ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

ANTIQUITIES FROM THE HOLY LAND

EXCAVATIONS IN BAHRAIN & KUWAIT

ISLAMIC ART FROM KUWAIT MUSEUM

GREEK TERRACOTTAS OF THE HELLENISTIC WORLD

MUSEUMS IN CRETE AND THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS

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Archeology and the Bible

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• Profile of Professor Allchin
• Egyptian Art of the First Intermediate Period
In this issue...

Our Middle Eastern theme this month is topical in two ways. Firstly, we have news from the Gulf, where, despite Muslim reticence over the pre-Islamic era, the ancient civilisations still exert a strong influence over the nation-states of the area. On page 27, Derek Kennet describes the excavations in Bahrain and Kuwait which have revealed evidence of the mysterious Dilmun civilisation which flourished around 4,000 years ago. Before the recent Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, The National Museum in Kuwait contained a unique collection of Islamic art, most of which has now disappeared. However, more than 100 pieces escaped the looting and now form part of an exhibition in Baltimore, described on page 24 by Howard White.

Secondly, in the Christmas issue, we also look at the Middle East in the form of two important exhibitions on the Holy Land which can be seen in Britain this month. 'Archaeology and the Bible', at the British Museum, examines whether excavations in the area can throw light on the events described in the Bible. Rupert Chapman discusses the exhibition and the background to it on page 6. Meanwhile, to round off Glasgow's year as European City of Culture, the Kelvingrove Museum is host to 'Treasures of the Holy Land', one of the largest and most important collections of ancient art from Israel ever to be shown abroad. Geoffrey Borwick reports on page 12.

A team of underwater archaeologists from the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M University has begun an extensive search for the remains of the 'Capitana' and the 'Santiago de Polas', two caravels reportedly abandoned by Christopher Columbus in St Ann's Bay, on Jamaica's north coast, in 1504.

The explorer was forced to beach the vessels, which had become unseaworthy, in 1503, and was stranded on the island for a year while members of his crew sailed to Haiti to get help.

Dr James Parrent, director of the project, is hopeful that a significant find will be made in time for the quincentenary of Columbus's first landfall in the Americas in 1992.

The wrecks are of enormous importance, Dr Parrent believes; since the two caravels ran aground in soft sediment in shallow water there is a good chance of finding well preserved hulls. They would yield vital information on caravel construction and enable archaeologists to compare construction variations of this little known ship type.

Search Begins for Columbus Ships

Roads programme will threaten over 800 archaeological sites

The Department of Transport's motorway and trunk road building programme will have a major impact on archaeological remains in England, with over 800 known sites – as well as many others still undiscovered – likely to be destroyed or disturbed, according to a study published by English Heritage.

The study, 'Roads for Prosperity' White Paper 1989: Implications for England's archaeological resource, was commissioned by English Heritage in response to the Government's 1989 White Paper 'Roads for Prosperity' and its 1990 report 'Trunk Roads, England: Into The 1990s'. The study also estimates that the cost of recording all the archaeological data from these sites before destruction would be well above £73 million.

In its response to the Government, English Heritage urges that full archaeological evaluations of these sites should be done before the routes are selected, rather than, as at present, after a preferred route has already been announced. Where possible, the sites should be preserved. It maintains that the surest way of achieving this is to assess their importance as early as possible in the planning process, so that the best decisions can be taken over the routing and design of the development.

In this way the impact on the archaeological landscape can be minimised and with it the eventual costs of archaeological recording.

The Government's road programme involves some 1,745 miles (2,804 km) and an area of over 14,800 hectares of new widened or improved roads. Although the time period is not definitely stated, this will have a greater impact on archaeology than any other single development.

The study estimated that 844 known sites of various types and periods (Prehistoric, Roman, Saxon, Medieval and Post-Medieval) would be affected. This would vary from complete destruction to alteration of the archaeological landscape, depending on the final routes chosen.

Among the important threatened sites which the case studies highlighted is the group of prehistoric barrows and associated features near Stonehenge. If the planned second carriageway to the A303 takes the northern route, then at least six of these sites are likely to be destroyed.

MINERVA

to be published bi-monthly

Volume two of Minerva will begin with a January/February issue, to be distributed before Christmas. It will then continue to be published every other month, with six issues per year. Since many readers were confused by the previous summer break in publication and missed Minerva during this period, a decision has been made to change to a bi-monthly format.

Subscribers will receive the correct number of issues remaining of the ten, twenty, or thirty copies for which they have paid.
Asphalt from the Dead Sea in Israel helped to preserve Egyptian mummies from the fourth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D., new research has shown.

Revealed by molecular analysis, this new finding settles a long-standing dispute between ancient historians who described the export of Dead Sea asphalt to Egypt and modern archaeologists who denied that it took place. The researchers found, by using methods developed for studying the geochemistry of crude oil, that asphalt was one of the ingredients in the mummies dated to the Hellenistic and Roman periods (fourth century B.C. to fourth century A.D.), but that an older mummy from 900 B.C. did not contain it. This reflects the change in the political situation when the economy of Palestine became incorporated into the Egyptian economic sphere following the conquests of Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C.

The area of the Dead Sea has been associated with naturally occurring asphalt for thousands of years. The Book of Genesis describes the war between the Kings of the North and the Kings of Sodom, Gomorrah and the Cities of the Plain. The soldiers of the latter cities were defeated and in their retreat fell into wells of asphalt.

Today, asphalt is found seeping from the rocks in the escarpments surrounding the Dead Sea and, unusually, occurs occasionally in huge blocks floating on the surface. They originate from an unknown geological formation somewhere at the bottom of the 320 metre deep body of water.

Asphalt was considered a valuable natural resource in the ancient Fertile Crescent. It was employed as mortar in the buildings and walls, particularly in Mesopotamia (for example, in the Tower of Babylon and the walls of Nebuchadnezzar). It was also used as a medicine, an adhesive and insecticide, as well as to decorate objects, caulk boats and waterproof baskets.

The earliest known use of asphalt by man was in the Dead Sea area. Baskets found by archaeologists at the 10,000-year-old settlement of Gilgal, near Jericho, were waterproofed with it, and in the 9,000 year old Cave of Heimar, near Sodom, asphalt was used to decorate skulls as well as in baskets.

Source: BIPAC

Archaeologists in Norfolk, eastern England, have found what has been described as one of the finest collections of Anglo-Saxon gold and silver work discovered in Britain this century.

Excavations by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit at Harford near Norwich have revealed a hoard of thirty silver and gold items from the seventh century B.C. Forty graves were unearthed, of which a quarter contained jewellery. One body was wearing a gold pendant inlaid with garnets, and was buried with two silver coins and a small bronze sewing casket containing pins and thread. Other pieces found on the corpses included an oval Roman gemstone inscribed with the figure of a god set in a gold mount, and a filigree gold pendant with a cross-shaped decoration.

Amongst silver pieces discovered were pins and chains and a large brooch inlaid with garnets.

Project director Trevor Ashwin described how the graves were discovered accidentally during rescue excavations before the construction of the Norwich by-pass. He called it a ‘nationally important discovery’ and said that the cemetery is of a very rare type. The graves are in rows with the heads pointing east and the bodies appear to be a mixed group of men, women and children, all of whom were buried wearing their best clothes and jewellery, many of them with purses holding glass and faience beads, silver chains and iron keys. The cemetery dates from around A.D.700 which suggests that they are Christian burials, possibly the first Christians to be detected in Norfolk.
A young American scholar, Jeffery Spier of University College London, was the first to spot the disturbing likeness between the controversial Getty kouros (now withdrawn from display - see Minerva, September 1990, p.20) and a fake torso on the Swiss market.

In September's issue of The Burlington Magazine, Spier explains how he first heard of the 'brother' torso in January. Trade rumour has it that a workshop of forgers in Rome produced both pieces from the same block of marble, basing their creations on Sir John Boardman's well-known handbook of archaic Greek sculpture.

Spier was later able to view the torso, whose unsightly brown surface suggests a failed attempt to age the marble in boiling water. After careful examination he judged the two pieces to be by the same hand - a telling judgment if correct, since 'the appearance of a piece from the same hand is always the best way to detect a forgery.'

Where does this episode leave the scientific 'authentication' of the Getty kouros? The Museum's trustees went ahead with the £4 million purchase in 1985, after a Californian geologist pronounced that the statue's surface incrustation was the result of a process of 'dolomitisation' which could only have happened over a period of centuries.

Spier says that this pronouncement 'overshoots the limits of current scientific knowledge and presents a good example of a generalisation from insufficient research'.

In fact little is known about the workshop secrets of Italian forgers. Spier thinks that over the years they could have developed a test-resistant method for giving a patina of age to the surface of new marble. Known techniques include 'cooking' the marble in various liquids and then reburying it for the final touch.

Another mystery is the Thasian connection. Marion True, the Getty's Curator of Antiquities, has reported a provenance-test on the Getty kouros which suggests that the marble comes from the North Aegean island of Thasos (Burlington Magazine, January 1987, p.10).

Recently the Getty ran the same test on the fake torso (now in the Museum's possession for study and comparison). The results suggest marble of a similar type. True herself says that stone from the Thasian acropolis 'has been reportedly quarrried this century'. Ominously, Thasos is also claimed (following provenance-tests) as the source of the marble for the Ludovisi and Boston thrones - two famous Greek artworks now under suspicion as fakes by a recent Roman workshop (The Guardian, 27 April 1988).

All in all, the episode of the Getty kouros is bound to raise disturbing doubts about science's ability to protect the art market from the faker's skills.

A.J.S. Spawforth

The Board of Governors at the Museum of London has announced that it is to make up to 130 archaeologists redundant. The Board made the decision at a meeting in October in which they examined the future of the Museum's archaeological units and the likely funds available in the rest of 1990/91. However, there will continue to be work on archaeological projects for well over one hundred staff, a great deal of which will be in post-excavation and publication projects.

They also looked at forecasts of archaeological work that might be necessary after 1 April, 1991. Much activity will still be devoted to post-excavation and publication, mainly funded by English Heritage. English Heritage have also undertaken to maintain their establishment grant for a further year. The volume of on-site work will depend on how quickly the construction and property business picks up, and so it is not possible to forecast likely staff levels at this stage.

The acute downturn in property development in London has had severe effects on archaeology, because excavations are primarily dependent on funds from site developers rather than central or local government. Excavations which are already in progress will not be abandoned, but the sudden cancellation of many planned building projects, together with bankruptcies among developers, means that no new archaeological work is coming in. Up to now, the museum has had a high turnover, starting up to ten new projects a month.
A dug-out boat, with some stern damage but in otherwise excellent condition, has been discovered during excavations of a crannog – an ancient man-made lake dwelling – at Buiston, near Kilmarnock in Ayrshire, south-west Scotland. It probably dates from the fourth to sixth centuries A.D.

About five metres of the vessel's port side have been uncovered and Dr Anne Crone, leader of the investigating team, estimates that another two metres remain to be excavated. She describes the vessel as having been beautifully made.

Adze grooves some nine centimetres wide are visible across the full width of the hull which was hollowed from a single oak log, and cut slightly asymmetrically to the axis of the material. The stern damage arose from penetration by piles used in building the defence palisade around the crannog. It is not yet clear whether the boat pre-dates the crannog itself or only the palisade. Despite the damage, a groove suggesting the presence of a stern transom is identifiable though the transom itself is missing.

About a metre apart along both sides are at least five housings which Dr Crone believes allowed the insertion of extension pieces to increase the height of the sides. Recesses in the interior probably provided for the fitting of seats. Though the vessel was almost certainly propelled by paddles, no signs either of paddles or of a mast have been found so far.

The discovery of the boat was made during excavation of the crannog to examine its structural details and to establish evidence of the life style of the inhabitants. Dr Crone, whose work is part of the programme of Scotland's Historic Buildings and Monuments organisation, hopes to throw further light on life in Scotland during the Dark Ages. Radio-carbon dating at similar sites last year showed evidence of occupation by Irish settlers during the fourth to fifth centuries A.D. According to Dr Crone, 'most of the crannogs in the Scottish Highlands date to the first millennium B.C., but those in Ireland and south-west Scotland are later, so it has been suggested that the use of crannogs spread over from Ireland. During the fourth century B.C. the Picts and the Irish were making frequent attacks on the locals, so they probably built crannogs to protect themselves'.

Complete excavation and recovery of the boat next year depends on discussions currently being held with museums and other potentially interested parties. A costly conservation programme – possibly lasting two years – and a major display space would be needed. Recovery alone would be expensive, the site being such that a tracked crane would be essential.

A similar canoe was found on the same site by a local antiquarian in 1881. It lay just outside the palisade and was of correspondingly elaborate construction. It was removed to a nearby museum but was destroyed by fire a few years later.

Geoffrey Borwick

Archaeologists at Llangorse, near Brecon in Wales, are excavating the only known Welsh crannog, which seems to have been the home of ninth-century Welsh kings. Crannogs – man-made lake villages – are more commonly associated with the Scottish Highlands and Ireland, where they were used for hundreds of years, from the sixth century B.C. until the Middle Ages.

The excavation, organised by the Museum of Wales and the University of Wales College of Cardiff, has made two important finds in this, its second season. The piles of a 60-metre timber causeway linking the crannog with the northern shore of Llangorse Lake, and a four-metre dugout boat have been discovered.

The timber and stone platform of the crannog has been dated through dendrochronology to the ninth century; this is confirmed by a reference in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to the destruction of Llangorse island and the capture of the Welsh kingdom of Brycheiniog by King Aethelflaed of England in A.D.916.

The site at Llangorse is almost the only surviving settlement in Wales from between A.D.400 and 1100, and it was a royal settlement, possibly used only in the summer for fishing.

Dr Anne Crone of Scotland's Historic Buildings and Monuments department examines the dug-out canoe found at Buiston, in Ayrshire.

Photo: Michael Brooks

Unique Welsh Crannog Found
Museum Exhibition

ARCHAEOLOGY AND

The British Museum is currently showing a major exhibition, Archaeology and the Bible, which reviews the 150 years of archaeological discoveries in the Holy Land and their relation to the story recorded in the Bible.

