ANIMALS IN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ART

NEW DISCOVERIES AT AKSUM, ETHIOPIA

THE PREHISPANIC ART OF CENTRAL PANAMA

SAVING TURKISH MOSAICS FROM THE SEA

REDATEING THE UFFINGTON WHITE HORSE

TREASURES FROM THE BLACK SEA REGION

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BRITISH TREASURE TROVE REPORTS

The Department of National Heritage (DNH) has recently published its first annual report of the Treasure Trove Reviewing Committee for 1993-94. On 1 April 1993, responsibility for Treasure Trove in England and Wales was transferred from the Treasury to the DNH.

The present law of Treasure Trove (dating from the twelfth century) requires that all objects of gold, silver or bullion that are found should be reported to the proper authorities (police, museum or coroner) and, if the items can be shown to have been hidden with intent to recover, and the original owner can no longer be traced, they are declared to be Treasure Trove and the property of the Crown. Should any museum wish to acquire any of the items they can do so, but they must pay to the finder their full market value as determined by the Treasure Trove Reviewing Committee (established in 1977). If the museum is not required by any museum, they are then returned to the finder to retain or dispose of as they wish. (Lord Peri's 'Treasure Bill' presently before Parliament would essentially change this to require all finds to be reported, irrespective of their metal content or original intent (for concealment, grave burial, hoarding or loss, etc.) Prompt reporting of items that may be the subject of a Treasure Trove inquest is essential as quite often important context and other evidence can be recovered from the site by archaeologists, as has most recently been shown with the excavation of the incredible Hoxne Roman Treasure Trove (see Minerva 1993, Jan/Feb, pp. 15-16; May/June, pp. 2, 15-16; Nov/Dec pp. 22-5).

During 1993-94 the Committee considered 19 finds. There was an enormous variation in evaluations from a group of six Roman silver denarii (a further part of a hoard of 168 pieces found in 1990), where one coin was retained by the British Museum with a valuation of £50, to the Hoxne hoard at the other end of the scale. The latter was the largest hoard of Roman gold and silver coins and jewellery ever found in Britain and was valued at £1.75 million (see below).

The majority of the finds considered by the Committee had been made by metal detectorists and were mainly groups of coins. Of the 19 cases listed in the Annual Report, 15 consisted wholly of coins, ranging from Celtic to Charles I, whilst two (Essex and Hoxne) included other precious metal items with coins. The remaining two cases, Monkton/Deverill, Wilts, and The Lee, Bucks, concerned a Bronze Age gold torque and a gold necklace of similar date, respectively valued at £75,000 and £8000.

Since the Hoxne hoard achieved such prominence in the media, the Committee felt that it should make the papers relating to the valuation public. They therefore took the unprecedented step of publishing the British Museum's valuation of the hoard together with summaries of the valuation reports received from three independent external expert advisers. Of these three, 'Valuer A' valued the whole hoard, coins and jewellery; 'Valuer B' valued just the coins and 'Valuer C' the other objects, essentially jewellery. The valuations were arrived at completely independently and the close approximation of the figures published is very interesting.

With the coins the three valuations (British Museum and Valuers A and B) were within 7.3 percent of each other respectively £321,493, £562,545 and £530,889. The final agreed valuation was put at £572,000.

For the jewellery, silver tableware and other items, the valuations were even closer to each other, within 6.6 percent. The three valuations (British Museum and Valuers A and C) were respectively £1,216,194; £1,194,539; and £1,136,313. The agreed valuation was £1,178,000. The totals for the whole hoard were: British Museum £1,737,687; Valuer A, £1,757,084. The agreed final figure was £1,759,000.

The British Museum wished to acquire the hoard in its entirety and was able to raise the money required from various sources including the National Heritage Memorial Fund, private donations and loans. A short illustrated booklet, The Hoxne Treasure: An Illustrated Introduction by Roger Bland and Catherine Johns has been published by British Museum Press (£4.75), but it will take time before conservation work and study of the hoard can be carried out, leading to a final definitive publication.

Peter A. Clayton

Six of the 19 gold bracelets from the Hoxne Treasure.

ARCHAEOLOGISTS VERSUS HUNGRARIAN ROAD BUILDERS

For more than eighteen months archaeologists and scholars from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences have been engaged in a race against time to save one of the most important archaeological sites in western Hungary. Around Lebény, near the city of Győr in north-western Hungary, work has been going on since 1991 to build a new highway connecting Budapest to Vienna. It is an extremely large project and has the financial backing of Italian and French consortia. The aim is that the new highway will open a new fast route into Hungary for tourists from western Europe.

The sub-soil of the intended route is clay, which the construction companies find unsuitable as a base, and therefore they have been seeking sources of large quantities of sand. Not far from the intended route of the highway there are a number of low sandhills, two to three metres in height, formed by deposits from the Danube over thousands of years. However, when they started to remove sand from these mounds archaeological remains began to appear, ranging from prehistoric villages, through the Roman occupation and into the period of the barbarian invasions. Bronze and Iron Age villages with perfectly preserved houses have been found, together with hundreds of Celtic tombs, many of them still complete with rich grave goods indicating their high status level.

It is not possible for the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences to stop the work, only to try and get permission to explore and excavate where possible in front of the bulldozers. Hungarian law requires, in such instances, that the development pay the cost of archaeological surveys and rescue excavations. Professor Ballint of the Budapest Archaeological Institute and his colleague Dr Takatch are working against the clock to survey and excavate a vast area of many hundreds of square kilometres, mapping and recording the thousands of finds. This is obviously not an ideal solution since finds divorced from their context lose a large part of their scientific value, but it is at least better than having everything destroyed.

In August this year the highway is scheduled to be completed - tourists will be able to travel rapidly from western Europe to Budapest, but the record of the past in the area over which the highway passes will have been obliterated for ever.

Giovanni Lattanzi

MINERVA 2
THE MAHDIA WRECK CONFERENCE

Carol Mattusch

A colloquium about the first-century BC Mahdia shipwreck and its cargo was held 19 and 20 January at The Rheinisches Landesmuseum in Bonn to accompany the exhibition about the wreck on loan from the Bardo Museum in Tunis (Minerva November/December 1994, pp. 20-25). Approximately 50 scholars participated in five sessions concerned with the date and character of the cargo, the ship’s route, scientific and technical observations, the artist Boethos (formerly associated with the lifesize bronze statue of Eros), questions of serial production and copies, and new observations about the ship and its cargo. Discussion leaders were Maria R. Alföldi, Gerhard Eggert, Wilfred Geominy, Andreas Linfer, the present author, and Gisela Hellenkemper Salles, the curator in charge of the exhibition. A principal panellist was Werner Fuchs, whose book Der Schiffsfund von Mahdia (Tubingen 1963) first alerted the scholarly world to this material, and has heretofore been the only major publication of this important shipwreck. Some of the issues discussed in the colloquium can be summarised briefly.

Between 100 and 70 BC, the ship was on its way to Rome or central Italy from the eastern Mediterranean, but missed the Straits of Messina and then, while trying to sail around Sicily instead, it ran off course (Helmut Binder, Olaf Hockmann) and sank about five kilometres from the coast of Tunisia. The wood from the ship cannot be placed with absolute certainty, but the boat was probably built in Rome or central Italy (Christoph Börker). The lead used for the ingots, tubes, anchor, and a sheet from the bottom of the ship is from a single ore deposit, perhaps in Spain. The lead dowel in the bronze herm is similar, but the lead dowels in the feet of the lifesize bronze Eros are of a different composition (Friedrich Beggmann). The pottery used by the ship’s crew is not Attic (Susan Rotroff), and can be dated between 100 and the 70s BC (Susan Rotroff and Bernard Liou). Clay core-material recovered from the bronze Eros, from the dancing dwarves, and from a springing panther was all from the same geological environment, one that is not like the Athenian clay that is known to date (Gerwulf Schneider).

