collection of 16th and 17th century Dutch and German prints. The exhibition is presented as a collaboration between Sprengel Museum Hannover, the State

Museum Hannover and the Museum August Kestner

##### **Landesmuseum Hannover**

+49 (0)51 19 80 76 86  
(www.landmuseum-hannover.niedersachsen.de). Until 19 February.

#### **HEIDELBERG,**

##### **Colourful Gods: The Colours of Ancient Sculpture**

Compiling 30 years of research this innovative exhibition brings the ancient monumental sculpture of the Greeks back to life by reconstructing how it would have been originally coloured. First shown in Munich in 2003 this exhibition places scientific research side by side with plaster casts of some of the most iconic sculpture to present a vivid portrait of the past.

##### **Museum of Ancient Art Heidelberg University**

+49 (0)62 21 54 25 12  
(www.klassische-archaeologie.uni-hd.de). Until 12 February.

#### **HEILBRONN,**

##### **Celtic Finds in the Heilbronner Land**

Through finds including grave goods, clay cups and early Iron Age weapons, the story of the Celts of the region is retold. Of particular interest is the picture that develops of the indigenous gods and how elements of them were absorbed into the Roman pantheon.

##### **Städtische Museen Heilbronn**

+49 (0)71 31 56 22 95  
(www.museen-heilbronn.de). Until 30 September.

#### **KALKRIESE,**

##### **Stone Age Massacre: Crime Scene Talheim**

This exhibition showcases latest methods coupled with recent research results, to get to the bottom of the extraordinary find of 34 7,000-year-old skeletons in a local garden in 1983. Through glimpses of everyday life in the Neolithic period, archaeology, anthropology and forensic scientists try to decide if this was an accident, or murder.

##### **Museum and Park Kalkriese**

+49 (0)54 68 92 04 200  
(www.kalkriese-varusschlacht.de). Until 8 January.

#### **MANNHEIM,**

##### **Skull Cult**

This intriguing, if rather macabre, exhibition brings together over 300 objects to explore the various ways humanity has been drawn to the human skull throughout civilisation. From scalp preparations to skull bowls used in rituals and jewellery to religious artefacts the cultural attachment is explored; with support from an interdisciplinary scientific



approach involving bioanthropology.

##### **eiss-Engelhorn Museums**

+49 (0)62 12 93 31 50 (www.schaedeltkult.de). Until 29 April.

#### **MUNICH, Bavaria**

##### **Battle for Troy: 200 Years of Aegina in Munich**

This exhibition marks the 200th anniversary of the division of the marbles from the Aegina pediment. Having suffered two centuries of vicissitudes these sculptures are now re-united and are shown here with new interpretations about their original colouring.

##### **Munich Staatliche Antike Collections and Glyptothek**

+49 (0) 8 59 98 88 30 (www.antike-amkoenigsplatz.mwn.de). Until 31 January.

### **RUSSIA**

#### **ST PETERSBURG,**

##### **In the Shade of the Cross. Western-European Crosses and Crucifixes of the 8th – 18th Centuries. From a private collection, Milan.**

Over 40 crosses from across Europe (with many from Italy) trace the evolution of this quintessential Christian icon. From Byzantine, through Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque periods the changing artistic and cultural attitudes can be seen.

##### **Hermitage Museum**

+7 (0) 812 710 90 79  
(www.hermitagemuseum.org). Until 29 January.

### **LECTURES**

##### **Supreme Council of Antiquities, Cairo, Egypt**

##### **Salvage Archaeology in Aswan (Syene) Recent work of the Swiss-Egyptian Mission**

23 January: Dr Cornelius von Pilgrim  
For further details please contact:  
+44 (0) 1227 190 174  
(hleithy@aucegypt.edu).