Fig 1

Fig 2a

Fig 3a

Fig 4

Rupert Chapman

In the beginning,

the aim of archaeologists studying the lands of the Bible was to prove its historical truth. The motivation was theological, the intention being to prove the veracity of what could be read in the Bible. However, this attempt failed, since the issues involved are not susceptible to proof or disproof in this way and are, in Sir Karl Popper's sense, metaphysical (which carries no implication concerning truth). Modern archaeology in the Holy Land has a different aim, seeking to uncover and interpret evidence of what happened in the history of the area. While this is a purely secular aim, it does not affect the relevance of the results to our understanding of the Bible. On the contrary, it has become clear over the past century that if we are to understand the Bible's message we must view it in its proper context, the ancient Near East as recovered by archaeology. There is, therefore, an important feedback relationship between archaeology, which sheds light on the Biblical account, and the Biblical account, which sheds light on the archaeology. This relationship is complex but, properly understood, is capable of yielding more and better information about the Bible than the pioneers could have imagined.

The exhibition begins with the Neolithic statues from 'Ain Ghazel (Fig 1), two of which face the visitor on entry. These striking, half life-size lime-plaster statues are the oldest large scale, three dimensional depictions of the human figure yet found, dating to about 9,000 years ago. From the same Pre-Pottery Neolithic B culture comes a skull
from Jericho, on which a face has been reconstructed in lime-plaster (Fig 4), probably a portrait of the deceased, and a carved stone mask. All of these objects were made by the villagers of some of the earliest agricultural cultures yet discovered.

The relationship between the Bible and the rest of the Near East is illustrated in the case of ‘Noah’s Flood’ by the tablets discovered by George Smith in the last century which record, in the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Assyrian version of the flood story. There is, of course, no archaeological evidence of an actual flood.

Many attempts have been made to date the stories of the Patriarchs, most notably W.F. Albright’s identification of the Patriarchs with the Early Bronze IV culture (c. 2400–2000 B.C.E.). None of these attempts has met with lasting acceptance.
In all of the narratives there is only one event which could have left any archaeological trace - the account of the five 'cities of the Plain' (Genesis 14:2-3). In the region at the southern end of the Dead Sea only five ancient cities have been discovered, down the eastern side of the Wadi Arabah, all violently destroyed about 2200 B.C. This gives us an earliest date, while the end of the Second Intermediate Period in Egypt gives a rough closing date to the period in which the story of Joseph could be set. From this period the exhibition includes material from the Early Bronze IV cemetery at Tiwil esh-Sharqi. The simple materials of the Early Bronze IV culture are contrasted with the wealth and opulence of the culture of the Sumerian kings of Ur, as exhibited in the famous gold and lapis lazuli statuette of the 'ram caught in a thicket' (Fig 5) (Genesis 22:13 - a version of the 'sheep/goat and tree of life' motif common to most ancient Near Eastern religions) found by Sir Leonard Woolley in the Royal Cemetery at Ur.

One of the few things on which there is general agreement among archaeologists and historians is that if there was an Egyptian exile it must have occurred during the Middle Bronze Age (c. 2000-1550 B.C.). During this time Canaanite civilisation reached its peak. In this period the earliest version of the alphabet was invented by the Canaanites. The simplicity of the script, compared to Egyptian hieroglyphics and Akkadian cuneiform, allowed a greater degree of literacy, and hence, a much wider dissemination of information in writing. Only slightly modified by the Phoenicians, and passed on by the Greeks, this is essentially today's alphabet, and the ancestor of all other alphabets. During the latter part of the Middle Bronze Age the steady immigration of Canaanite merchants into Egypt, followed by the collapse of central government, led to the domination of Egypt by Canaanite princes, the so-called 'Hyksos'. In 1550 B.C. the reunited Egyptian government drove the 'Hyksos' out of Egypt and established Egyptian domination over Canaan, inaugurating the Late Bronze Age. This was a cosmopolitan period, in which the material culture of the Canaanites was enriched by imported luxuries from Egypt and the Aegean. In the portion of the exhibition dealing with this period a schematic reconstruction of part of the Fosse Temple of Lachish serves as a setting for the display of a large selection of the pottery and other artefacts of the period, giving a general view of the whole of the material culture of the Canaanites, the utilitarian pottery and objects as well as the more elaborate decorated pottery and art objects (Figs 2&3).

Under the Egyptian Empire the Canaanites were very heavily taxed, with the result that the peasantry suffered badly, and many were forced to flee their land and join the groups of Hapiru, dispossessed and somewhat lawless people living on the fringes of urban society. Among these stateless people were the Israelites. By 1220 B.C. the people living in the central hills of Palestine were recognised by the name 'Israel', as found in an inscription of
Pharaoh Merneptah of Egypt.

In the latter part of the Late Bronze Age the Egyptians recruited into their army Aegean mercenaries who were used to garrison the outposts of empire in the Levant. In the reign of Ramesses III (1198-1166 B.C.) a coalition of these 'Sea Peoples' attacked, and very nearly conquered, Egypt. Either before this date or afterwards the Egyptians allowed groups of these Aegean peoples to settle on the Canaanite coastal plain. One such group was the Philistines who, after the collapse of the Egyptian Empire c.1150 B.C., established a number of independent kingdoms. Several of the distinctive anthropomorphic clay coffin-lids used in Philistine burials are displayed alongside the stone lid of the sarcophagus of Ramesses VI, the last king of Egypt to exercise control over the Egyptian Empire in Canaan.

The Israelite monarchy was established by Saul, and the whole of the country was brought into a single kingdom by David, c.1000 B.C., who made Jerusalem his capital. His son Solomon built the Temple which later became the centre of Jewish worship. On the death of Solomon the kingdom split into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. These kingdoms soon began to come under pressure from the expanding Assyrian Empire. In 841 B.C. Jehu, king of Israel, was forced to pay tribute to Shalmaneser III of Assyria, an act depicted on the famous 'Black Obelisk', the only known contemporary depiction of an Israelite king (Fig 7). In 722 B.C. the northern kingdom was finally destroyed and its people deported to Mesopotamia. In 701 B.C. Judah rebelled against the Assyrians. Although Jerusalem was not taken, many of the cities of Judah were destroyed, and a heavy tribute was imposed.

Following the fall of Assyria in 612 B.C., Babylon took over the former Assyrian Empire. In 586 B.C. Judah again rebelled, and the kingdom was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar II, king of Babylon, and the bulk of its population deported (Fig 8). From this time on the land was always under the rule of one of the great powers of the ancient world.

In 539 B.C. the last king of Babylon, Nabonidus, was defeated by Cyrus, king of Persia, and the former Babylonian Empire became part of the Persian Empire. A glazed brick panel from the royal palace at Susa shows one of the Persian royal bodyguard, the 'immortals'. The rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and its Temple are described in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, but otherwise relatively little is known about Palestine during the Persian period. The Persians left little permanent trace: the fine Persian 'residency' at Lachish shows Greek influence, not Persian. In the interior of the country the traditional culture continued, although the coastal regions were influenced by Greek culture, transmitted by Phoenicians and Greek colonists even before conquest by Alexander the Great.

In 332 B.C. the Persian Empire fell to Alexander. His policy of exporting Greek culture completely transformed the ancient Near East. After his death Palestine came under the control of his successors, first the Ptolemaic Empire of Egypt, then the Seleucid Empire of Mesopotamia. Following the looting of the Temple of Antiochus IV in 167 B.C., the Jews rose in rebellion under the leadership of the Maccabees, who created an independent Jewish state for the first time since 586 B.C. This kingdom lasted from 142 B.C. until the conquest of Palestine by Pompey the Great in 63 B.C.

Hasmonaean continued to rule until 40 B.C. when Rome appointed the Idumaean convert to Judaism, Herod the Great, ruler of Judaea. In 37 B.C. he was made client-king, and began a series of major construction projects. The most magnificent of these was his enlargement of the Temple Platform in Jerusalem and rebuilding of the Temple. A model of this based on the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund and literary sources shows the understanding of this construction at the end of the last century. Following the death of Herod, Judaea was ruled by a series of increasingly corrupt Roman officials, until the outbreak of the first Jewish Revolt in A.D. 66. Jerusalem fell and the Temple was destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70, and Masada fell in A.D. 74. A second revolt led by Simeon Bar Kochba in A.D. 132 was crushed in A.D. 135. Jerusalem was rebuilt as Aelia Capitolina, from which Jews were excluded save on the anniversary of its destruction when they were allowed to lament on the site of the Temple.

A high point of the exhibition is the display of one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Commentary on Habakuk which dates to the first century A.D., on loan from the Israel Museum. Also on display is the Old Testament of Codex Sinaiticus, a fourth century A.D. copy of the Bible in Greek.
The Hippolytus Ewer and Stuible, 5th cent. AD. From the Seyfo Treasure which was discussed at length in two articles in Apollo, July 1990. This also had an article on The Plundering of Byzantine North Cyprus.

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In the nineteenth century the Holy Land was rediscovered by western explorers, scientists, and artists. A display of paintings by David Roberts, Edward Lear, Sir David Wilkie and the Dutch cartographer, author, and artist van de Velde illustrates this.

The first attempt to survey the Holy Land was made during Napoleon's invasion in 1801, but only in 1864 did the Wilson's Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem provide the first accurate map of the city and record of its architecture. His success convinced George Grove, a civil engineer with an interest in the historical geography of the Holy Land, to propose a society for the scientific exploration of Palestine. In 1865 the Palestine Exploration Fund was founded. Working for the Fund, Lt. Warren began work in Jerusalem around Herod's Temple; Western Palestine was surveyed in the 1870s by Conder and Kitchener, and Flinders Petrie began the excavation of Tell el-Hesey in 1880, identifying eleven successive cities, dated by Egyptian objects found at Hesey and Levantine artefacts found in Egypt. Sir Leonard Woolley and T.E. Lawrence ('of Arabia') are among the many others who worked for the Fund. In this section of the exhibition are displayed the surveying instruments used by Conder and Kitchener and manuscript and printed maps.

The exhibition concludes with a display of the material resulting from the Museum's current excavations at Tell es-Sa'diyeh in the Jordan Valley, directed by Jonathan Tubb, who has organised the exhibition, showing a wealth of material from the Early Bronze Age II and the Iron Age.

It is worth noting that of the hundreds of objects displayed in this exhibition only a handful do not come from proper, scientific excavations. It is also worth noting that the span of materials displayed covers the entire range of activities of the cultures concerned, not just the art objects of the urban elites. Although the situation is changing now, in the past archaeologists working in the Near East have had few problems similar to those which current bedevil their colleagues working in, for example, Central and South America, where widespread and large-scale looting of sites to supply the legal and illegal trade in antiquities has caused major damage.

'Archeology and the Bible' is at the British Museum until 24 March, 1991. A book 'Archeology and the Bible' by Jonathan Tubb and Rupert Chapman accompanies the exhibition and is available from the Museum bookshop price £6.95 (£7.95 from other bookshops).

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MINERVA 11
REASURES OF THE HOLY LAND

Geoffrey Borwick

Approaching the end of Glasgow's reign as European City of Culture, the Treasures of the Holy Land exhibition brings to the city a cross-section of the largest and most important exhibition of ancient art from Israel ever to travel abroad. All exhibits are from the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, and the Kelvingrove Museum in Glasgow is the only European venue for this display from sites throughout the Holy Land.

'Treasures of the Holy Land' is extracted from a larger exhibition shown in the USA and has two important differences. The historic side of the US project is understated, to leave the emphasis on archaeological aspects, and, though space is found for an intriguing selection of ossuaries and an anthropoid coffin, several of the more cumbersome of the US exhibits have been excluded. Jewellery, household ware and cult artefacts predominate.

Man's cultural development in the area can be glimpsed through his weapons, implements and ritual objects. Development is traced through the times of the Patriarchs and the First and Second Temple periods and into the beginnings of Christianity and Islam. Each group of objects is accompanied by associated biblical texts which offer specific insights into the thoughts of the kings and priests of the day.

In a display of over two hundred antiquities, covering some twelve thousand years, the choice of representative items is difficult and, inevitably, subjective.

One of the oldest. The tenth-millennium B.C. figurine of a gazelle (below) was found in an Umm el-Zuweitina cave. It is carved from hard limestone and, despite subsequent polishing, retains marks from the flint knife used to shape it. Traces of red ochre suggest that it may once have had a painted pattern.

From Neolithic times, around the seventh millennium B.C., comes evidence of the level of
agricultural development of the time in the form of bone tools found at Nahal Hemar (left). Fashioned chiefly from the ribs of wild cattle, they include a parallel-sided implemnet with a rounded end, a spatula used in dressing animal skins and other domestic tasks. In the same group are a carved bone sickle and pointed tools with perforated ends indicating usage in weaving and basketry.

A fourth-millennium B.C. copper hoard from Nahal Mishmar is part of a larger find and includes mace-heads, crowns and sceptres. Over four hundred objects were found packed in a reed mat in the Judean desert’s Cave of Treasure. The hoard offers evidence that coppersmiths, even 6,000 years ago, had mastered the lost wax casting process, and underlines the incredibly high standards of workmanship reached by the craftsmen of the period.

One of the most fascinating exhibits is a ceramic female figure seated on a pedestal (right). She balances a churn on her head and holds a chalice under her arm and is a fourth-millennium B.C. discovery from the Western Negev. Some body details have been depicted in paint and some, including fingers and toes, are incised. Others – the ears, breasts and navel – are formed from applied clay.

The figure was found in a building identified as a temple, which, together with the anthropomorphic shape, the complex design and the churn suggest an association with milk production and fertility rites.

Typical of the household equipment shown is an Early Canaanite (2950-2650 B.C.) group from the site at Arad. Storage ware for liquids and dry goods include cooking pots and two bowls containing carbonised wheat and barley, the most common crops grown at Arad.