There is further evidence that the ship’s 300-ton cargo came from various places. The bulk of the load consisted of 60 to 70 unfinished marble columns of various lengths. Most of them are Pentelic marble, as are the various capitals found in the cargo, the five or more large ornate candleabra, and more than four relief-kraters (Erna Fiorentini). Three to four columns were identified as Dolian marble, but the possibility was raised that they may actually be Pentelic like the others, because Dolian, a local Peloponnesian marble, is not known to have been exported (Olga Palagia). Nor is it likely that the columns were loaded in different places. The seven large marble busts/tondli from the cargo are made of Parian marble, and all may represent Dionysiac characters (Hans-Hoyer von Frittwitz und Gaffron).

Some pieces on the ship may have been picked up or plundered, such as four Attic reliefs, at least three of which are dated to the fourth century BC (Gerhard Bauchhen8), and five inscriptions that are assigned similar dates (Georg Petzl), but there are also
new objects (Henner von Hesberg), such as the columns, capitals, and bases, the relief-kraters, the candelabra, four marble seated children intended for a fountain, and 23 bronze klinai with serially-numbered legs. The klinai were all made of fresh bronze, with no added scrap-metal (Gerhard Eggert).

Mass-production in both marble and bronze was in full swing at the time of the Mahdia shipwreck. The Mahdia fountain-figures, as well as the relief-kraters, a three-splouted lamp, and some bronze handles, are apparently the earliest known examples of their types. The candelabra are of the oldest type, but may not be the earliest examples of that type (Hans-Ulrich Cain). The same fountain-figures as those from Mahdia were found at the first-century AD site of Sperlonga (Bernard Andreae).

The bronze herm from the wreck, well-known for its inscription naming Boethos of Calchedon as the maker, had previously been installed, then lifted from a marble base, one of which a small portion survives (Frank Wilier). An artist by the name of Boethos was active in the mid-second century BC. The fact that this herm has two extraordinarily close parallels, one in bronze (J. Paul Getty Museum, with the same alloy as the Mahdia herm and the Mahdia Eros), and one in marble (Pompeii) suggests the existence of a model, of which copies may have been widely distributed and were available over a long period of time (Carol Mattusch).

The herm and the Eros do not belong together: their heights do not allow for this; the lead used for the dowels is not the same; and the two bronzes were made and cold-worked differently (Frank Wilier). There was some thought that the bronze Eros was a new statue, and that the lead dowels were poured into its feet before shipping it to its final destination (Olga Palagia). A parallel situation was suggested for the large marble tondo: they might have been new, not reused as was previously proposed, with an iron nail fixed in lead in their backs before shipping for ease of installation (Hans-Hoyer von Prittwitz und Gaffron).

The question was raised whether even now, with its left thigh and right hip newly-restored, the Eros does not have its hip thrust too far out to the side (Olga Palagia). In fact, the new armature inside the statue was made in such a way that the stance can be readjusted (Frank Wilier).

The base for a large bronze statue of a running satyr has now been identified, as have bases for two of the dancing dwarves—in pieces that were originally published as two weights (Hans-Georg Hartke and Frank Wilier). Two bronzes with rings on their back, one a dancing dwarf, the other a winged Eros, also originally had bases fixed to their feet by dowels, and the rings may be later additions.

Some problems defy interpretation. An adjustable stand that supported a large circular object has now been tentatively restored as a reflector for illuminating a room (Stefan Geppert), but other identifications that were offered include a picture-stand (Maria R.-Alföldi), or a gong (Werner Fuchs). A miniature vessel with griffin-protomes now restored on top of the triple-snouted bronze lamp (Norbert Franken) seemed to several participants to be a rather puzzling combination of elements.

The objects from 'Das Wrack' will be returned to the Bardo Museum in Tunis for reinstallation in the autumn of this year.

The two-volume catalogue, Das Wrack, is available from the publisher, Rheinland-Verlag, Abtei Brauweiler, 50259 Pulheim, Germany. For the account of an earlier colloquium, see 'Der Antike schiffsfund von Mahdia', in Bonner Jahrbuch 192, 1992, 507-536.

Carol C. Mattusch is Professor at George Mason University, USA.

Stolen Objects...

- An Etruscan bronze kouros of the sixth century BC (right) was stolen on 21 January from the Winter Antiques Show in New York City. It has a crested helmet and is c. 10 cm in height. Please contact: Airlade Galleries, Inc., 970 Madison Avenue (at 76th St), New York, NY10021. Tel: (212) 772 3388, Fax: (212) 517 7562.

- A group of antiquities of the neo-Sumerian period, c. 2150-2000 BC, was stolen in France on 29 October 1994. They included a gold and semi-precious stone necklace with two gold bulls decorated with trefiol designs inlaid with turquoise (above), and a group of plain gold jewellery, including a bracelet of slightly flattened circular shape. Please send information to: Gendarmerie nationale, 23 rue Gare, F-60560 Ory-la-Ville, France.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I was delighted to see that Minerva has given space to the exciting work on the Newton St Loe mosaic ('Orpheus Rising', March/April 1995). It is all credit to the current museum authorities that this splendiferous survival from Roman Britain is receiving the attention it deserves, as it may be even more significant than hitherto appreciated.

The female bust which decorated the panel between the Orpheus mosaic and the adjoining geometric floor is likely to have represented Ge, the Earth Mother, or Tellus, the Roman equivalent. The inverted triangle on her head may have been a stylised modius or corn measure, the attribute traditionally worn by the Earth Mother. Clear examples can be found on mosaics from Shabba-Philippopolis and Apamea in Syria. On the latter mosaic the identification is established beyond doubt by the inscription 'Ge'. On a mosaic from Panik in the former Yugoslavia the figure of Ge decorated the panel below an Orpheus mosaic, just as on the Newton St Loe floor.

Concepts of fertility, such as the Seasons, have a well-established connection with Orpheus, appearing frequently on Orpheus mosaics from all over the Empire as well as on depic-
tions of Orpheus in other media. It is therefore inherently more likely that the Newton St Loe bust evoked the same idea, and that Tellus/Ge – rather than Isis-Aphrodite or a Muse as suggested – was the personification depicted at Newton St Loe. To the best of my knowledge, there is no extant depiction of Orpheus in which Isis, Aphrodite or the Muses are included.

This is all the more interesting in view of the similarity noted by Anthony Beeson between the Newton St Loe Orpheus and the lost mosaic from Nunney (Whatley): on both pavements the animals were depicted in confronted pairs rather than the more usual procession. Both, too, featured female busts. It is possible that the bust from Whatley was also intended to represent Tellus/Ge. The mosaic is known only from a lithograph on which her headress resembles a mural crown. This may have been a missed version of a modius, especially as a cornucopia was represented with the bust, a traditional attribute of figures alluding to fertility. Alternatively, if a mural crown was intended, it would indicate Tyche who, although unknown with Orpheus elsewhere, would stand for a similar concept to the Earth Mother, namely prosperity and good fortune.