Another Early Canaanite hoard was accidentally discovered at Kefar Monash in the Plain of Sharon. Some of 800 ridged metal plates, thought to have formed body armour, are exhibited. If they are indeed body armour, they are the earliest found in the zone. The hoard, of copper artefacts, included axes, adzes and chisels, making up what is described as the richest and most interesting Early Bronze Age finds so far in Israel.

From Tel el-Aful comes two jewellery hoards of the Middle Canaanite period, the mid-sixteenth century B.C. They include some of the finest Canaanite jewellery ever found, those on display being two from five hoards discovered.

They contained scraps of gold and silver and are assumed to have belonged to merchants who had hoped to recover the precious metals by melting the items down. A good deal of Mesopotamian and Egyptian influence appears in the designs and the colour inlays, though independence of style is by no means lost. The Tel el-Aful hoards are the largest so far found from the period, showing the considerable wealth of the area. They survive from the siege by Ahmose, founder of the Egyptian 18th Dynasty, during which the defenders had time to hide their treasures under floors and within walls.

A Late Canaanite (thirteenth century B.C.) jewellery hoard comes from the site at Beth Shemesh, selected from another group of about 400 objects recovered. They included gold, silver and bronze jewellery and 31 scarabs dating to the reign of Ramesses. Manufacturing techniques included hammering and casting, with decoration by fluting and incision. The work is of a high standard executed by skilled workers clearly influenced by the fashions of the day.

A wall-mounted copper oxhide ingot of the fourteenth-thirteenth century B.C. attracts attention. So named because it is shaped like a stretched oxhide, this one comes from the Carmel coast, though others have been found throughout the Mediterranean basin.
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Among larger objects shown is a Late Canaanite pottery coffin from Deir El-Balah. It was used for the burial of a man and a woman and, though locally made, reveals, in its shape and in details of head-dress and ornaments, signs of significant influence from Egypt, where the custom of burial in such sarcophagi originated. That the people buried in this one were wealthy is shown by the elaborate jewellery and numerous imported luxury items buried with them.

Surviving specimens of royal architecture from Israelite cities are uncommon and a highlight at the exhibition is a fine example of the genre (below). About four feet long, it is a section of window balustrade from a royal palace at Ramat Rahel near Jerusalem and is from the Israelite (Iron) period (late eighth-early seventh century B.C.).

It is formed from a row of identical colonettes, joined at the capitals by metal clamps inserted into holes. Architecture at the palace reflected the Phoenician influence from the times when Solomon imported Phoenician artisans for palace and temple construction. Elements of their style, incorporated into local design, led eventually to the creation of the distinctive architecture which became a feature of royal cities in Israel and Judaea.

Bronzes from Upper Galilee represent the Late Persian (around fifth-fourth centuries B.C.) period and comes from a site identified as cultic. From about a century earlier a cast bronze censer (left) is from a tomb accidentally discovered near the Sea of Galilee. It has a shallow flat-bottomed bowl, and a handle finished with a duck's head design. Achaemenid craftsmen often used the duck's head motif in handles. The censer may therefore have royal or religious links.

A hoard of second-century A.D. Roman armour in iron and bronze includes one of only two Trajanic infantry helmets known. The hoard is important, too, for its value as one of the few surviving relics from the Roman army's campaign during the Bar-Kokhba war (132-135 A.D.) which brought five legions to the area for what proved to be one of Hadrian's more difficult campaigns. The list of interesting objects is long and each visitor will no doubt select his own highlights. One item certain to be on everyone's list, if only for its intriguing wording, is a funerary inscription dating from around the end of the pre-Christian era. Carved in Aramaic, it reads: 'Hither were brought the bones of Uzziah, King of Judaea. Do not open.'

James Thompson, deputy keeper at the Burrell Collection but seconded from there to set up this exhibition, deserves, with his staff, high praise for his imaginative work.

'Treasures of the Holy Land' is at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow, and is open daily, including Sundays, until 16 December, 1990. The exhibition forms part of the Glasgow Festival of Jewish Culture, the contribution of Glasgow's strong Jewish community to the Year of Culture.

(top left) Handle of sickle, carved bone, 10th millennium B.C.
(left) Bronze censer with duck head handle, Persian period, 6th-5th century B.C.
(below) Limestone balustrade from palace at Ramat Rahel, Israelite period, late 8th-early 7th century B.C.
Curiosities in Crete

Some intriguing Minoan and other objects in the museum at Haghios Nikolaos, Crete

Stavros Aspropoulos

The once tranquil fishing village of Haghios Nikolaos, nestled in Mirabello Bay some 86 kms east of Iraklio (Heraklion), is now home to a tourist crowd which flocks to its luxury hotels and patronises the restaurants which now ring the southern and western shores of the port. Yet few take the time or the trouble to visit the town's archaeological museum. It was founded in 1970 in order to house and display the increasing number of significant finds derived from the rich archaeological excavations of Crete's eastern sites, which had previously been accessioned into the collections of the Archaeological Museum in Iraklio. The present unassuming building rests inconspicuously at the crest of a hill at the right hand side of the one way street leading to the island's major northern motorway. Indeed, one might drive right past it because its location is not well marked with signs and placards. Nevertheless, this museum houses some extraordinarily objects, just a few of which are discussed here.

The oldest and most intriguing object in the collection is the so-called Pelekita idol (inv.nr.7730) (Fig.1), found in the Cave of Pelekita on the precipitous eastern slope of Mount Traostalos, near Zakros. Broadly assigned to a Neolithic horizon, the design of this ambiguous effigy relies upon the visual dialectic between the forms of a schematised human figure and those of a phallus. Whereas such ambiguity is rare on Crete, one can profitably compare the Pelekita idol to others, particularly the hermaphroditic idol from Sotira-Arkolies accidently discovered on Cyprus and housed, since 1981, in the Cyprus Museum. This Cypriot example, assumed to date to the period around 4000 B.C., presents a phallic form in its side and profile views while its top and bottom views suggest the form of a vulva. Both the Cretan and Cypriot idols rely on broadly modelled planes, set off from one another by emphatic linear incisions which articulate the component parts of the image.

The primacy of place now held by Cycladic female figurines has so dominated both the archaeological literature and popular imagination of late that one is now pre-conditioned to overlook the role of the male idol in the cultures of the Greek islands in the Neolithic Period. Nevertheless, the Pelekita idol clearly demonstrates that the earliest plastic expression yet uncovered on Crete is an image of the male, and not the female, principle.

The underlying cultural phenomena responsible for the shift of emphasis from the male to the female principle and the concomitant meteoric rise of the so-called fertility goddesses on Crete has yet to be satisfactorily explained. Such elucidating exegeses should now take note of the wonderful Goddess of Myrtos (inv.nr.68/P259) (Fig.2), excavated in a settlement on the coastal promontory of Phournou Korphi near the village of Myrtos at Hierapetra. Terned a rhyton – a spouted vessel in the form of either an animal or human – this vessel is in the form of a highly schematised female figure from whose legless, bell-shaped body sprouts an enormously long, giraffe-like neck which terminates in a small head on which only the most rudimentary physiognomic features have been defined. Two lumps of clay indicate the breasts, red paint the pubic triangle, and square reticulated patterns which some regard as representations of a non-descript garment. The long tube-like arms clutch a typically Early Minoan II B jug, which, although a miniature replica of such actual vessels, suggests a dating for the Goddess of Myrtos to the period around 2500 B.C. The inside of this jug communicates with the interior of the bell-shaped body by means of a hole through which the liquid was presumably
decanted in an as yet unspecified ritual. The absence of good parallels and of an exact archaeological context render any interpretations of this, the museum’s most famous piece, problematic.

The religious practices of the islanders of Crete during the Middle Minoan Period about 2000 B.C. took the form of worshipping deities at mountain peak sanctuaries, several of which have been excavated. The peak sanctuary of Prinias, near Sitia, might be considered typical of such places of worship, were it not for a series of enigmatic cult objects, actually terracotta libation vessels in the form of scarabs, the sacred Egyptian beetle associated with solar imagery (Fig.3). Several, on exhibition but without accompanying labels bearing their inventory numbers, are on view in this museum. Entomologically accurate in depicting the insect’s actual appearance and astonishingly close to replicating ancient Egyptian prototypes, which are admittedly much smaller in size, these Minoan scarabs invite further speculation about the nature and extent of Egypto-Cretan contacts during the Middle Kingdom. Assuredly such contacts did exist, because communication by ocean-going ships can be demonstrated. Still, one wonders what the Cretans saw in the motif of the Egyptian scarab and in its pharaonic cultic usages to move them to transform so radically a motif, generally reserved in Egypt for jewellery, the underside of which could be inscribed with a motto. Contemporary practices in Egypt do not associate the scarab with libations and such zoomorphic vessels are virtually unattested in the pharaonic record. One is, therefore, cautioned against seeking an exact one to one correspondence between things Minoan and Egyptian. Indeed, one should be encouraged to seek explanations for such anomalies within the narrower confines of the Minoan cultural record itself.

The Eastern sector of Crete continues to yield other examples of objects which are decidedly Egyptianising, in other words local imitations or variations of pharaonic motifs. Among these is a unique ivory statuette of a crocodile (inv.nr. 8889) (Fig.4), of slightly later date, which formed part of the lavish furnishings of a chamber tomb excavated at Milatos. The deluxe finds included a spouted, one-handled bowl carved of gypsum and decorated with a geometrical network of banded triangles; a considerable number of fragments of Baltic amber (a substance almost never encountered in Minoan contexts); and this extraordinary reptile, which is not truly a sculpture. In reality, the object is conceived as two relief surfaces rather than as an image in the round. The craftsman, it might be suggested, has never seen a crocodile alive because of his fanciful treatment of its skin which is here rendered in imitation of the pelt of an exotic feline. The uncharacteristically rounded head and beaked snout are turned backward along the spine, in conformity with the design concerns of pharaonic Egyptian craftsmen as seen, for example, on Egyptian ivory combs. Nevertheless, the motif of the crocodile carved in ivory is evocative of the Nile. Like the amber found together with it, both attest to the tomb owner’s awareness of the riches to be found at the fringes of the then known world.

Finally, discussions about the origins of Greek monumental sculpture in the Iron Age might profit from a consideration of a schematic, plank-like figure (inv.nr. 1178) (Fig.5) in terracotta from the Geometric deposit at Anavlochos in Vrachasi. The literary tradition records that among the earliest effigies in Greece were a type called the xoan, putatively carved from tree trunks. Although some have seriously questioned that tradition, this xoanomorphic figurine is cause for reflection, inasmuch as it appears to reflect a column-like tree trunk. Indeed there is a faint correspondence between its configuration, which mushrooms up from the splayed out legs, and the later Ionian images of Samian Hera. The plaque-like head, atrophied arms, rudimentary breasts, and timidly incised pubic triangle bespeak of an early game attempt to imbue an incidental work with a brooding monumentality evocative of what may well prove to be among the antecedents of the Elgin marbles.
Polychrome sandstone relief of Queen Nefertiti. New Kingdom, Dynasty XVIII, early Amarna Period, ca. 1372-1355 B.C. 5\(\frac{1}{4}\) in x 10\(\frac{1}{4}\) in. (13.3 cm x 26 cm)
Earliest Statue of Zeus Unearthed

Ian Shaw

A team of British and American archaeologists working on the site of Palaikastro in eastern Crete have found the lower half of an ivory and gold statue that may be the earliest representation of the Greek god Zeus. The 3,500-year-old statue – described by the excavators as 'one of the greatest of Minoan masterpieces' – is carved in an unusually naturalistic style considering its early date. Many fragments have also survived of the gold foil that originally covered it, and a pair of golden sandals was found nearby. The upper half of the statue, including a head carved from serpentine, was found by the same excavators in 1987, but it is this year's discovery of the statue's legs that clinches its identification as an image of Zeus. Standing at a height of 50cm, the figure is said to be the largest and finest surviving Minoan sculpture.

The statue is completely preserved apart from a section of the midriff and a few fragments of the face. The two halves of the figure were found ten metres apart in a thin layer dating to the Late Minoan IB phase, within a set of rooms which may have served some cultic purpose. The many pieces of ivory (including 191 fragments making up the left leg alone) had to be painstakingly reassembled before the figure could be clearly identified as a youthful male divinity in the walking pose of a type of Archaic Greek statue known as a kouros.

Palaikastro was first excavated at the turn of the century by R.C. Bosanquet and R.M. Dawkins, who found that the site had been occupied from the Neolithic to the end of the Late Minoan period (c. 1450 B.C.). The town was accompanied by cemeteries, outlying villas, an acropolis, a sandstone quarry and a sacred peak sanctuary. The main street of Palaikastro was lined with a series of grand houses. Despite the fact that the town is clearly larger than many other Minoan settlements, such as Zakros, Ayia Triadha and Gournia, no evidence of a palace could be found. However, Bosanquet's excavations did reveal the foundations of a much later Roman temple dedicated to Zeus Diktaios, which contained the scattered remains of a limestone slab inscribed with a hymn to Zeus in the Archaic Greek language (now in the Iklion Museum).

The current excavations at Palaikastro are funded by the British School at Athens and directed by Hugh Sackett and Professor Sandy MacGillivray. Since work began in 1986 they have uncovered large areas of the centre of Late Minoan Palaikastro but they have not yet been able to locate the palace. Their efforts have been rewarded instead by a series of further discoveries concerning Palaikastro's religious importance. These finds have culminated in the discovery of the statue, which was clearly an important cult image, representing a youthful form of Zeus. It now seems almost certain that a variant of Zeus was already being worshipped on Crete some thousand years earlier than the heyday of classical Greece.

Minoan religion is still a relatively poorly known aspect of Cretan culture, so the evidence from Palaikastro is a welcome addition to the slim body of evidence. The worship of an earlier form of Zeus at Palaikastro was also indicated by the discovery, in the 1988 season, of a clay seal impression bearing a rare representation of a divine figure holding a thunderbolt and dominating a stag, which seems to anticipate the Greek imagery of Zeus in the seventh century B.C. The seal impression and the statue both suggest that the origins of the worship of Zeus can now be traced back to the late Minoan period.