The Newton St Loe and Whatley villas were only some 18 kilometres or so apart. Lying almost equidistant between them is the site of Wellow, which produced the mosaic convincingly identified as another Orpheus pavement by Anthony Beeson in Minerva last year (‘Orpheus Rediscovered’, May/June 1994). The scheme of the Wellow mosaic was based on interlaced squares, a unique design among the known Roman-British Orpheus mosaics but one found with the Panik Orpheus mentioned above. The Wellow pavement also included confronted animals, namely felines in panels.

The iconography of these three Orpheus mosaics (of which only Newton St Loe is known to survive), all from a confined area in the south west of England, is fascinating for the similarities between the mosaics themselves and the parallels that can be found on the more accomplished mosaics in other parts of the Empire, distant from Roman Britain.

Dr Pat Witts, Menston, Ilkley, Yorks

I was interested to read the article about the Newton St Loe Mosaic in the last issue of Minerva, but was surprised to see it called an ‘Orphic floor’. The description is somewhat misleading as it ascribes a cult function to the room for which there is no evidence. Indeed, it is generally accepted that the mosaic came from a corridor villa and decorated the floor of its triclinium. The term ‘Orphic’ has a distinct meaning which is inappropriate in this context. It applies to a cult, presumed to have existed from textual references to ‘Orphics’, understood as the followers of a cult, and to Orpheoteleai, those who initiated people into Mysteries, called ‘Orphic’. Nothing concrete is known of such a cult more than hints and allusions. Its very existence has been disputed. Possibly it was a form of Dionysiac cult and Mystery. There is no art which has been firmly established as associated with a demonstrable and distinct ‘Orphic’ cult. Therefore, to call Newton St Loe ‘Orphic’ is to apply a problematic designation which is entirely unfounded and without proof.

The presence of the fox at Newton St Loe is interesting as this animal appears frequently with Orpheus outside Britain, particularly on mosaics from the Eastern Empire. There the symbolism probably pertained to the Thracian origin of Orpheus – the Thracians wore and were denoted by their foxskin hats. Moreover, Basareus, meaning Fox, was a common epithet of the god Dionysus, whose ‘psalmist’ Orpheus was. His mythic followers, the Bassarei, wore foxskin garments. The animal then denotes Orpheus as belonging to the god. It is likely that this was also the case in the British examples, bearing in mind the exceptional popularity of Dionysus/Bacchus as a subject of Roman-British mosaics. A concern with agricultural success, as suggested by Anthony Beeson, could well have been in some minds, but we cannot be certain that all Orpheus mosaics came from buildings primarily associated with farms. The Great Pavement at Woodchester, for example, came from a building of such grandeur it is often described as a palace. Moreover, the Brading Orpheus, with its seated fox, is on the Isle of Wight, which has no foxes. The leaping fox seen at Newton St Loe is unique to Britain. It has the same form as the Mithraic dog, which may well have been the visual influence.

We should congratulate Anthony Beeson on his committed and meticulous work on recovering this excellent mosaic which would now be a prime prospect for restoration and exhibition.

Dr Ilona Jesnick, Southgate, London N14

Anthony Beeson replies:

Ilona Jesnick has read too much into the word ‘Orphic’ which, of course, simply means ‘pertaining to Orpheus’, and, as the text implies, in no way suggests this villa was a cult centre. For a site that has a good claim to be such a religious complex I would urge her to study the excellent work of Mr Bryn Walters and his team at Littlecote in Wiltshire. The size of an establishment does not necessarily reflect a lack of interest in farm economics or the control of vermin by the owners. One only has to consider the part the fox played in the lives of most of the owners of the great palaces of Georgian Britain to understand this. The Brading mosaic, of course, is not a circular zonal mosaic and compares with the landscape Orpheus mosaics of the continent, where all the animals appear dotted about the musician. That no foxes remain on the Isle of Wight nowadays does not mean that there were any in the past. That British artists alone chose to portray the fox leaping suggests its exceptional importance to them.

Knowing the mosaic from Panik, the suggestion by Pat Witts that the lost bust may be a perfectly valid one, and should certainly be borne in mind. Much depends on how one interprets the stylized object on the woman’s head at Newton! A Muse, if unusual, would hardly be out of keeping with the artistic spirit of Orpheus, and the figure does bear similarity with the Muse from the Sages mosaic from the House of Patricius at Baalbek. The oddly truncated line of her cloak at Newton must be a result of her hand (perhaps with a scroll as at Baalbek) having once crossed the line of her garment. Isis-Aphrodite and Venus were the deities of Spring and rebirth, has an equal claim to be a deity of fertility as Ge.

It is dangerous to assume that the lost mosaic from Nunney was an Orpheus floor for, after all, nothing at all remained of the central square panel. Certainly the animals in the border have nothing of Newton St Loe about them beyond a confrontational pose. There can be no real doubt that the bust at Nunney, unlike the Newton one, did wear the Corona Muralis on her head as crenellations are clearly recorded, and she should be seen as Tyche. If the lost panel did show Orpheus here, then, as Pat Witts intimates, this, like the Newton bust, would show another figure not known from representations of her elsewhere, and may be seen as yet another Roman-British innovation. The felines from Wellow are heraldic in confrontation and not aggressive, and as such they bear relationship to those at Littlecote.

MINERVA 5
PIERCING THE SHAMANIC VEIL

The Prehistoric Art of Central Panama

Panama, long neglected in the field of precolombian art, is currently the focus of a major exhibition at the Bowers Museum of Cultural Art in Santa Ana, California, which concentrates mainly on art from the Central Region, embracing the Panamanian provinces of Cocle, Veraguas, Herrera, Los Santos, parts of Colon and the littoral of the Bay of Panama. It comprises 200 works in ceramic and gold, rich in indigenous iconography and allusions to shamanic lore and ideology.

Armand J. Labbé

The Central Region of Panama is one of the few cultural regions of the Americas which has a continuous 2000-year-long art tradition. This offers scholars and researchers a unique opportunity to study and document an entire indigenous tradition from its inception through its evolution, its florescence, to its demise.

When this tradition was first uncovered in the early twentieth century by archaeologists from Harvard University’s Peabody Museum and the University of Pennsylvania’s University Museum, research was hampered by the absence of absolute dating techniques with which to date the excavated materials. However, excavations conducted in the last twenty years have yielded numerous dates which allow the determination of firm archaeological phases and chronological parameters for specific artistic styles.

The Bowers exhibition addresses two major areas of concern, the development of a true art history for the Central Region of Panama and the development of an interpretive framework by which the extensive body of iconography can be understood.

The first section of the exhibition is divided chronologically according to artistic styles, each of which is represented by a large number of works. Each style is divided into a number of discrete characteristics such as designs, design motifs, design elements, colour schemes, and artistic layouts. Each of these characteristics serves as a diagnostic tool enabling the viewer to determine one style from another, observing their gradual evolution through time.

Section two of the exhibition establishes a framework for interpreting the large body of iconography and graphic themes used to decorate objects of the Central Region. The research leading to the exhibition and a monograph entitled Guardians of the Life Stream: Shamans, Art and Power in Prehispanic Central Panama clearly illustrate the strong shamanic imprint on Central Panamanian precolombian art, particularly for the period AD 200-1000. Portrayed in the art are references to the activation of shamanic powers (the Shamanic Transformation theme), the shaman’s role as healer and adversary of illness and malevolence (the Shaman-in-Combat theme), the shaman as conductor of souls to the afterlife (the Shaman-in-Flight theme), and the shaman’s function as the replenisher of species.

Fig 1. Tricolour globular jar illustrating the Shamanic Transformation Theme. Tomasa Style. Central Region Panama. c. AD 200-400.

Fig 2. Polychrome pedestal bowl showing the Shamanic Transformation Theme. Macaracas Style. Central Region Panama. c. AD 800-1000.

Fig 3. Tricolour ring-based bowl with the Shaman-in-profile (Shaman-in-combat Theme). Conte Style. Central Region Panama. c. AD 600-800.
Prehistoric Art

(shaman as Guardian of Fertility).

The Shamanic Transformation theme is characterized by a frontal portrayal of a standing anthropomorphic figure (Figs 1, 2). Typically such figures have large concentric eyes often with the long beak of a bird extending laterally from the eye. The chest and abdomen of these figures are usually decorated with geometric designs. Also distinctive are the eminations extending from the sides of the body, which in earlier renditions are usually in the form of undulating serpent-like bands, but which in later styles are frequently depicted as birds, reptiles, or even sting-ray spines.

The Shaman-in-Combat theme (Figs 3, 4) is characteristically an anthropomorphic figure shown in profile. In later periods the heads of such figures have a crocodilian or rep-

Fig 4. Polychrome pedestal bowl decorated with the Shaman-in-profile. Macaracas Style. Central Region Panama. c. AD 800-1000.

Fig 5. Tricolour jar with Shamanic lizard with solar associations. Tonosi Style. Central Region Panama. c. AD 200-400.

Fig 6. Tricolour jar with Shamanic animal with solar or celestial associations. Montijo Transitional Style. Central Region Panama. c. AD 500-600.

Fig 7. Polychrome pedestal bowl with running Shamanic reptiles. Macaracas Style. Central Region Panama. c. AD 800-1000.

Fig 8. Polychrome standing Shamanic figure. Conte Style. Central Region Panama. c. AD 600-800.
tillian appearance. There is little doubt that the figure portrayed is the same as that in the frontal-facing Shamantic Transformation depictions, the absence of the reptilian snout apparently reflecting nothing more than artistic difficulty in painting this from a frontal perspective. Both themes share elements such as large concentric eyes, binary geometrics on the toso, and emulations from the body.

A variant of the standing Shamanic-profile theme are depictions of reptiles running on all fours (Figs 5, 6, 7). These can be traced to Tonosi and other early depictions of shamanic lizards, often with coronas around the head that suggest solar associations. As Elizabeth Benson has noted (River of Gold, 1992: 29-31), crocodiles and lizards are frequently closely connected with the sun in Central and South American myth. Among many indigenous groups the sun is considered First Shaman. Other portrayals covered in this section of the exhibition are depictions of celestial entities such as stars and constellations, including the Milky Way.

Section Three of the exhibition focuses briefly on the ceramic art of eastern and western Panama including seldom-seen wares from the early first millennium BC. The art from these regions is related to that of Colombia and Costa Rica and shows no direct affinity with the art of the Central Region, thereby confirming the indigenous nature of Central Panamanian art.

The last section, entitled 'The Pre-Columbian Zoo', includes a large selection of three-dimensional ceramic pieces in the form of fauna, including jaguars, crocodiles, coatimundis, tapirs, stingrays, and a large variety of birds.

The objects included in the exhibition are representative of the finest works of art in public and private collections across the United States and include fifty treasures from the Museo Antropológico Reina Torres de Arauz in Panama.

The exhibition is complemented by indigenous music, a video presentation, gallery guides, and a research monograph with over 150 colour plates of artworks and 120 black-and-white illustrations of design elements and design motifs arranged according to specific styles and chronological periods.

Armand J. Labbé, Director of Research and Collections at the Bowers Museum of Cultural Art, Santa Ana, California, is the curator of Between Empires: The Artistic Legacy of Pre-Columbian Panama and author of the research monograph Guardians of the Life Stream: Shamans, Art and Power in Pre-Columbian Central Panama.


Fig. 9. Tricolor jar with coiled serpent marking off the four cardinal directions. Montañita Transitional Style. Central Region. Panama. c. AD 500-600.

Fig. 10. Tricolor double jar depicting reflections of upper world imagery in lower world. Zahina Polychrome Style. Central Region. Panama. c. AD 200-400.

11. Map of Panama showing the Central Region Sites and Provinces.
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NEW DISCOVERIES AT AKSUM, ETHIOPIA

David W. Phillipson

Recent excavations at Aksum in Ethiopia have been casting new light on the spectacular remains of 'the last of the great civilizations of Antiquity to be revealed to modern knowledge.'

The city of Aksum lies in the Tigray highlands in northern Ethiopia (Figs 1, 2). During the early centuries AD it was the capital of a major trading state which has been described as 'the last of the great civilizations of Antiquity to be revealed to modern knowledge'. In their heyday the kings of Aksum ruled not only in Africa but also across the Red Sea in what is now Yemen.

Archaeologically, Aksum is best known for its series of monumental stelae (Fig 3), some of which are carved in representation of multi-storied buildings; they probably date from about the third or fourth centuries AD. They are remarkable monuments, not least because of their sheer size (Fig 4). Each consists of a single piece of granite, which must have been transported from quarries at least four kilometres distant from the site where it was to be erected (Fig 5). The largest of the stelae, now fallen and broken, would have been 29.8 metres high and some 517 tonnes in weight (Fig 6). This monument is a strong candidate for consideration as one of the largest single monuments which human beings have ever attempted to erect. Our research has been able to throw interesting light on the significance and symbolism of these remarkable monuments.

The fourth century was also the time when the kings of Aksum adopted Christianity. The city has remained a major religious centre ever since, dominated by the Cathedrals of Saint Mary of Zion (Fig 7) where, according to the traditions of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, is kept the Ark of the Covenant brought to Ethiopia by Menelik, the son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

Archaeology has the potential to be our main source of knowledge about the Aksumite past, but there are also occasional references in surviving classical texts such as the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea in the first century AD, and a series of inscriptions, in both Ethiopic and Greek, from Aksum itself. The coinage, issued in gold, silver and bronze between the third and seventh centuries, likewise provides significant information. Ethiopian tradition, some of which was committed to writing in later times, is also highly and directly relevant.

Previous excavation has largely concentrated on the city's remarkable monumental architecture and on its long-distance trade contacts. Luxury manufactured goods, imported mostly from the eastern Mediterranean via the Red Sea port of Axulis, have been recovered in some quantity. We know far less, however, about whatever was exported in exchange, although the Periplus indicates that ivory was important. Likewise, little attempt has yet been made to understand the local economic base, presumably founded in indigenous Ethiopian agriculture, which led to the rapid rise of urbanism. These are some of the principal topics which the current research seeks to address.

The current excavations at Aksum began in 1993. They are conducted under the direction of the author, with the British Institute in Eastern Africa as principal sponsor. Major research grants from the Society of Antiquaries of London and from the
The aims of the current project cannot be expressed exclusively in research terms. We also seek to contribute something more tangible to Ethiopia and its people. The provision of field experience and training to local archaeologists is thus regarded as an integral part of the project, as are monument conservation and the development of museum facilities.

The ‘Tomb of the Brick Arches’
Although located in the central stelae area, this tomb does not appear to have been associated with any particular stela, and probably dates from the late third or early fourth centuries AD. The tomb is approached by means of an entrance with 18 surviving stone steps (Fig 8). The entrance, 12 metres long by 1.5 metres wide, reaches a depth of 6.2 metres and was originally roofed with rough stone lintels. Its east side retains the original stone wall to its full height in a
Excavation

Fig 5 (left). One of the quarries where the stelae were cut.
Fig 6 (below). The great fallen stela.
Fig 7 (bottom). Bird's-eye view of the Cathedral of Saint Mary of Zion, erected on the podium of the earlier basilica.

remarkably fine state of preservation. At the foot of the steps, a horseshoe-shaped brick arch gives access to the tomb, which comprises four rock-cut chambers, their floor being almost ten metres below the modern ground surface. It appears that the complex was roughly carved out as a whole, then subdivided by the insertion of stone cross-walls incorporating brick arches built with lime-mortar (Fig 9).