Hugh Sackett stressed the importance of the statue: 'There is no doubt that this find is something out of the ordinary. Viewers find it hard to tear themselves away – even the experienced conservators in Athens and Crete, when discussing the proper methods of conservation, sat around in debate for some five hours. Sir Arthur Evans, the excavator of Knossos, referred to a prevalent local legend about a “golden boy with diamond eyes” and I suppose that this figure could seem to fulfil such a role. So far we have not been able to reconstruct the position or pattern of the hundreds of gold foil fragments, which are still in the museum, but it seems likely that they will have represented some kind of garment, such as a kilt. One fragment was found still attached to an arm.'

A great deal of evidence now links Palaikastro with the cult of a divine antecedent of classical Zeus. The nearby peak sanctuary of Petsophas contained a set of four stone offering tables bearing inscriptions in the Minoan Linear A script, including the name 'Di-ki-te'. Sackett and MacGillivray now believe that there is a strong case for identifying the town of Palaikastro with the mythical site of Dikte, the supposed birthplace of Zeus.

(See also Minerva, March 1990, p.26)
THE COROPLAST’S ART
Greek Terracottas of the
Hellenistic World

The ninetieth birthday of Dorothy Burr Thompson, the foremost authority on the subject of Hellenistic terracottas and a longtime Princeton resident, is being honoured by the Art Museum, Princeton University, with an exhibition of Greek terracottas of the Hellenistic World.

Jaimee Uhlenbrock

During the course of the fourth century B.C., the manufacture of inexpensive votive figurines in terracotta underwent a gradual but important change. Formerly works of indifferent craftsmanship reflecting a strictly religious sentiment, by the last quarter of the fourth century they were transformed into miniature works of art illustrating an overwhelmingly secular realm. Mould-made and mass-produced in enormous quantity, thousands have been found in sanctuaries and in graves throughout the Greek world, where they were deposited as offerings to the gods; smaller numbers recovered from the ruins of ancient Greek houses testify to their decorative use in the home.

Over the past decades, excavations at Hellenistic sites and scholarly reassessment of the Hellenistic period have considerably increased our knowledge and revised our views of the development of Hellenistic art. The drive to refine our understanding of chronology and intercultural contact in this period has led to an increased awareness of the importance of the minor arts. Coins, pottery, the stamped handles of transport amphoras, and terracotta figurines have begun to play a significant role in the untangling of the complex web of style and chronology that faces scholars dealing with the Hellenistic period. Moreover, a little more than a century has passed since the Hellenistic terracottas clandestinely recovered from tombs at Tanagra and Myrina were introduced to the public. The Coro plast’s Art: Greek Terracottas of the Hellenistic World and its accompanying catalogue present an excellent opportunity to synthesize current research in the field.

The exhibition is the first ever to focus exclusively on terracottas of the Hellenistic world, and the accompanying catalogue is the first book to provide a comprehensive overview of terracotta production for the period. The 52 terracotta figurines that make up this exhibition have been drawn from major public and private collections across the United States. Each one is an outstanding example of the art of the coroplast, the craftsman who, in ancient Greece, modelled figurines in clay.

The exhibition highlights six of the most important terracotta-producing centres for the Hellenistic world: Athens, Tanagra and Corinth on the Greek mainland; Myrina and Smyrna in Asia Minor; and Taras in Southern Italy. Examples of the coroplast’s art from Ptolemaic Egypt and the Pontic region are also included. The figurines from these centres document differing stylistic tendencies and also illustrate the stylistic interconnections between centres. Thus the exhibition opens with three figurines representative of the major geographic areas of the Hellenistic world, mainland Greece, Asia Minor and Magna Graecia. Accompanying text prepares the visitor for the variations in regional style to be explored in the exhibition. The visitor is also introduced to the concept of the coroplast. A didactic case presents a coroplast’s signature and explains and illustrates his production methods. Bowls of colouring matter stress the visual brilliance that was once an integral part of terracotta manufacture.

The Tanagra style is the initial focus of the exhibition. The name comes from the site of Tanagra in Boeotia where thousands of figurines were looted in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. The Tanagra style was born at

Exhibition Schedule
The Art Museum, Princeton University
Until 30 December, 1990
The College Art Gallery, State University of New York, College at New Paltz
9 February-15 March, 1991
Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University
Athens in the third quarter of the fourth century B.C. It is well documented in the exhibition by examples of standing and seated draped woman and children from Athens and Tanagra that radiate an air of cosmopolitan grace and charm. These are accompanied by several figurines and a theatrical mask illustrating the passion for the theatre that was so much a part of Hellenistic life. The restrained and careful, almost metallic, style of these figurines and their attitudes of gracious composure are characteristic of the understated taste of the Athenians. Two Corinthian figurines of the early third century B.C. illustrate the Corinthian coroplast's response to the Tanagra style; these are contrasted with a puppet-like image of a seated goddess reflective of the strong conservative outlook of the inhabitants of that city.

The fifteen figurines that document terracotta manufacture in Asia Minor date from the later third to the first century B.C. In this part of the exhibition, the focus is on the terracottas from Myrina and Smyrna. Although the Tanagra style was taken up as much by the coroplasts of Myrina as by those elsewhere, a distinctly Asiatic taste developed by the early second century. A flying Nike, whose transparent drapery hardly conceals her plump sensual form, is accompanied by a nude Eros who appears more feminine than masculine in the fullness of his breasts and his softly rounded contours. This is in striking contrast to the dignified standing and seated women of the Greek mainland, whose bodies are muffled in heavy drapery. From Smyrna comes a collection of caricatures and chillingly clinical representations of illness and deformity. In one example, a hunchback's spine, defined by the meticulous execution of each individual vertebra, reveals a miniaturist's love of fine detail.

Southern Italy is the final focus of the exhibition with nine works representing terracotta manufacture in ancient Taras and Canosa. While the influence of the Tanagra style is evident among these figurines, it has been transformed. The draped females from Taras appear less demure and more extraverted in their stances and expressions, while those from Canosa are reflective of a provincial mentality only peripherally touched by Greek Art.

The various themes illustrated by the figurines in the exhibition document a wide range of social concerns. They present new heroes and heroines who are drawn from the ranks of everyday life. From the Greek mainland come figurines of old nursemaids holding children; these accompany a seated old man in reflective mood, a youthful soldier, young women playing knucklebones, and comfortable, well-dressed matrons. These move through life with an arresting grace and self-assurance that reflect a secure and affluent position. Other figurines present the less noble side of existence in the Hellenistic world. A small head from Smyrna, broken from a full-length figure, displays the anguish of a man suffering from partial facial paralysis, while another Smyrnite head depicts a toothless old man whose face is touched with a wild expression suggestive of a dramatic burst of rhetoric. An emaciated old woman with a hawklike face typifies a class of figurines from Asia Minor representing old men and women of horrible aspect, characterised by an excessive elongation of the figure and a schematisation of its bony frame. Even more grotesquely exaggerated is the head of a mime, also broken from a full figure. Its long and pendulous nose, monstrous open and twisted mouth, deeply furrowed brow, and small, squinting eyes, reveal a mentalité of a simpleton who struggles with a twisted tongue to pronounce his words.

When seen as a whole, these terracotta figurines present a map of ancient Greek life, expressed with the kind of intimacy and directness that only working in clay can provide. Because of the inexpensive nature of the clay and the suitability of the material for mass-production, the coroplasts could appeal to a wide audience. Judging from the large number of terracottas found in Hellenistic contexts, they must have created the single most popular form of sculpture of the day.

A symposium, 'The Individual and the Cosmus in the Hellenistic World,' will be held at the State University of New York, College at New Paltz, on 9 February, 1991.

The exhibition is organised by the College Art Gallery, State University of New York, College at New Paltz.

Professor Jaimee P. Uhlenbrock of the Art History Department State University of New York, College at New Paltz, is Curator of 'The Art of the Coroplast: Terracottas of the Hellenistic World.'
The Seuso Cauldron

Is the Seuso Treasure from Hungary?

Mihály Nagy and Endre Tóth

Germany outside the Roman frontier, and so the same variants can be found in these provinces and in non-Roman Germany.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century several distinguished scholars have written studies of bronze vessels, including the typology of cauldrons, especially Gunnar Ekholm, who worked out a detailed typological chart for the Vestland cauldrons in Roman times. Those variants which are included in Group I of Ekholm’s typology are particularly noteworthy in the present context. They have a non-horizontal everted rim, a cylindrical neck and a round base. There is always a clearly separable break between the neck and the body, which either slopes straight outwards, or is slightly rounded. On the earlier specimens there is a small ridge at the junction of the neck and the bulge of the body. On later specimens the offset disappears; but neck and body still join with a definite acute angle, giving the body a bipartite shape. On the specimen dated after A.D. 400 there is no such definite division between neck and body.

Vestland cauldrons with a narrow offset between neck and body have been found in Germany outside the Roman frontier, at Stordalen and Stadelm. Both were dated by Ekholm between A.D. 260 and 400, but none of the dated pieces found in the Rhenish and Danube provinces (Krayenhoff/Nijmegen — before A.D. 270; Filzen/Trier — before A.D. 275; Straubing — before A.D. 233-60; Igar — before A.D. 168) was manufactured after A.D. 275, and in any case Ekholm’s Group 1 disappears completely about A.D. 400.

The Vestland- and Östland-cauldrons and the basin-type are all represented in the archaeological material from Pannonia, just as in the German, Gallic and Alpine provinces (e.g. at Rheinzabern, Grieben, Marburg and Lyon). They were produced in local workshops, which produced vessels of all types and also carried out repairs. One such workshop was found by Hungarian archaeologists at the beginning of this century at the former Celtic oppidum of Nagyherki-Szalacska, on a hilltop in the Kapos Valley, which functioned until its destruction in the second half of the third century. Surviving products of the workshop include a number of cauldrons, three of which have a rare type of bond combining a crenellated joint with solder, better proof against leaks than a riveted bond. Parallels for this type of joint, combined with solder or rivets in this manufacturing technique and for repairs, are found during the first three centuries A.D., but only in Pannonia, as Dr Hans Drescher...
Seuso Treasure

The Seuso cauldron’s place of manufacture is only to be found in a region of the Roman Empire where are known to be: Vestland-type cauldrons with a clear offset between neck and body; workshops manufacturing cauldrons with two sheets for the body and a third for the bottom; workshops fastening bottoms of cauldrons to their bodies by crenellated seams. To our present knowledge this complex system of criteria can be found only in the region of Lake Balaton, in the third and fourth centuries A.D.

On the basis of the above considerations it is very possible that the cauldron which contained the Seuso Treasure was manufactured in the region of Lake Balaton, that it was used and repaired there, and that in some crisis the treasure was buried in it. This crisis must be before or at the latest around A.D. 410, when the Alans and afterwards the Western and Eastern Goths devastated Pannonia. This date matches the Carbon-14 date obtained from the soil on the cauldron’s base (95% likelihood of A.D. 140-410; 65% likelihood of A.D. 230-380). The Seuso Treasure was not recovered by its ancient owners. We end the paper with the hope that it may contribute to the uncovering of the Seuso Treasure’s place of discovery in modern times.

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Kuwait Exhibition

ISLAMIC ART AN
Selections from the Kuw
Howard D.

An exhibition of more than one hundred masterpieces of Islamic art testifying to the richness and diversity of Moslem patronage of the arts over more than a thousand years opens this month at the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, Maryland, after being on display in Leningrad. It is drawn from the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah (DAI), a private collection of 20,000 pieces belonging to Sheikha Husnah Sabah al-Sa'lem al-Sabah and her husband Sheikh Nasser Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah. The collection is on permanent loan to the Kuwait National Museum and is considered one of the most important collections of Islamic art in the world.

The central focus of the exhibition is the diverse social classes that sponsored the arts, ranging from caliphs, sultans, and shahs, to royal families, emirs, and wealthy merchants. It traces the cultural achievements of Islamic societies, extending from Afghanistan to Spain. The display is divided into four chronological sections: 1. Early Islam (622-1050), when characteristically Islamic motifs and decorative concepts were formulated; 2. Classical Islam (1050-1250), when the arts had an unprecedented flowering; 3. Post-classical Islam (1250-1500), when established traditions were refined and the arts of the book reached their peak; and 4. Late Islamic (1500-1800), when splendid items were produced in the courts of great emperors.

As in any great civilization, patronage played a large part in the development of the arts. In the Islamic world, caliphs, sultans and shahs ordered monumental buildings and exquisite objects to immortalise their reigns and to create worlds of luxury and beauty around them. Supporting the arts was a princely activity which inevitably led to great honour in life and made a lasting contribution to their civilisation. The demand for high-quality production created a dynamic artistic environment in which great competition and excellence among artists was promoted. This desire for beautiful objects extended to members of the upper classes, administrative and military officials and wealthy merchants who strove to emulate the splendour of their rulers. Members of the middle and lower classes who could not afford objects produced from rare materials commissioned works in less precious materials: e.g. silver instead of gold, and glass instead of expensive rock crystal. Interestingly, all objects on display were originally functional and not purely decorative. A highlight of the exhibition is a carved mar-

Carved marble capital from Spain. Made for Caliph al-Hakam II by Faith and dated 972/3. Height: 38.2 cm.

This marble capital belongs to a series of hundreds of columns made for the royal palace at Madinat al-Zahra near Cordoba begun in 936 by Caliph Abd al-Rahman III (r. 912-61) and continued by his son al-Hakam II (r. 961-76). The surface of the capital is divided into horizontal registers and is entirely covered with deeply carved floral motifs. The lower registers are decorated with alternating rows of projecting acanthus leaves, while the head of the capital has four large volutes protruding from the corners. Above is a narrow panel with inscriptions, interrupted by four projecting triangles. The Arabic inscriptions, rendered in Kufic, include the names of al-Hakam and the supervisor of the project, Taled, and end with the date 362 A.H. (9727/3). The name of the maker, written on one of the triangular projections, is given as Faith.

Carved ivory box from Spain, early eleventh century. Height: 9.9 cm.