Excavation has been concentrated in the second chamber, where a mass of archaeological material was preserved (Fig 10), despite having suffered some disturbance in ancient times. It appeared that the tomb's contents had been raked over, resulting, for example, in the disarticulation of one or more human skeletons and, presumably, in the removal of any items of high intrinsic value.

Large numbers of complete and broken pots (Fig 11) were mixed with fragmented glass vessels, some of very fine quality which must have featured prominently among Aksum's luxury imports. There were also the remains of wooden boxes which had been covered with metal plaques inlaid with designs in coloured glass paste (Fig 13). Other metal items were of iron, bronze and silver.

Particular interest attaches to a substantial quantity of ivory, including two very large panels carved with elaborate representations of vines and animals (Fig 12). Although parallels are known over a wide area, the animals give these specimens a uniquely Aksumite aspect. The two panels are probably best interpreted as having adorned the back of an elaborate chair or throne. A further type of ivory object from this tomb consists of about two dozen thin square panels finely carved with concentric circles around a domed metal stud. It is tempting to suggest that these may have adorned some form of chest. A small cylindrical box, carved with exquisite delicacy from a single piece of ivory, was also recovered. We have here direct archaeological evidence for Aksumite involvement not only with trade in ivory (previously attested in written sources), but also with the local working of that material at a very high artistic and technological level.

The Giant Stela and its Associated Tombs

Another of our major excavations is centred on the largest of the stelae, briefly noted above, which seems to have fallen whilst attempts were being made to erect it (Fig 14). It is carved on all four sides in representa-
Excavation

Fig 8 (left). Entrance to the 'Tomb of the Brick Arches'.
Fig 9 (above). Inside the 'Tomb of the Brick Arches', showing the dividing walls between chambers.
Fig 10 (left, centre). Inside the 'Tomb of the Brick Arches', showing the mass of artefacts on the floor of the second chamber.

The architectural remains intact although the slabs and substantial remains of the brickwork survive. The side chambers, like the central passage, had been largely but not completely cleared in antiquity, before being filled with debris and rubbish; some materials apparently dating to the original deposit were, however, recovered. These included pieces of fine coloured-glass inlay, engraved mother-of-pearl plaques and a copper-alloy handle plated in gold.

The internal walls of the Mausoleum, constructed of rough stones set in mud-mortar, were originally thickly plastered with a coarse gritty

Fig 11 (below). Pottery bowl from the 'Tomb of the Brick Arches', its base bearing a model of yoked oxen.
Fig 12 (right). Carved ivory panel from the 'Tomb of the Brick Arches'.

On each side of the Mausoleum's central passage are five side-chambers, making ten in all, each 6.6 metres long by 1.7 metres wide (Fig 18). At the entrance to each of these, had originally been a brick arch springing from dressed stone slabs: none
render: careful examination failed to reveal any traces of painted or other decoration. This render had also been applied to the cracks between the roof slabs and is a previously unrecorded feature of Aksumite architecture.

The Stelae and the Elite Tombs
We are now able to offer a much amplified understanding of the central stelae area (Fig 17). During the first three centuries AD, it was gradually built up in a series of terraces and platforms, in and under which were subterranean tombs, many of them marked by stelae. The finely carved storeyed stelae were probably the last, dating to around the beginning of the fourth century AD. The largest of all was associated with tombs of great complexity and magnificence, and there can be little doubt that these were the burial places of Aksum’s élite – presumably royal. They symbolise not only the power, authority and technological expertise of the ancient kingdom, but also its capacity for the organisation of manpower.

It seems likely that the fall of the great stela closely coincided in date

Fig 13 (above). Bronze and iron plaque from the ‘Tomb of the Brick Arches’, inlaid with coloured glass paste.

Fig 14 (above right). The megalithic tomb known as Nefas Mawcha, destroyed by the fall of the great stela. The capstone of Nefas Mawcha weighs 360 tonnes.

Fig 15 (right) Excavation in progress in the ‘Mausoleum’s central passage.

Fig 16 (left). Inside the ‘Mausoleum’, showing the western arch and the entrance to a sidechamber.

Fig 17 (below). Excavation in progress in the main stela area. The trench in the foreground exposed the original site of a stela taken to Rome in 1938.

MINERVA 14
with the coming of Christianity. The erection of stelae seems thereafter to have been abandoned. Later élite tombs were of distinct but related types, such as the structure named the 'Tomb of the False Door'. The substructure is reminiscent of earlier tombs, but the superstructure — although retaining a false door identical to those on the stelae — has a distinct, squat form. I believe that we can see here evidence for the Christianising of tomb architecture among the Aksumite élite.

Religious and Domestic Areas

In 1994 we were able to extend our work into several new areas in and on the outskirts of Aksum. Permission was granted for us to conduct a detailed survey of the Cathedral precinct at Aksum (Fig 20). Investigations included the great Aksumite podium on which the present Old Cathedral was built in the seventeenth century but which is believed to date back at least to Aksum’s first Christian church, the basilica erected by King Ezana in the fourth century. Trial excavations were conducted in the area on the northern edge of the ancient city, where archaeological remains of domestic occupation are preserved. Stone walls were located which showed signs of repeated repair and alteration; these were associated with stratified deposits up to two metres deep, extending back to at least the sixth century AD.

Three further annual field seasons are planned with the expectation that, by 1997, we shall have achieved a much broader understanding of ancient Aksumite civilization, emphasising its internal workings and economy, as well as the local input for its long-distance trade links.

Fig 18 (above left). Inside the ‘Mausoleum’: a sidechamber.
Fig 19 (above right). The western entrance to the ‘Mausoleum’, viewed from the ground-surface.
Fig 20 (below). The festival of Saint Mary of Zion.

Dr David Phillipson is Curator of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology and Reader in African Prehistory at the University of Cambridge.

David Phillipson will give a lecture on Recent Archaeological Discoveries at Aksum at the British Museum on 20 September. For details contact the Honorary Secretary, the Sudan Archaeological Research Society, c/o the British Museum, London, WC1B 3DG; tel. (0171) 323 8500.

FURTHER READING


A NEW AGE FOR THE UFFINGTON WHITE HORSE

New scientific techniques have enabled archaeologists to date the Uffington White Horse, the huge white figure shown galloping across the side of the chalk downland in southern England, to much earlier than was previously believed.

David Miles

The Uffington White Horse is one of the best known and most distinctive icons of the British past (Fig 1). Its elegant and abstract form, nearly 110 metres in length, leaps across a downland etched by prehistoric monuments: the great hillfort of Uffington Castle, burial mounds such as Wayland’s Smithy (Fig 2) and the Ridgeway, the green road linking Avebury and Wessex with the Thames Valley and East Anglia (Fig 3).

The Horse itself is ancient. It was listed in a medieval document, along with Stonehenge, as one of the Wonders of Britain. For the past three centuries antiquaries and archaeologists have speculated about its origins, yet surprisingly few scientific or systematic investigations have taken place until very recently. In 1980 several members of the Oxford Archaeological Unit spent a weekend surveying the White Horse. The results were not dramatic but it started a dialogue with the National Trust, the owners of the Horse, and English Heritage, its legal guardians.

The time was opportune. The Honorable David Astor had recently given the National Trust a stretch of downland around the White Horse, so that it need no longer remain cursed by barbed wire and ploughed fields. There was an opportunity to let the Horse gallop and allow visitors to breathe. Something could be done about the serious erosion caused by visitors funnelling into the limited public space on White Horse Hill. The potential for improved management, protection and interpretation appealed to English Heritage and the National Trust.

For the archaeologists there was the fascination of the centuries-old questions, ‘Who made the White Horse and why?’ But was this a question that could be answered? In order to date sites archaeologists excavate and analyse strata and the artefacts encapsulated in them. Sceptics argued that the usual excavation techniques could not work on the White Horse, an image simply cut into chalk bedrock. The biggest breakthrough came not in the field but while excava...
vating Ministry of Works archives in the Elephant and Castle, London. In the files we found records relating to work done on the Horse by the Ministry after the Second World War.

During the War some cautious officials had had the Horse covered over in case it should provide a landmark to antiquarian-minded Luftwaffe pilots. In the late '40s and early '50s the Horse was allowed to see the light of day again, and in the Ministry files there was a drawing and a photograph showing that during the restoration a trench had been carefully excavated into the head and the so-called 'beak' of the Horse. To our delight this showed clearly that the Horse was not simply scoured into natural chalk. Instead successive trenches were filled with rammmed chalk – the Horse was a layer cake of strata over three feet deep (Fig 5).

The instigator of this excavation was unknown and the result had never been published or disseminated. Further enquiries, however, proved that the archaeologist in charge of the post-War restoration had been W.F. (Peter) Grimes, later Director of the Museum of London and Director of the Institute of Archaeology at London University.

Grimes' trench provided the impetus to launch the White Horse Hill project in 1989. The aim was to study the whole historic landscape around the Horse, to put the animal in context, and at the same time provide information to help with the restoration and maintenance of a very sensitive area. The archaeologist could not just let rip with machines and large scale trenches; this had to be brain surgery rather than an autopsy. In the first stages the techniques used were non-destructive: computerised aerial surveys and detailed ground surveys mapped every hump and bump on the hill. Geophysical surveys with magnetometers and resistivity metres provided a below-ground picture (Fig 6). These surveys made it possible to target particular questions and specific areas for excavation which might hold the answers.

Some of these questions related to the landscape itself – its formation, how the vegetation cover had changed and how it has been used by people over the millennia. In a dry, chalky environment the best potential source of evidence was ancient buried soils. Most of these were in the Manger, the dramatic, steep-sided, dry valley beneath the Horse. The Manger has acted as a sump into which environmental materials have been washed for the past 12,000 years. Trenches sliced into the base of the Manger revealed a time capsule of soils from the end of the last Ice Age when the valley was partly filled by frost-shattered chalk and scoured out by melting snow fields (Fig 7). Above the soils created when the first farmers cleared some of the forest cover some 5000 years ago. Preserved beneath prehistoric earthworks we found other buried soils from the Late Bronze Age which showed that by 700 BC the downland already existed and trees were a rarity.

The White Horse occupies an ancient and much-used landscape. Several incisions were carefully cut into the Horse itself. The first one located Grimes' trench. We knew we were in the right place when at the base of the cut we found a penny of 1952, which he had considerably placed for future generations. Other trenches were placed across the body of the Horse.

The first problem to tackle was the shape of the Horse. Was the present abstract, sinuous and segmented shape the original one? Two credible theories have been argued in recent decades. Professor Stuart Piggott, noting the stylistic similarity to horses on ceremonial coinage, argued that the Horse was designed by the Iron Age British, whereas the more recent theory suggests that the Uffington Horse originated in the first century BC. In contrast, Diana Woolner proposed a pagan Anglo-Saxon date, about AD 600, observing that the Horse may once have been larger and more naturalistic in its design.

Our trenches have settled the shape argument. The Horse was formed by cutting a trench into the ground which was then filled with chalk. For the image to survive it had to be cleaned and scoured every few years. Sometimes new layers of chalk were rammed in. Thomas Hughes, author of Tom Brown's Schooldays and a native of Uffington, recorded the last of the great local scouring festivals in September 1857, in his book The Scouring of the White Horse. The scouring is remarkable but the method of construction resulted in the shape remaining relatively fixed; it has not changed much over the years.

Nevertheless a stylistic basis is not a strong one upon which to date a figure such as this. We were always more sceptical about our chances of dating the origins of the White Horse. The
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odds were improved, however, by the development in the late 1980s of a new dating method. Scientists at Oxford University Research Laboratory for Archaeology and History of Art were developing Optically Stimulated Luminescence (O.S.L.) Dating. This method aims to date the last exposure to sunlight of buried soils. It was unlikely that we would find pottery or coins (other than Professor Grimes’s) in the body of the White Horse. Even carbon for C14 dating might be a problem. However, buried soils or silts were a distinct possibility, and in the final season of work in 1994 we located the most promising samples, silts in the lowest levels of the Horse’s belly.

By the end of 1994 Professor Mike Tite and Julie Rees-Jones of the Oxford Laboratory had the results: three dates all centred on 1000 BC. These are statistical dates and so the likely range is 1400-600 BC. They suggest that the Uffington White Horse was first carved into the hillside in the Late Bronze Age.

Is this possible? Can the Horse be 3000 years old? We know that it was regarded as a great mystery about 900 years ago. For the prehistoric art historian a date as old as 1000 BC presents problems. Possible equine parallels exist in the Iron Age, on coins in the first century BC and even as far back as the sixth century on the Hochdorf couch, found in a princely burial. But for the landscape archaeologist a Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date makes sense. The period around 800-600 BC was one of intense activity on the Downs. For the first time great blocks of land were divided by ditched boundaries. Fortified sites appeared on the hilltops. The hillfort of Uffington Castle has been dated to this period by the White Horse Project. To the east Rams Hill has recently been similarly radiated by the British Museum. On the adjacent hill to the west, Tower Hill, we have also recently found a large Bronze Age settlement. Alongside one of the round houses was a spectacular hoard of bronze axes, buried before the craftsmen had actually finished making some of them, around 650 BC.

This then was a period of rapid population growth when territory was being carved out and protected and hillforts defended. Perhaps the White Horse was a banner for these people. But it was also a banner which marked the ancestral burial grounds of their ancestors and their successors. Above the White Horse we found tumuli and cemeteries of the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods (Fig 8). During some 4000 years the dead were interred on the hill, their burial mounds silhouetted against the sky. This ceased in the Christian period, but the Horse was adopted as an icon of St George who is said to have slain the dragon on Dragon Hill, the distinctive chalk pyramid above the Manger (Fig 9). Perhaps it is the ability of successive generations of people to identify with the White Horse and adopt it as a meaningful icon that has resulted in its survival for over 25 centuries.

David Miles is Director of the Oxford Archaeological Unit.
New Gallery

A NEW PREHISTORY FOR LONDON

The Museum of London has embarked on an ambitious programme of gallery renewal, designed to carry the capital’s story forward into the next millennium. The new Prehistoric Gallery, ‘People before London’, which opened at the end of last year, is the first of this new generation of galleries, and displays half a million years of human activity in the lower Thames Valley prior to the founding of Londinium by the Romans in the middle of the first century AD.