This cylindrical box, known as a pyxis, was produced from a single piece of ivory. The exterior is intricately carved in deep relief with green paint applied to the background. Like most Spanish ivories, it is covered with profuse foliage inhabited by animals and birds. The creatures are placed within interlocking medallions and arched cartouches encircling the base. These units are outlined with beaded bands. Inside the medallions are pairs of animals alternating with pairs of birds. The docile animals have intertwining ears or necks, while the ferocious birds attack one another. The arched cartouches are decorated with palmettes and half-palmettes. A series of triangular panels adorns the edge of the lid, each representing a human face flanked by a pair of deer. The flat top of the lid contains an undeciphered inscription, in the centre of which is a four-petalled rosette. The function of such boxes is explained in an Arabic inscription found on a similar example in the Museum of the Hispanic Society of America, New York, a part of which reads: 'I am a receptacle for musk, camphor, and ambergris.'
AND PATRONAGE
Kuwait National Museum
D. White

...as reported in the last issue of Minerva, was the
inclusion in an exhibition Islamic Art and Patronage: Selections from
the Kuwait National Museum. The exhibition, which was held in
October 1991 at the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore.

The exhibition consisted of over one hundred pieces of Islamic art, spanning from the 7th to the 14th century. These included ceramics, textiles, metalwork, and bookbinding, all of which were selected to illustrate the rich patronage and craftsmanship of Islamic cultures.

One of the highlights of the exhibition was a slip-painted ceramic bowl with inscription, from Iran, tenth century. The bowl was part of a group of slip-painted pottery, known as 'black-on-white wares', which were characterized by their simple decorations consisting of bold or delicate inscriptions, stylised leaves, or birds. The bowl was found in a tomb in Bukhara, Uzbekistan, and it is one of the finest examples of this type of pottery.

Another highlight was a brass (?) ewer with engraved decoration from Egypt, ninth century. This ewer was part of a group of early Islamic examples related to that found in Egypt near the tomb of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwan II. It is one of the finest examples of this type of pottery, which was characterized by its fine craftsmanship and intricate design.

The exhibition was accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue, edited by Dr Esin Atli, guest curator for the exhibition.

Exhibition schedule

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<td>Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX</td>
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<td>St Louis Museum of Art, St Louis, MO</td>
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BRIDGING THE ANCIENT GULF

The influence of the ancient civilisations in the Gulf is not necessarily conscious, in fact it would be difficult for it to be so. The cultural identity of pre-Islamic times is specifically discredited by the Koran as the time of ignorance when idols were worshipped and Allah was ignored. However, such regional cultural identities still prove to be a strong influence both politically and socially. Egypt, much as Iraq, still sees her ancient cultural heritage as lending the country a dignity and identity. Recent newspaper articles have demonstrated the way in which these ancient cultural images are being exploited by Saddam Hussein for his own purposes. Likewise, in the 1920s, Ataturk adopted symbols from bronze age excavations in Anatolia during his struggle to create a secular multi-ethnic modern nation-state.

The power and relevance of ancient cultural identities in the Near East should not be under-estimated. This is perhaps a difficult concept for Westerners, except perhaps Italians and Greeks, to grasp. With this point in mind it is interesting to examine the ancient history of the Gulf, and especially Kuwait. There is a general misconception amongst Arabs and Westerners alike that before the discovery of oil the Gulf was a barren and harsh environment where people struggled to survive in abject poverty. In fact the reality is shockingly different. Evidence, both historical and archaeological, proves otherwise. In some parts of the Gulf archaeologists have uncovered remains of human habitation dating back more than 7,000 years.

From the earliest days the Gulf was clearly a vital station and cross-roads for overland and marine trade routes to the east. In fact, prior to the discovery of oil, the primary reason for external interest in the Gulf was trade. Before the Portuguese colonised the Gulf in the sixteenth century there is historical and archaeological evidence for a number of thriving and prosperous ports around the Gulf. In the early Islamic period the Gulf was very rich; when the Prophet Muhammad called for financial contributions in the early days of the new Islamic state, the greatest contribution was sent by the state of Bahrain.

During the time when the world was dominated by the three great cradles of civilisation, Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley, there flourished in the Gulf a less known but equally prosperous civilisation which was known at the time as the Land of Dilmun. Dilmun was not rediscovered until the middle of the last century when European travellers began to excavate the large archaeological sites in Mesopotamia. On these sites a great quantity of clay tablets were uncovered which were inscribed with a script called cuneiform. Although one or two such inscriptions had already been discovered, cuneiform was totally unknown and it took many years of painstaking work before scholars were able to decipher the script and the language.

Once scholars were able to read the texts a whole new world was opened up. Writing that had been buried in the sand for thousands of years was suddenly readable; letters from merchants, orders for goods, accounts, foundation inscriptions from temples and palaces, decrees, accounts of battles and military campaigns, lists of kings. A long forgotten past came back to life.

From a number of such texts comes the mention of an unknown land called Dilmun. The texts are all very vague on the subject. One of them is a list of gods and the regions which they each protected, and here...
Dilmun is mentioned together with the god Enzak:

‘The god Enzak; the god Nabu of Dilmun.’

This is interesting because in an inscription discovered on the island of Bahrain a local man is described as a slave of the god Enzak. If the god Enzak was god of Dilmun and an inhabitant of Bahrain recognised Enzak as his chief god then it seems likely that Bahrain and Dilmun are one and the same place.

Another text deals with the conquests of King Sargon of Akkad who lived about 2000 B.C.

‘Uperi, king of Dilmun, whose abode is situated, like a fish, 30 double-hours away in the midst of the sea of the rising sun...sent his gifts.’

The statement ‘like a fish’ and ‘in the midst of the sea’ are usually used in inscriptions of this time to indicate an island, and the ‘sea of the rising sun’ indicates the Arabian Gulf. So Dilmun was an island in the Arabian Gulf, but which one? The text tells us that it was ‘30 double-hours’ from the Shatt al-Arab. How far is 30 double-hours? If a ‘double-hour’ means the distance that can be sailed in two hours, then it is interesting to note that until recently the dhows which sailed from the Shatt al-Arab to Bahrain (which were probably faster than ancient boats), counted the voyage as two days, or around 24 ‘double-hours’. This backs up what the other texts seem to indicate – that Dilmun is to be equated with Bahrain. So much for the evidence from inscriptions, but what does the archaeological evidence tell us?

In the early 1950s a team of Danish excavators with an interest in this question mounted an expedition to Bahrain where they began to explore the practically unknown archaeology of the island. They did not know what they were going to find and were even less sure how they would be able to recognise ‘Dilmun’. After all, unless you are lucky enough to find an unambiguous inscription, it is difficult to recognise which ancient country you are in from pottery and stones.

The first excavations in Bahrain, however, uncovered the remains of an important and completely unsuspected civilisation on the island. A complete temple was brought to light along with a large city surrounded by a defensive wall. The objects found within the excavations told the archaeologists that the buildings were constructed at the time when the land of Dilmun was known to have existed. They also showed that the people who had lived there had contact with both the Indus Valley and the Babylonian civilisations. Since the archaeological evidence ties in so closely with what we know about Dilmun from the inscriptions, the conclusion must be that these buildings are the remains of the civilisation of Dilmun.

Subsequently, archaeologists working in Kuwait, and especially on the island of Fallaka, have uncovered buildings and artefacts which prove that the land of Dilmun spread beyond Bahrain to Kuwait and also onto the mainland. There are historical suggestions for this; on the authority of Saigon of Assyria, there was a land frontier between Dilmun and a land known as Bit-Iakin on the mainland.

In terms of her ancient cultural heritage, Kuwait is a part of the Gulf, not a part of the Mesopotamian cultural sphere. Although trade with Mesopotamia was an important part of her economic life, there is a clear archaeological distinction between Dilmun and Mesopotamia. An interesting piece of evidence for this comes in the form of the largest and most important single collection of 4,000-year-old stamp seals from anywhere in the world. Stamp seals are small stone discs about the size of a coin, one side of which is covered with the most ornate and detailed carving, executed with a quality of craftsmanship that would make even the jewellers in Kuwait's gold souk jealous. They depict mythological scenes relating to the ancient pagan religions of Mesopotamia and much of their symbolism is still a mystery to us.
More than 400 such seals have been found on Failaka and 30 or so have been found in Bahrain – it was almost certainly in the Land of Dilmun that these seals were made and used. So far as we can ascertain, the seals were used by merchants trading from Dilmun to seal letters and consignments of goods which they sent abroad. So it was no surprise when archaeologists working at the site of Ur in Southern Iraq discovered a number of seals in the course of their excavations. It is to be expected that merchants from Failaka would be trading with Mesopotamia, but it was more of a surprise when similar seals were discovered by archaeologists working at Lothal on the Gulf of Bombay in India, more than 1,700 miles (2,700 km) away. This suggests that merchants from Kuwait had travelled as far as India in the course of their trading activities.

We know quite a lot about these merchants and their trade because they kept their accounts and wrote their letters onto clay tablets. Many of these tablets have been preserved and archaeologists are now able to read them.

**Further Reading**


From the tablets we know that the merchants imported and exported such commodities as copper, precious stones, ivory, wood, perfumes and medicines. Some of these came from the east, others, such as wood, were floated down the River Euphrates from the north.

One such text seems to be a list of goods in one consignment to Mesopotamia from the Land of Dilmun:

- Copper ingots of 4 talents
- 4 copper ingots of 3 talents each
- 11 lots of oblong pieces of bronze
- 3 beads of carnelian
- 3 ‘fish eyes’
- 9 lots of white coral
- 3 green stones
- 5½ lots of rods of ivory
- 30 finger shaped pieces of tortoise shell

‘Fish eyes’ was probably the ancient name for pearls. We can see that many of these goods could have come from the Indus valley, especially the ivory and precious stones. The pearls were perhaps from Failaka itself. It seems then that the merchants of Kuwait were buying in the east and selling to the Mesopotamians. We know from texts that the currency used to pay for these goods would have been silver. The Mesopotamians themselves were importing all of these luxury goods and in return they exported grain and barley, wool and textiles.
The Richness of Ross-shire

Elizabeth Marshall looks at a small award-winning Scottish museum of the art of the Picts who inhabited north-east Scotland from the Roman period until the ninth century A.D. and left mysterious stone monuments carved with distinctive symbols and decorations.

Groam House Museum is situated in the heart of Rosemarkie, a small Black Isle village set between pink wooded cliffs of boulder clay and the red gritty sand of a Moray Firth beach. The High Street has changed little over the years. The contiguous burgh roads on either side of the king’s highway dating from the villages thirteenth-century status as a royal burgh are still recognisable. The church, though rebuilt at least once, is still the centre of the parish.

But Rosemarkie is not what it was. Evangelised, according to Skene (who gave no authority for this statement), by St Moluag of Lismore in the sixth century or, according to late sources, by St Boniface known as Curitan who established a monastery here about 715 A.D., Rosemarkie was once a thriving centre for evangelisation in the Pictish Church.

Later, with the creation of the Diocese of Ross by David I in the twelfth century, the small church was for some hundred years the Cathedral Kirk of the Diocese of Ross. It was not until the Pope granted permission and money for the enlargement of the Chapter that the cathedral was rebuilt in neighbouring Fortrose about 1250 A.D. Therefore Rosemarkie lost its status as a royal burgh and declined in wealth and importance over the centuries, unaware that its true treasure – known today as the Soul of Rosemarkie – still remained in its midst.

This treasure was not recovered until some two hundred years ago. Records differ as to the date and exact location of the find, but the Third Statistical Account of Scotland, (1953), states that it was dug up in the churchyard of Rosemarkie and broken by the labourers into three pieces, the top fragment which is now mis-

Front (left) and back (below) of Rosemarkie cross slab

Highland Museums Update . . .

The Groam House Museum, run by the Rosemarkie Trust, described above is one part of a rapidly developing set of improvements in the museum and display facilities of the Highland region. Graham Watson, the Museums Officer for Ross and Cromarty, is planning to extend the pattern of museums in this area. Currently museums operate independently at Dingwall, the administrative centre of Ross and Cromarty at Gairloch, and also at Tain where Mrs Katherine Rhodes is the curator. Both these receive finance and advice from the District Council.

Graham Watson is currently planning with his colleagues in the County Offices to develop a new museum in the remarkable Georgian port of Cromarty at the furthest tip of the Black Isle. The town has a distinct atmosphere of its own, being part fishing port, part base for sea merchants who, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, took advantage of the great natu-
 Highland Museums

ing. After a thousand years the great cross-slab of Rosemarkie had come to light again. (An excellent description with drawings and photographs appears in J. Romilly Allen's *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, 1902.)

Made of local pink sandstone, the Rosemarkie cross-slab measures 289.5 cm high and 76 cm wide. The lower front panel is one mass of intricate animal interlace badly worn, while the top half is filled with rosettes and interlace dominated by an equal-armed cross set within a square panel of delicate spirals and key-patterning. The back is also divided into two distinct parts. The top portion has, as Dr Isabel Henderson writes, 'perhaps the most remarkable display of symbols found on any cross-slab', with three crescents and v-rods, a double disc and z-rod all elaborately infilled, a mirror, mirrorcase and comb. The lower panel is dominated by a bold cross - the only example of its type in Pictish sculpture - with stepped hollow angles set within a square panel and surrounded by spectacular decoration. Unusually, both edges are heavily decorated, pointing to a comparatively late date, probably towards the end of the eighth century.

Those who discovered the stone must have recognised its superb quality, but judging the symbols to be pagan they had it fixed within iron stanchions and erected outside the church. Here it stood weathering and corroding over the years, a mystery to generations of parishioners.

Then in 1974 an Italian ice-cream maker who owned the local fish and chips cafe presented the town council with the gift of a near-derelict eighteenth-century two-storey stone building known as Groom House. His only stipulation was that it should be used for the benefit of the community. Controversy raged as each councillor backed by a band of lobbyists put forward his own ideas. The enlightened decision was to remove the cross-slab to Groom House and open an interpretive centre for tourists under the watchful eye of the Community Council. The building was gutted of its first floor and internal walls. The cross-slab was cleaned and treated by the Royal Commission of the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and re-erected in 1980 to start its new life as a solitary museum object.

At the same time a cache of eight sculptured fragments was found in the church tool-shed. These included two panels of grey sandstone superbly carved and in mint condition which were probably the long sides of box-shaped shrines, and a grooved fragment - possibly an end piece carved with a vine arranged to look like a tree top and topped with a small cross.

During the subsequent eight years these objects, together with a random assortment of local objects, were enthusiastically brought into the museum. Prehistoric elf-bolts (flint arrow heads) jostled with stuffed game birds and Victoriana ranging from gleaming brass puppets to faded photographs and worn-treated butter churns. It was not until Ross & Cromarty District Council appointed a museums' service that Groom House began to learn the basic facts of museum organisation and curatorship.

In 1989 after a total refurbishment funded by the District Council, Groom House became a Trust and re-opened as a Pictish centre for Ross-shire. Proof of the development was recognised by an award from the Gulbenkian Trust in 1990 for the most improved rural museum/gallery in Britain.

The aim of the museum is to give visitors an instant visual impression of the magnificence of Pictish art. The Rosemarkie collection together with a further four local fragments from loan from the Royal Museum of Scotland and Inverness Museum & Art Gallery are subtly lit and comfortably displayed on specially designed plinths. The walls are adorned with spectacular full-sized coloured impressions of other stones in Ross and Cromarty, including the Shandwick cross-slab, still to be found in their country setting. These have been made by the American artist Marriana Lines whose technique is to bind mordanted material over the stones and rub gently with beeswax and other organic materials ranging from red cabbage to pansy petals. Display panels describe the complicated history of the Picts in easily digested and illustrated prose while a video sums up and complements the display.

For the growing number of Pictophiles an archive of professional photographs of stones throughout Scotland is available for immediate scrutiny, while those who wish to study the subject in depth may want to spend time in the reference library at present in preparation.

An annual academic lecture on a Pictish-related subject is published and available for sale. Dr Isabel Henderson's *The Art and Function of Rosemarkie's Pictish Monuments* is first in the series, contains much new thinking and is available from the curators.

Gordon Maxwell's paper on the aerial photography of Pictish settlements will be ready next year. Nor has the musical aspect of Pictish life been forgotten. A local harp-maker has been commissioned to make a fully playable clarsach based on a design taken from the Nigg stone in Easter Ross.

Future plans include the purchase of the adjacent building to expand the Pictish theme, for as Dr Henderson has written 'Rosemarkie is perhaps our best hope for eventually understanding what lies behind the artistic richness of Ross-shire'. This is a huge task for a small village in a remote area, but bearing in mind that artistically Rosemarkie was a centre not a periphery in medieval Scotland, it is an ideal location to interpret and unravel the mystery of the painted people called the Picts.

Aberlour harbour of the Cromarty Firth. The splendid Georgian County Courthouse will be adapted as a museum based on the life of the harbour-town in its heyday c.1780. A model of Sir Thomas Lipton's yacht, a larger-than-life character who translated Rabbelais into extremely racy English and reputedly died in a fit of laughter at news of the restoration of the monarchy, will greet visitors at the door. Inside, David Astin, the new curator, is setting up a collection with mementoes of the centrepiece of the exhibition and reconstruct the trial of six flawker in the 1780s.

Across the Cromarty Firth at Tain, James IV of Scotland regularly visited the shrine of the local saint, St Duthac. Ross and Cromarty Council plan to help the trustees of the Tain Pilgrimage Centre to improve site interpretation around his shrine set close to the beautiful shore of the Dornoch Firth. Plans are also afoot for a Museum of Childhood at Strathpeffer and on the west coast an Industrial Archaeology Museum based on Loch Currin.

Meanwhile, at Inverness Museum under the curatorship of Mrs Catherine Niven, staff changes have brought two southern recruits to Highland archaeology. Robin Hanley, Assistant Curator (Archaeology) in succession to Gill Harden, was formerly employed by the Bath Museum. Another recruit from the south is Mark Elliott who has become the conservator at Inverness Museum, the only post of its kind in the north of Scotland. We wish them well in tackling the problems of such an extensive but archaeologically rich area.

To promote co-operation the museum and the successor to Inverness Museum, the only post of its kind in the north of Scotland. We wish them well in tackling the problems of such an extensive but archaeologically rich area.

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Numismatic News

Now that Coinex has come and gone, we can look back at this gathering of buyers and sellers in London and discuss events. There was no important material at the fair, which was a major disappointment to all as Coinex has often acted as a lens with which to focus on the season ahead. The sale rooms were the centre of activity and, considering that the auctions had very little that was either rare or beautiful, a surprising response was seen.

The most significant sale was that held by Sotheby’s on 5 October, actually a Thursday, and this required intending bidders to come to London a good three to four days earlier than necessary. Why Sotheby’s persists in doing this every year and causing a certain amount of inconvenience to their overseas buyers remains to be seen, but the sales have consistently proved to be both very interesting and very strong in terms of prices realised.

This year there were quite a few Greek silver pieces whose provenance could be traced back to the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s disposal of their ancient coin collections in 1973, when the coins were sold by Sotheby’s in Zurich. This series of sales, together with the famous ‘Kunstfreunde’ Sale held jointly by Bank Leu of Zurich and Munzen und Medaillen AG of Basel in May 1974, set the tone for the present ancient coin market. Each of these sales featured coins which were rare and beautiful, and in many cases both. Some of the coins that fetched relatively huge sums in the early 1970s were later discovered not to be such good examples of the engraver’s art as had been originally thought. The massive metal detector finds of the late 1970s and early 1980s introduced coins which, in many cases, were far superior to any examples then known.

It is well known that the Bunker Hunt example of the Athenian dekadrachm, the highlight of the ‘Kunstfreunde’ Sale, turned out to be not nearly as choice as the specimens found just a few years ago in the infamous ‘Anatolian Dekadrachm Hoard’.

Many of the coins from the Metropolitan Museum could trace their pedigree back to the famous Ward Collection which was the basis for the Greek collection of that museum. Why Thomas Hoving made the momentous decision to ‘de-acquisition’ the ancient coin holdings of the Metropolitan in order to buy the rather infamous ‘Euphonious Krater’ (which then produced as much of a scandal as the ‘dekadrachm hoard’ is doing now), is still a matter for conjecture. The full machinations of that transaction will probably have to wait for the publication of Hoving’s memoirs.

In the recent Sotheby’s sale some very interesting results were seen. Lot 22, an extraordinarily charming silver lira of Catania, signed by Piocone, and estimated at £500-700, actually made £1,300, or $2,900 when the 11.5% buyer’s fee is included and converted to dollars.

A rather rare, but slightly the worse for wear tetradrachm of Naxos in Sicily (Lot 31) did very well, making £23,000 or about $51,300—just slightly over high estimate. At the Metropolitan Sale in 1973, the coin made the then equivalent of about $21,000. Some of the Metropolitan coins were exceptionally rare but not very beautiful; Lot 34, a tetradrachm of Segesta which was very rare but also very one-sided, made well under low estimate of £6,000, selling for £5,250 ($11,700) to a major Beverly Hills dealer. Back in 1973 the coin sold for 26,000 SF which at the rate of 3.25 to the dollar was worth $8,000, so it did not do all that well over the intervening years.

The highlight of the Sotheby’s sale was Lot 119 which consisted of the entire collection of Judaean and related coinages assembled over the years by Dr Edwin Mendelssohn, previously from the Philadelphia area and now living in Florida. This was sold as one lot. Having met and corresponded with Dr Mendelssohn in the 1970s, I found this to be an extraordinary collection assembled by an extraordinary man. Dr Mendelssohn made no secret of the fact that he had survived the Holocaust and had attended the Nazi concentration camps and, in fact, had assembled a large collection of concentration camp items alongside his Judaean collection.

The collection was well-known in the United States as it had been shown and won awards at several coin shows in both New York and Florida. It was also shown as a special side-event at the 1976 Bi-Centennial Celebration in Philadelphia, a fact not known by the Sotheby’s cataloguers.

The Mendelssohn Collection was not assembled by an overly wealthy man, but collected for completeness rather than the quality of the individual items. Thus, the ‘Ivdaea’ sestertius of Hadrian was closely examined by a number of experts and found to have been completely re-tooled on the reverse, to the extent that it might have been made (in Victorian times) from an Adv. Avg. Ivdaea sestertius of Hadrian, which is, in itself, a great rarity, but it does not compete with the specimen in this collection. Since the only other example of this coin has also been extensively re-tooled on the reverse, there are many numismatic experts who doubt whether the coin actually exists as a ‘Ivdaea’ reverse.

The year 4 under the First Revolt of the Jews against the Romans, was also found to be extensively re-worked, so that some wondered if the coin had not been remade from the far commoner Year 2 shekel. In addition, many of the gold aureus issued by Vespasian and his son Titus to commemorate the capture of the Jews were found to be in very low grade and/or showing evidence of having once been used as jewellery. However, this does not mean in any way that the collection consisted only of doubtful coins; there were many splendid examples of both Judaean and Roman-related coins, including a very choice Adv. Avg. Ivdaea bronze as of Hadrian, which only comes onto the market a few times a decade.

This one lot of 258 coins was estimated by Sotheby’s at £40,000-50,000, and most of the buyers felt that the value of the collection to buy was around £100,000. In fact, many dealers felt that even at this level there was little or no profit in the deal.

When the auction took place, the various dealers around the room fell by the wayside at around £44,000, after which the collection was fought over by a Jewish collector from Western Europe who was in the room, and a Jewish collector from the UK who was bidding by telephone and who finally prevailed at the staggering level of £75,000. When the buyers premium is included and the amount converted to dollars the price was a fantastic $167,725.

MINERVA 33

The Ancient Coin Market Place

Dr Arnold Saslow

There was no important material at the fair, which was a major disappointment to all as Coinex has often acted as a lens with which to focus on the season ahead."
The autumn season in New York started with a series of three auctions featuring an unusually large group of Indian, Himalayan and Southeast Asian works of art. Unfortunately there were too many objects offered to a limited group of museums, collectors and dealers in this specialised field. With the almost uniformly high estimates and an economy perhaps already in recession, the generally poor results were to be expected, offering many bargains to the astute buyer.

First New York Sale for Christie's in Eight Years

The first sale in this field for eight years in New York at Christie's, on 3 October, brought some exceptional prices for Indian miniatures, including a world-record of $462,000 for a previously unknown Mughal School page from the Dastan-i-Amir Hamza, c.1567-1582, but, as usual, we will restrict our report to the early sculptures. The only outstanding piece, an important Hoysala, Karnataka, chlorite schist stele (Fig.1), 30½ ins, of the twelfth century, depicting Bhairava, the four-armed manifestation of Siva, seated in lalitasana, from the estate of the well-known collector Edwin Binney, III, brought $46,200 (including the 10% buyer's premium), with an estimate of $30,000-$40,000.

An attractive pair of twelfth-century West Indian dancing female musicians, estimated at $18,000-$22,000, sold for $30,800 to an American collector.

A fine published Nepalese copper figure of Samvara from the second half of the fifteenth century, estimated at $24,000-$28,000, brought $38,500 from a private collector, and a rare West Tibetan brass figure of Padmasambhava of the thirteenth-fourteenth century, with an estimate of $10,000-$20,000, again sold to an American collector for $28,600.

But these were exceptions. There were many unsold lots, no doubt due to a combination of high reserves and cautious buyers. The most important sculpture in the sale, an eleventh-century Chola bronze group of Siva and Parvati (Fig.2) from the collection of Senator and Mrs John D. Rockefeller IV, estimated at $150,000-$200,000, was bought in at only $70,000. Of the 238 lots, only 141 were sold, or 59%, for a total of $1,564,626 or 73% of the lots sold by value.

The Pan-Asian Collection at Sotheby's

This very important collection of Southeast Asian sculpture, covering several cultures and nearly two thousand years of art history from the second century B.C. to the seventeenth century A.D., was formed by the late Christian Humann, a member of the Lazard family and a prominent Wall Street investment banker, from the 1950s to the 1970s. Ably assisted by Dr Pratapaditya Pal of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, he assembled a remarkable collection, many pieces of which were on long-term loan to the Los Angeles museum and Denver Art Museum.

An outstanding catalogue, The Sensuous Immortals (1977), was written by Dr Pal for a travelling exhibition. Originally promised...
to the Los Angeles Museum, it was necessary to sell the collection after his death due to the change in the US tax laws. It was acquired by the noted New York dealer Robert Ellsworth, who was the first to interest Mr. Humann in Asian art and was one of his closest advisors, along with Dr. Pal. Groups of the finest pieces were sold to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Cleveland Museum of Art. Many individual pieces were sold to other museum and private collectors. An initial sale of the balance of the collection was held at Sotheby’s in New York in 1982.

It was not the best of timing with a soft market, a lot of material for sale within the same week in New York and London, and with rather optimistic estimates for the current season. The sale of 137 lots realised $2,730,000 with only eight lots unsold, compared to a presale estimate of $3,400,000 to $4,800,000.

The two most important pieces were sold to a European collector. The first, a monumental (63½ ins.) eighteenth century A.D. South Indian granite figure of Siva in Pandyan style (Fig 3), estimated at $150,000-$200,000, brought $165,000. The second, a charming large (30½ ins.) South Indian bronze figure of the Bodhisattva Maitreyā of the twelfth-thirteenth century from Tamilnadu, Nāgapattinam area, standing in an elegant tribhanga (Fig 4), also estimated at $150,000-$200,000, sold for $159,000.

A 34-inch tenth-century sandstone stele of a Yogini seated astride her owl (Fig 5), from Uttar Pradesh or Madhya Pradesh, estimated at $60,000-$80,000, sold to an American museum for $104,500. The museum also purchased for the same price an ornately carved Indian grey chloritic schist stele of Uma-Mahesvarā, with Siva affectionately holding Parvati on his knee, from the Hoysala Dynasty of the twelfth-thirteenth century A.D. from Karnataka, Halebid region, estimated at $100,000-$150,000 (Fig 6).