Jonathan Cotton

The Museum of London is the result of an amalgamation of two separate museums: the Guildhall Museum in the City (established by the Corporation of London in 1826) and the London Museum in Kensington Palace (established by Viscount Harcourt and Lord Esher in 1912). When it opened to the public in 1976, its galleries broke new ground in presenting a linear, chronological biography of a city using a combination of original objects, reconstructed settings, text, graphics, sound and lighting. The original Prehistoric Gallery was intended to set the geological and topographical scene, and to display as much as possible of the Museum’s rich holding of prehistoric artefacts, many of which had been recovered from the waters of the River Thames, and from commercial gravel digging both upstream and downstream of the City. Herein lay a problem, however, for splendid though these objects were, few had reliable archaeological contexts. By the same token, the handful of prehistoric sites then known through excavation were isolated monuments unrelated in space if not time; virtually nothing was known of the overall pattern of settlement of which they formed part.

The years since 1976 have witnessed an explosion of archaeological fieldwork and research, much of it carried out by the Museum’s own staff. Excavations conducted ahead of development programmes across London have revealed much that is new and unexpected, and have begun to provide a framework within which earlier findings can be set. The evidence has been summarised by Nick Merriman in his book Prehistoric Lon-

Fig 1 (left). Thousands of all purpose cutting and chopping tools have been found in the Thames Valley. This example, from the site of the Regent Palace Hotel, Glasshouse Street, off Piccadilly Circus, and dating to c. 350,000-120,000 BC, is one of the finest.

Fig 2 (above). Copper, flint and bone daggers from the Thames in West London, c. 2200-1500 BC.
don (HMSO 1990), although such has been the pace of discovery that even this is now out-of-date in certain respects.

The new Gallery incorporates the results of detailed audience research and is divided into two main sections: a chronological narrative, and a central ‘spine’ devoted to early technologies (e.g. stone, wood, pottery, metals etc). The chronological narrative is enlivened by a series of dramatic dioramas, painted landscape friezes, artists’ reconstructions, newly-commissioned models and an evocative bird-song soundtrack, while the technology spine incorporates a number of touch-panels and ancient-and-modern equivalents inviting the visitor to make a direct connection with the early past. The Gallery has also been kept deliberately ‘low-tech’ – there are no computers or videos to cause bottlenecks and break the atmosphere; a small Pepper’s Ghost (a nineteenth-century Music Hall illusion which uses an angled semi-silvered mirror to superimpose one image on top of another) displaying ‘Caesar’s Camp Heathrow then... and now’ is the only concession to ‘modern’ hardware.

The Gallery has three main aims: to orientate the first-time visitor to London through the use of a timeline and location maps; to show the massive changes wrought on the local landscape by nature and people; and to make it clear that such people were not necessarily ‘primitive’ (the shambly caveman image dies hard), but perceptive, adaptive beings capable of rational thought and collective action.

The aims are perhaps most difficult to achieve for the earliest periods of London’s prehistory, when our evidence is restricted to flint tools and animal bones buried deep within the Thames gravel terraces. We have attempted to surmount these difficulties by featuring finds from famous localities in the West End of London and elsewhere – for instance a fine handaxe (c. 350,000-120,000 BC) from the site of the Regent Palace Hotel off Piccadilly Circus (Fig 1) and mammoth and rhinoceros teeth (c. 120,000-40,000 BC) from Whitehall and the Old Bailey. A later ‘Mounterian’ handaxe (c. 80,000-40,000 BC), associated in Europe with people of Neanderthal type, comes from an area just to the north of Heathrow Airport – another locality likely to be familiar to many modern visitors!

This western part of London is heavily featured in the Gallery, for recent work has built on that carried out by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century antiquaries like John Aubrey and William Stukeley, and post-war fieldworkers such as A.D. Lacaille and W.F. Grimes. As a result, we can now begin to talk in terms of the development and utilisation of the whole of the post-glacial landscape after c. 10,000 BC, from the butchery sites and base camps of nomadic hunter-gatherers to the defended enclosures, farmsteads, field-systems and trackways of highly-stratified later prehistoric communities.

Evidence from the fourth and third millennia BC is particularly well-represented in the area. In the fourth millennium BC activity seems to have hugged the Thames and its major tributaries. Earthen monuments of ‘causewayed enclosure’ type, thought to represent the communal meeting places of scattered ‘farming’ communities, are now known from Staines, Eton Wick and Dorney, while rectangular ‘houses’ have been identified at Runnymede Bridge and Cranford. By the third millennium BC there was a move out of the wetter valley floors and onto the wooded gravel terraces. Seemingly domestic settlements are harder to locate, and there appears to

Fig 5. Iron dagger of continental type in a bronze-bound wooden sheath of local manufacture, 6th-5th century BC. Probably from the Thames at Mortlake.
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New Gallery

Although these Thames-side communities were well-placed to take full advantage of the cross-channel trade in bronze between the ninth and seventh centuries BC, they may have been hard hit as bronze gave way to iron soon after. The London area has few of the hillforts which characterise this period in other parts of Britain. Most of the local population appear to have lived in small farmsteads engaged in a mixture of stock raising and crop growing. Although some settlements had more specific functions connected with iron working, the volume of objects offered to the river diminishes sharply at this time as local smiths struggled to come to terms with the new metal. A small but select group of iron daggers in innovative bronze-bound wooden scabbards (Fig 5), and a range of hinged bronze brooches from the west-London Thames demonstrate that certain sections of the local populace had access to prestige objects; pointed iron swords (several with decorated blades) appear in the river from the fourth century BC.

For reasons which are still not understood, the London area appears to have lain outside the mainstream of tribal politics in the last century or so BC. It could be that the Thames, formerly something of a highway into lowland Britain, now marked the boundary between neighbouring tribes whose main centres or oppida were set well back from the river. Certainly, on present evidence, London was not itself a tribal centre, although a number of important settlements were beginning to appear downstream. (On the evidence of coin distributions, John Kent has also argued for the presence of another such settlement upstream in West London, though no trace has yet been found on the ground.) Most of the local population probably lived in smaller farming settlements, of which a number have been excavated, and were perhaps little affected by the Roman Conquest of AD 43. Some of these settlements continued in use beyond the Conquest; several later developed into fully fledged villas.

Despite this apparent downturn in local fortunes, the Thames continued to receive splendid offerings. A few exceptional pieces of martial equipment such as the Battersea Shield and the Waterloo Bridge Helmet were joined by items of pony harness and feasting gear (Fig 7); the famous so-called Brentford ‘horn-cup’, with its fantastically convoluted decoration (originally inlaid with red enamel), and the stave-built bronze bound tankard from Kew are good examples of this, and both are featured in the displays. Such objects represent the high water mark of Celtic artistic achievement.

Fig 7. Poun gear of 2nd or 1st century BC date, including a snaffle bit from Walthamstow, a terret ring or rein guide from the Thames at Teddworth, and the so-called Brentford ‘horn-cup’. This latter piece is the finest of a group of hollow cast bronze mounts whose purpose remains unclear; they may have been chariot or harness fittings.

Overall, the aim of the Gallery is to portray prehistory and prehistoric people in a more positive light. So that when, on our final panel, we ask, ‘Now, what does prehistory mean to you?’ (answer: the shaping of the landscape, development of social structures and ideologies, crafts and technology, customs and belief), the visitor is left in no doubt that shambles caverns are definitely off the agenda.

Jonathan Cotton is Curator (Prehistory) at the Museum of London.
FROM 1000 BC TO AD 1000
Treasures and People from the Black Sea

Filippo Salviati

The time span covered by the exhibition, slightly longer than its title would indicate, ends with the arrival of the Mongols who, in three successive waves, gained control of the region in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries AD.