A large (42 inch) fragment of a grey-green slate stele of a voluptuous early thirteenth-century celestial nymph from Andhra Pradesh, Wanagal District, estimated at $60,000-$90,000, went to a private collector for $82,500. A delightful South Indian bronze figure, 31½ inches high, of the young Krishna dancing on the serpent Kaliya, c.1200 A.D., from Tamilnadu, estimated at a healthy $100,000-$150,000, went to a collector for just $82,500.

These were the highlights of the sale, which was presented in a handsome full-colour hardcover catalogue. Then there were the many bargains, due to the low reserves or lack of them, among which was an elegant Khmer brown sandstone torso of a mid-eleventh-century four-armed divinity in Baphuon style, estimated at $75,000-$100,000, which sold for an unusually low $44,000. A monumental (60½ inch) Khmer buff sandstone figure of Siva, late twelfth-early thirteenth century, style of Angkor Tom, Bayon, estimated at $80,000-$100,000, sold for only $57,750.

Some of the buy-ins were surprising: an impressive Central Javanese buff volcanic figure of the goddess Tara, ninth-century A.D., estimated at $60,000-$80,000, was unsold at $20,000, and a large (37½ inch)
Thai Lopburi sandstone figure of Buddha sheltered by the giant serpentine king Muchalinda, estimated at $40,000-$60,000, went without a buyer at $15,000.

There were a good number of bargains at prices from one-third to one-half of the estimates, even though some of the estimates were rather high. The best buys were among the smaller bronzes. Those who stayed away from the sale because of the printed estimates are no doubt very disappointed.

The Second Asian Sale at Sotheby’s

On 6 October, the day after the Pan-Asian sale, Sotheby’s, New York held a further large two-session sale of Indian, Himalayan and Southeast Asian art, totalling 456 lots. With two other sales already conducted in New York within the past week, both with rather poor results, it was almost a foregone conclusion that this auction would not be a success. Only 261 lots, or 57%, sold, for a total of $1,485,880, far below the presale estimate of $2,735,200 to $3,968,300. Several fine consignments of material from the estate of Richard B. Gump and the collections of Dr. William K. Efrenfeld and Sheldon Breithart suffered as a result.

A choice large (22½ inches) Western Tibetan three-headed bronze figure of a Vajra from the Breithart collection, estimated at $40,000-$60,000, realised $90,750, and a beautifully carved twelfth-century Pala black stone openwork stela of Mahasri Tara seated in lotusasana (Fig.7), from the same collection, estimated at only $15,000-$25,000, brought $46,750, the former sold to an American private collector. But these were the only better pieces that went over their estimate.

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MINERVA 36
A fine lifesize (57 inch) Khmer buff sandstone figure of a divinity (Fig 8) in the style of Angkor Thom, Bayon, late twelfth-early thirteenth century, from the estate of Richard B. Gump, estimated at $60,000-$90,000 brought $71,500.

The large number of unsold lots reflected both the rather high estimates and the reluctance of the buyers in these unsettled times to commit themselves to less than top objects. At one point seven sculpture lots were passed in succession. Whether this is partially the effect of the Gulf crisis remains to be seen.

A magnificent and rare Sikyaki polychrome olla (Fig 9) from the Hopi Fire-wood Clan Pueblo, c.1400-1625 A.D., with four highly stylised bird motifs, was the highlight of the prehistoric pottery section of the New York Sotheby's Fine American Indian Art sale of 25-26 October, 1990. Illustrated in the November 1982 National Geographic article 'Pueblo Pottery: 2,000 Years of Artistry', it was sold to an American dealer for just $71,500 (including the 10% buyer's premium), with an estimate of $80,000-$120,000.

A Classic Mimbres polychrome picture bowl (Fig 10) from the Upper Gila Drainage, Silver City, New Mexico, c.950-1150 A.D., depicting a human figure wearing a bat costume, attributed to the 'Polychrome Priest Painter', with a rare second colour, published in Mimbres Pottery (1983) and in the National Geographic article, was also purchased by an American dealer for $60,500, estimated at $60,000-$90,000. A Classic Mimbres black-on-white picture bowl (Fig 11) from the Carr Site, Deming, New Mexico, with two scorpions, published in Brody, Mimbres Painted Pottery, estimate $35,000-$50,000, was again acquired by an American dealer for $38,500. A third Classic Mimbres bowl with two ant-like creatures, estimated at $40,000-$60,000, was bought in at $37,500.

The overvaluing of the pottery was evident in the number of unsold lots and in several lesser pieces without reserves bringing just one-quarter to one-half of the estimate. The entire sale realised $1,640,375 with 67% of the lots sold, 73% by total value. All of the major pieces in the other American Indian areas, such as textiles, were also bought by dealers, only one bringing above the estimates. As in other fields, a reappraisal is necessary of the often inflated estimates, primarily due to the competition between the major auction houses in securing the consignment of material.
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Minerva 38
Apparantly endless streams of guide books are published every year, some invaluable, some beautifully illustrated and others totally dire. The differences tend to lie as much in the intended audience of the books as in the quality of their writing and illustrations. This review takes in a few of the most recent archaeological examples of the genre, suggesting that the tried and trusted 'Blue Guide' formula has now been joined by a number of alternative ways and means of examining ancient monuments.

Mughal India, Islamic Spain and Classical Turkey are the first three volumes in a new series of architectural guides for travellers published by Viking. From an archaeological point of view all three are likely to prove extremely useful either as general introductions to the subjects or as practical guides for visits to the areas concerned although, as in the Blue Guides, the emphasis is on cultural information rather than practical advice on opening times or methods of travel. The text – generally clear and very readable – is matched by a good quality of well-chosen photographs and plans. The style and tone of each of the three guides are distinct, and they all have a refreshing exuberance, exemplified by such instances as Goodwin’s description of Spain as ‘a land like a loaf with too much crust and too little fertile crumb’ or Tillotson’s description of the Taj Mahal: ‘Whether it is expressly feminine or not, the Taj Mahal certainly has a kind of sexual appeal, and this is due in no small part again to the main material, with its flesh-like surface. It is a seductive building; to dislike it requires a very determined cynicism which few can honestly sustain’.

The beauty of these Viking guides is that their relatively narrow specialisation in one particular aspect of a country allows them space both to embroider their accounts with informed opinions and to provide the kind of detail that even Blue Guides are occasionally obliged to omit or compress. Of the three, Freely’s Classical Turkey is perhaps the least sparkling, but only because the subject-matter has already been relatively well-trodden by an eclectic set of authors from Homer and Herodotus to Freya Stark, George Bean and Ekrem Akurgal. Nevertheless, even Freely’s more workaday guide has occasional pleasures to be savoured by the archaeological traveller, such as his discussion of the Aeolians: ‘As Athenaeus writes in his Doctors at Dinner completed in A.D. 192, the Aeolians were much “given to wine, worshipping the Luxurians living”. This is probably why they left no monuments along the coast where they lived throughout antiquity.’.

Archaeological Guide Books

Classical Turkey,
John Freely.

Islamic Spain,
Godfrey Goodwin.

Mughal India,
G.H.R. Tillotson.

Castles in Spain,
Michael Busselle.

Castles of England, Scotland and Wales,
Paul Johnson

The Ancient Stones of Wales,
Chris Barber and J.G. Williams
Blorenge Books (Abergavenny) 1989. 192 pp.; £7.95

English Heritage from the Air,
Neil Burton

Castles in Spain is illustrated with superb colour photographs, providing a good taste of the full range of medieval Spanish architecture, but the text is distinctly bland, with more than its fair share of the ‘sweeping views’ and ‘soaring mountain peaks’ to which most guides are prone. To be fair, however, this is a perfect example of a guide book designed to function as an extended colour supplement travel article rather than being consulted in a practical way. The superficially archaeological theme of Spanish castles is – in contrast to Goodwin’s Viking guide to Islamic Spain – an unapologetically visual rather than verbal experience, with the emphasis primarily on the traveller’s most scenic progression from one national Parador inn to another.

Castles of England, Scotland and Wales has equally good illustrations but there are more black and white photographs and the text is a great deal more informative than Busselle’s guide to Spanish castles. The book covers its subject in a primarily chronological format, which suggests that its aim is to act as a literary aperitif to castle visits rather than as a gazetteer. Johnson’s style is less tailored to his task and has a confident individuality similar to that of the new Viking guides. Although the book is neither intended to be comprehensive nor arranged in a particularly ‘traveller-friendly’ way, it is a very good combination of architectural description and historical context, and will hold its own among the numerous other guides on a similar theme.

The Ancient Stones of Wales is one of those books that hovers at the extreme edges of mainstream archaeology, its success as a guide marred largely by the authors’ assumption that the archaeological appreciation of the monuments is insufficient to keep the reader’s interest without the gratuitous introduction of paranormal and mystic ingredients. The first half of the book is a poorly structured and rambling discussion of megalithic monuments and associated phenomena, presumably intended to place the guide in some kind of context. The chapter on Strange Lights and Objects, however, includes some bizarre photographs of ‘strange effects’ supposedly emanating from the megaliths, usually involving small blurred patches of light on black and white prints of questionable quality.

The second half is a moderately useful gazetteer of Welsh megalithic monuments, which, as the authors point out in the preface, theoretically fills a gap in the literature, although closer examination reveals that it actually tends to lapse into a kind of index to two earlier guides by one of the authors of the present book.

English Heritage from the Air is one of the better examples of a relatively new type of guide book made up of panoramic aerial photographs of ancient monuments with accompanying guide book text. Although it is not as detailed and archaeologically informative as Frances Griffiths’ Devon’s Past: An Aerial View, it is nevertheless much more successful than most conventional guide books in conveying a sense of the context and surrounding landscape of the selected monuments. The photographs of...
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—Journal of Hellenic Studies (1919)

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Prehistoric London

by Nick Merriman

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MINERVA 40
A Guide to the Archaeological sites of Israel, Egypt and North Africa

Courtlandt Canby with Arcadia Kocybala

xi + 278 pp. 97 photographs, 4 maps. $29.95.

By the admission of the authors, this book is intended to address the needs of two very different audiences. On the one hand, they pitch the book to those members of the general public who may find it useful as a field manual supplementing, as they contend it does, data generally found in the usual tourist guides (p.vii). The book is simultaneously being aimed at the ‘stay-at-homes’ (p.viii). The dilemma of attempting to reach these two different audiences becomes all too apparent with the collaborators’ admission (p.ix) that they have relied in the main on ‘tour guidebooks, other archaeological guides for particular areas, magazine articles, newspaper clips, ... the occasional scholarly books ... and a culling of archaeological periodicals and reports.’ One gains the distinct impression that the information was assembled by a cut-and-paste method, and this is reinforced by internal inconsistencies such as those found on page 129.

Additionally one suspects that the authors did not personally visit many of the sites they discuss. As a result of the methodology involved, the two very different readerships to whom the book is addressed will doubtless experience varying degrees of satisfaction.

This book may well satisfy the need of the stay-at-home who simply wishes to consult an easy to use reference work to a plethora of archaeological sites in Israel, Egypt and North Africa. To be sure, the breadth and scope of the numerous entries which, in all fairness, do contain fairly reliable bits of information, may redeem this volume as a reference work. Nevertheless, there are occasional errors such as the equation of the Hebrews with the Habiru (p.7), the position of the Third Intermediate Period within the Egyptian chronology presented on page 112, and the fact that the Papyrus Institute is not presented as the commercial endeavour it is (p.133). The absence of an inclusive synopsis of the Byzantine Period against which to evaluate the comments made for the sites of Acre (pp.11-13), Rehovot (pp.90-1), and several sites in North Africa is regrettable.

While those who use this volume as a reference work may hardly notice these apparent quibbles, the information may prove exceedingly unreliable for anyone using the book in the field. As an example of practical advice, for a visit to the tomb of Khufu in the Asasif at Thebes (p.172), one reads, ‘(permission necessary to enter it).’ The tomb is, and has been, readily accessible to tourists for several years now upon presentation of an entry ticket readily purchased near the ferry boat landing. Similarly, the opening of a good asphalt road several years ago from Mersa Matrouh to Siwa negates the need for vehicles travelling to Siwa to do so in convoy (p.165). One can easily reach Siwa from Alexandria within a day. Conversely, why is the tourist not dissuaded from visiting Dashur (p.149), for long a military area into which access is denied? Compounding this ill-advice is an abundance of errors of omission, which again seriously erodes the volume’s practical application. The more glaring among these is the failure to mention the wonderful colossal statue of Ramesses date at Akhmim (p.124); the group of outstanding statuettes on view in the Cairo Museum which were excavated by the Czech mission at Abu Sir (pp.148-9); and the Hellenistic mosaics, now in the Graeco-Roman Museum at Alexandria which were discovered at Mendes (pp.156-7).

Although the volume could just about serve as a reference, its advantages for a tourist on site are limited.

Stavros Asprapoulas

The Archaeology of early Medieval Ireland

Nancy Edwards


To many readers of Irish archaeology the period covered by this book will be better known as ‘early Christian’ or ‘Dark Age’, though in simple terms the time-span covered is the fifth to the twelfth centuries.

Though neglected in the past, this is a fascinating, and indeed important, period in Irish archaeology, which is excellently covered by Nancy Edwards in this publication.

The Archaeology Of Early Medieval Ireland is a surprising, well researched selection of contents leading the reader from the Roman ‘leftovers’ into types of settlement, their distribution, what was being eaten and how it was farmed or imported, the range of supporting crafts, and that all-important subject ‘trade’. Throughout, the text is supported by photographs, graphics and well drawn illustrations of archaeological sites or finds.

No archaeological publication on Ireland would be complete without due mention of the Church, the Arts, and of course, the Vikings. Nancy Edwards sets the importance of the Church in the early medieval period in its context and has balanced the theory with a survey of the evidence. In the course of this she has highlighted the need for more research in this area. With such a variety of architecture from the Romanesque Cormac’s Chapel, Cashel, and Antrim round tower, to Gallarus ‘Oratory’, Co. Kerry, a student of early medieval archaeology is promised a field day!

The surviving Irish art from early medieval Ireland also has strong religious links. It is a change to find a publication trying to balance this situation and drawing attention to the range of material which might once have existed. Examples in the forms of ornamental metalwork and illuminated manuscripts, the surviving artefacts and documents show the skill which craftsmen in Ireland had acquired during this period.

Finally, Nancy Edwards closes with a review of Viking evidence. Interest in the Vikings has grown in the past 30 years, and with the excavations in the waterlogged deposits in Dublin producing important material both in terms of settlement behaviour and finds, this review is extremely interesting and welcome.

Mike Curtis
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The magnificent Lion of Venice (above) is currently on display in the Front Hall of the British Museum. Until recently, the lion stood high on a column in the Piazzetta San Marco where it proudly symbolised the former power of the ‘Most Serene Republic’. Measuring about 14.5 feet (4.4 metres) in length, and weighing around two and three quarter tons (2,800 kilos), it was removed from its perch in 1985 for an intensive study of the monument by a team of Italian art historians and scientists.

The date at which the lion was set up on its column is unknown, although it is first referred to in a document of 1293 that authorises funds for repairs. The scientists have, however, shown that before the lion was put in place it had already undergone a number of modifications. Professor Bianca Marla Scarfi, the author of the book about the lion which accompanies the exhibition, has speculated that the lion might originally have been part of a monument created around 300 B.C. and plundered from the Near East by the Venetians in the twelfth century, much as they removed the famous bronze horses from Constantinople.

In 1797 the lion was certainly carried off, when it was transported to Paris by Napoleon Bonaparte. Following Napoleon’s fall a request for the return of the bronze was made, but it was severely damaged shortly afterwards, being accidentally smashed into twenty pieces during its removal by Austrian engineers. Extensive restoration was undertaken in 1812 when the wings, paws, part of the back and most of the tail were completely renewed.

Toledo Museum of Art’s renovated Classic Court reopens with newly acquired Roman Mosaic

The Toledo Museum of Art’s newly renovated gallery of ancient art, the Classic Court, has reopened featuring a spectacular new acquisition, a complete mosaic floor from a Roman villa in North Africa. The Roman mosaic has been installed beneath an atrium through which a shaft of natural light enters the centre of the newly designed court.

The mosaic, which measures about ten feet square, has a central medallion depicting Bacchus wreathed in grape leaves. The four sides of the mosaic portray groups of acanthus leaves on which sit birds, and in the corners are Maenads, the female followers of Bacchus. The mosaic dates to around 140-160 A.D., and is one of the most impressive to have been found in North Africa. It was acquired in London, with funds from the Edward Drummond Libbey bequest, and had previously come from a central European collection.

The Museum of Archaeology in Fort Lauderdale, Florida re-opened in October. Permanent exhibitions include: The Tequesta Indians of South Florida, African Tribal Images, A Sense of Egypt, Marine Archaeology.
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2. Head of Woman. Rhodes. Late 6th century B.C. Terracotta head with flat smiling face and pointed nose. Symmetrical himation over head, hair visible above forehead. Spout with thick lip and flat top and sides emerge from top of head. Traces of red slip over orange ware. 4.6cm. BM 57-90. ... Choice 250.00

3. Figure of Woman. Western Asia Minor. Early 6th century B.C. Right hand holding unidentified object over breast, left arm on left hip. Wearing polos, chiton and symmetrical himation going over palla. Pale orange ware with white slip. 6.6cm. BM 243-29. Back eroded. ... Choice 300.00


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Appointments

At the end of September Dr John Kent, B.A., retired as Keeper of Coins and Medals in the British Museum, a post he had held for the last seven years. He joined the Museum staff in 1953 and was, at the time he retired, its longest serving academic. At his retirement party held in the Museum on 28 September, the Director, Sir David Wilson, presented Dr Kent with a portrait medal in silver commissioned by his friends and colleagues to commemorate his retirement. It was designed and modelled by Avril Vaughan and struck by Thomas Fattorini Ltd.

The reverse of this portrait medal is a bird's eye view of the Second Pyramid at Giza, that of the pharaoh Chephren of the Fourth Dynasty (c. 2540 B.C.). The legend beneath it reads: "Nil Sine Labore" (Nothing without toil) and the composition symbolises a career in numismatics, progressing from a solid foundation to an apex of achievement.

Dr Kent's successor as Keeper is Mark Jones, Curator in charge of medals and author of several specialist catalogues in this field. He was also responsible for the recent British Museum exhibition 'Take?' and edited the splendid catalogue that accompanied it (see Minerva March 1990, pp.13-5, and April 1990, pp.41-7).

The Tampa Museum of Art has announced the appointment of J. Michael Padgett as Curator of Classical Art.

Gerry D. Scott, III has succeeded Carlos A. Picon as Curator of Ancient Western Art at the San Antonio Museum of Art. Dr Scott has an M.A. in Egyptology and Ph.D. in Egyptian Art, both from Yale University. He was previously director of corporate and foundation relations at Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, assistant to the director for special projects at Yale's Peabody Museum, curatorial associate in the division of anthropology at the Peabody Museum, and research associate in the department of ancient art at the Yale University Art Gallery. He curated several exhibitions, including 'An Ancient Egyptian Masterpiece' and 'The Past Rediscovered: Everyday Life in Ancient Egypt,' both for the Peabody Museum.

Picon resigned in May to become curator in charge of the department of Greek and Roman art at the Metropolitan Museum, New York. However, he continues to assist with the installation of the Ewing Hawell Wing for Ancient Art.

Professor Michael Iaffie has been succeeded as Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, by Simon Jervis, formerly keeper of the Department of Furniture at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Vishakha N. Desai, formerly a curator in the Department of Asian Arts in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and an associate professor of art at the University of Massachusetts, has become Director of the Asia Society Galleries.

Dr Desai, who was responsible for Indian, Southeast Asian and Islamic collections at the Boston Museum, served as the head of public and academic programmes.

Prior to joining the Museum of Fine Arts in 1977, Dr Desai worked at the Brooklyn Museum and at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

Dr Desai graduated from Bombay University and received her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in the History of Arts from the University of Michigan. Curator of several exhibitions of Asian art and author of numerous articles on Indian painting, Dr Desai's scholarly focus has been on the political and cultural context of works of art.

A Magnificent Gift to the British Museum

The Trustees of the British Museum have announced that Mr Joseph Hotung, an international businessman and art-collector from Hong Kong, has made a magnificent gift of £2,000,000 to the British Museum to cover the cost of renovating most of the main gallery in the King Edward VII Building, which is the largest exhibition area in the Museum and houses the Oriental Collections.

The British Museum's Chinese collections rank among the most important and comprehensive in the world, whilst its collection of Indian sculpture is the most important outside the Indian sub-continent. Renovation of the gallery in which these are displayed has long been overdue, and the Trustees have been preparing plans to undertake this work for over a year. This gift from Mr Hotung, one of the largest ever made by an individual to the Museum, is made in recognition of the British Museum's deep scholarship in the field of Oriental art and archaeology and will enable these treasures to be displayed in outstanding surroundings.

New Underwater Archaeology Department at Lipari

The regional museum on the Aeolian island of Lipari has just established a department of underwater archaeology in order to document and record the work being carried out around its shores, such as the wreck of the world's oldest sea-going ship discovered near Panarea. The new department also has a data bank relating to the relics in its possession. Later, it intends to set up an information network in conjunction with other museums.

MINERVA 45
MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

UNITED KINGDOM

DORCHESTER, Dorset TUTANKHAMUN: THE EXHIBITION. Reconstruction of the tomb of Tutankhamun at the time it was discovered. 25 High West Street, Dorch- ter, Dorset, DT1 1WU. (0305) 695197. Until 31 December.


CLEVELAND, Ohio EARLY ISLAMIC TEXTILES FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA. 50 7th to 15th century works from Egypt, Syria, the Levant, and Spain, including silk and gold ornaments, prickly pear, and woven silks, all from the museum's collection. CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART (216) 421 7340. Until spring 1991. Catalogue.

LODGE OF THE THOUSAND BUDDHAS: CHINESE ART FROM THE SILK ROUTE. Major exhibition of Buddhist art consisting largely of the remarkable finds made by Sir Marc Aurel Stein between 1906-9 in the cave shrines at Dunhuang, including manuscripts, paintings and textiles from Cave 17, the walled-up 'Library cave'. THE BRITISH MUSEUM (071) 323 8352. Until 12 December. See (Minerva, June 1990, p.4).


OXFORD, Oxon PORTRAITS FROM MUGHAL INDIA. ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM (0865) 278009. Until 31 December.


UNITED STATES


BALTIMORE, Maryland ISLAMIC ART AND PATRONAGE: SELECTIONS FROM KUWAIT. 107 masterworks ranging over more than 1000 years from Sheikh Nasser Sabah al-Ahmad al Sabah family collection on permanent loan to the Kuwait National Museum. THE WALTERS ART GALLERY (310) 547 9000. 9 December 1990 - 17 February 1991 (then to Worth, Texas). Catalogue. (See page 24).


CLEVELAND, Ohio EARLY ISLAMIC TEXTILES FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA. 50 7th to 15th century works from Egypt, Syria, the Levant, and Spain, including silk and gold ornaments, prickly pear, and woven silks, all from the museum's collection. CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART (216) 421 7340. Until spring 1991. Catalogue.

YORUBA: NINE CENTURIES OF AFRICAN ART AND THOUGHT. The Yoruba of Nigeria and Benin are heirs to one of the oldest and finest artistic traditions in West Africa. This exhibition, organized and premiered by the Center for African Art, New York, presents 123 works of art including exquisite, highly naturalistic works in terracotta and bronze dating as far back as the 12th century, drawn from public and private collections in North America, Africa and Europe. CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART (216) 421 7340. Until 9 December (then to New Orleans). Book with full catalogue $65.


HOUSTON, Texas BEYOND THE JAWA SEA: THE ART OF INDONESIAN OUTER ISLANDS. The first major exhibition of masterpieces from this area. Over 200 works of art ranging from fine gold jewellery to large stone sculptures. HOUSTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE (713) 639 4600. Until 3 March 1991 (then to Washington, D.C.).

LINCOLN, Nebraska ECUADOR. 64 Pre-Columbian ceramics from c.1000 B.C. to c.1500 A.D. all once removed clandestinely from Ecuador and since repatriated. UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA STATE MUSEUM (402) 472 3779. Until 31 December.

LOS ANGELES, California CHINESE CERAMIC MASTERPIECES: CULTURES OF SIBERIA AND ALASKA. 500 artifacts reflecting the cultural interchange that began when the first Siberian explorers reached North America 14,000 years ago. One third of the pieces are from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology in Leningrad, the balance from US and Canadian museums. GENE AUBREY WESTERN HERITAGE MUSEUM (213) 749 3442. Until 24 February 1991. (then to Anchorage, Alaska) Catalogue $24.95, cloth $45.


JAPANESE ARCHAELOGICAL CERAMICS. 76 vessels and figurines from c.800 B.C. to c. A.D.1200, the last major exhibition of this field ever to be held outside Japan. IBM GALLERY OF SCIENCE AND ART (212) 745 6100. Until 9 February, 1991.

MEXICO: SPLENDOURS OF THIRTY CENTURIES. A major exhibition of over 400 works of art, of which about one-third are Precolombian, dat- ing from the 1st to the 19th century. Featuring some monumental stone sculptures, frescoes, and codices, among other works. MUSEO DE ARTE, INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ANTROPOLOGIA HISTORIA Y CIENCIAS NATURALES. MEXICAN ART MUSEUM (212) 879 5500. Until 13 January 1991 (then to San Anto- nio). Catalogue $39.95. Cloth $49.95. (See Minerva, Nov. 1990, p.21).

PASADENA, California IMAGES OF FAITH: RELIGIOUS IVORY CARVINGS FROM THE PHILIPPINES. Approximately 125 objects dating from 1590 to 1810. The carvings range from very small ivory heads and hands of saints, to large solid ivory carvings and a half feet high PACIFIC ASIA MUSEUM (818) 449 2742. Until 13 January 1991. Catalogue.


PRINCETON, New Jersey THE COROPLASI ART: GREEK TERRACOTTA OF THE HELLENISTIC WORLD. The first comprehen- sive exhibition emphasizing the technique of the coepast with 52 figurines from Ameri- can public and private collections including six of principal terracotta-producing cen- ters through the Eastern Mediterranean to Leningrad, the balance from US and Canadian museums. GENE AUBREY WESTERN HERITAGE MUSEUM (213) 749 3442. Until 24 February 1991. (then to Anchorage, Alaska) Catalogue $24.95, cloth $45.
SAN FRANCISCO, California

WOMEN: AUSPICIOUS AND DIVINE, IMAGES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND INDIA. Over 30 figurative works depicting the female in both human and divine form in both Buddhist and Hindu art. ASIAN ART MUSEUM OF SAN FRANCISCO (415) 668 8921. Until 30 December.

WASHINGTON, D.C.
THE ARTS OF CHINA. 228 masterworks of Chinese art dating from the 4th millennium B.C. to recent times, largely drawn from the permanent collection, features 108 jades from c.5000 to c.1700 B.C. and 56 bronze vessels from the 16th to 22nd centuries B.C. ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION. 202-357-3320. Opening 18 November and continuing indefinitely.

WILLIAMSTOWN, Massachusetts
GREEK-ROMAN ART FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION. Sculpture and decorative objects in bronze, gold, marble and ceramics and other media. WILLIAMS COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART (413) 597 2429. Until 30 December 1990.

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INCA. 450 Ancient Peruvian gold and silver masks, earrings, and other objects from a period of 3,000 years from museums in Peru, US and Europe. MUSEES ROYAL D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE (02) 734 40 11. Until 30 December, 1990.

THE HUMAN ADVENTURE. 200 exhibits covering human evolution from the fossilized remains of early man to prehistoric art and artefacts. PALAIS DES BEAUX-ARTS (02) 512 50 45. Until 30 December, 1990.

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