The geographical location of the Black Sea northern territories, at the heart of the route that links the Mediterranean, the Balkans and Central Europe with Persia, Central Asia and China, and the variety of ethnic groups which have inhabited them, is reflected in the many different artistic influences to be detected in the motifs on the objects in the exhibition.

The main interest of the display lies not only in the fact that it introduces to the general public the artistry of peoples who lived in one of the lesser known but nevertheless important regions of the world, but

UN TIL 25 June the exhibition 'From 1000 BC to 1000 AD: Treasures and People from the Black Sea' will be on display in the Sala dell'Arenco, Palazzo del Podestà in Rimini, Italy. The exhibition focuses on the peoples who dwelled in the northern regions of the Black Sea, illustrating their history from an archaeological, art historical, historical and anthropological point of view.

The lands bordering the Black Sea have since antiquity been seen as remote and mysterious. This was the homeland of the legendary Cimmerians mentioned in Homer's Odyssey and in the historical writings of Herodotus and Strabo, as well as in Assyrian records of the eighth century BC. It was a region described as being shrouded in perennial darkness and located near the entrance to the Underworld, while the nomadic way of life of the Cimmerians, their customs, fierce nature and ferocious habits in war justified the epithet of 'barbarian' given them by Classical writers.

Between the first millennium BC and the year AD 1000, the period which gives the Rimini exhibition its title, many nomadic and semi-nomadic people fought to gain control over this vast area, modern Ukraine and Crimea. The Cimberians were replaced by the Scythians (first half of the seventh century BC to third century BC), and later by the Sarmatians (third century BC to third century AD).

The period between the third and tenth centuries AD was marked by the migration of many groups of people, the Alans, Goths and Huns, destined to influence profoundly European history during the Late Antique period and the early Middle Ages. Other minor ethnic groups which from the tenth to the twelfth centuries AD settled in the Black Sea area contributed to the formation of the nucleus from which the modern Bulgarians originated.

Fig. 1. Pair of gold Scythian earrings excavated in 1992 in tomb no. 4 of kurgan 9, near the village of Malina Lepeticha, district of Velikaja Lepeticha in the region of Cherson. 4th century BC. H: 7.7 cm. Kiev, Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Sciences.

Fig. 2. Scythian culture. Gold object in the shape of a fish, excavated in 1989 in the kurgan located near Ingulo-Kamenska, district of Novogrodovka, region of Kerovo-grad. 4th century BC. L: 34 cm. Kiev, Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Sciences.

Fig. 3. Gotth-Alans culture. Bronze plaque in openwork design with a standing human figure in the centre. Found in tomb no. 65 of the Luchitoe cemetery, Alasta, excavated from 1977 to 1994. The tombs date from the 6th to the 12th century AD. Simferopol', Crimea, Historical Museum of the Republic of Crimea.
Amongst the most striking objects in the exhibition are a gold Scythian cup (fifth century BC) decorated with horse heads of exquisite craftsmanship from a kurgan in the region of Cherson (Fig 5), a scabbard, also of gold, for a short Scythian akinak sword (fourth century BC) decorated with battle scenes between Greeks and Persians, and the central part of a shield of the sixth-seventh century BC as well as several Sarmatian, Scythian and Gothic pieces of jewellery.


The catalogue, edited by E.A. Arslan and G. della Porta, with essays by D.N. Kozak, I.N. Chirapunov, G. Susin, E.P. Buniatjan, N.G. Novicenkov, A.I. Ajabalin, M.G. Kramarovskyi, P.G. Guzzo, A. Donati, and a bibliography of most recent publications, is published by Electa, Milan. It is informative and well illustrated in black and white and colour.

From 1000 BC to AD 1000: Treasures and People from the Black Sea (Dal Mille ai Mille: Tesori e Popoli dal Mar Nero) is at Sala dell’Arte e Palazzo del Podestà, Piazza Cavour, Rimini, Italy, until 25 May, every day from 8.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. Closed Monday. Information and bookings: Paolo Facciotta, Associazione Meeting. Tel.: 0541/783100 Fax: 0541/786422

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THE HELLENISTIC WORLD: ART AND CULTURE

A new permanent gallery at the British Museum

Ian Jenkins

On 12 July of this year the British Museum will open its new gallery of Hellenistic art. The display comes at a time when Hellenistic art and culture, generally, are undergoing a radical re-evaluation. Over the past fifteen years or so there has been an increasing awareness that the old tendency to dismiss the Hellenistic world as an age of decadence, contrasting with the supposed purity of the preceding Archaic and Classical periods, is no longer a tenable viewpoint. Hellenistic art may lack the apparently linear development through time, from abstraction to naturalism, that characterises earlier Greek art. Yet its rich diversity of style and genre offers a fascinating field of enquiry in which questions relating to chronological development are not the only ones that may be asked. That is not to say that students of Hellenistic art are not interested in dates, which of course they are; merely that chronological divisions are not always so helpful in dealing with the Hellenistic period as other sorts of approach. In arranging its exhibition thematically, the British Museum has sought to provide a cultural context for its collection of Hellenistic art, bringing to the forefront certain ideas that typify this intellectually self-conscious age.

The rise of Macedon in the fourth century BC and the subjugation of Greece under King Philip II brought to an end the political independence of the individual Greek cities. After Philip's death in 336 BC, his son and

Fig 1 (left). Marble head of Alexander the Great. Hellenistic original of 2nd-1st century BC, from Alexandria.

Fig 2 (above). Marble head of the Athenian orator Demosthenes. Roman copy of the head of a statue by Polyeuktos, erected in the Athenian market place in 280 BC, forty-two years after Demosthenes' suicide.
successor Alexander the Great (Fig 1) pursued his father's policy of expansionism far beyond the former boundaries of Greece, and his conquest of the old empires to the east and south opened up vast new areas to the influence of Greek culture. Following Alexander's death in 323 BC, no single individual was strong enough to rule the empire he had created, and his generals divided it up into a series of independent kingdoms. These lands were gradually 'Hellenised', and the term 'Hellenistic' is used to describe the period between Alexander's death and the fall of the last independent kingdom to the advancing Roman Empire. The defeat of Cleopatra and Antony at Actium in 31 BC may be taken as the political end of the Hellenistic age. Egypt was the richest and longest-lived of the Hellenistic kingdoms, and Mark Antony was the last of the great Hellenistic heroes, of whom Alexander had been the first.

Athens was among the independent Greek city states that lost political freedom as a result of Macedonian ambition, and two of her orators had much to say on the subject. Demosthenes (c. 384-322 BC) urged military resistance, while Aeschines (c. 390/289 -after 314 BC) was the advocate of peaceful compromise. Following his suicide by poison, Demosthenes was remembered as the greatest of all the Athenian orators and one of Greece's noblest patriots. In 280 BC, forty-two years after his death, a statue of him by the sculptor Polykleitos was erected in the Athenian market-place. Roman copies of this lost portrait show the brow knitted and the lips compressed to indicate the inner struggle of a troubled mind (Fig 2).

As ruler of all Greece, Alexander was keen to present himself as a worthy champion, in the legendary mould of the Homeric hero. In 334 he crossed the Hellespont, the narrow strait separating Europe from Asia, and went first to Troy. There he dedicated his armour to Athena and laid a wreath at the tomb of Achilles, protege of Athena and champion of the Greek army in the Trojan War. This act prefigured Alexander's role as a new Achilles liberating the Greek cities of Asia Minor from oriental rule.

That same summer a successful engagement with the Persian army at the river Granicus, east of Troy, opened the gates of Asia Minor, and Alexander proceeded to tour the Greek cities of the west coast, expelling their Persian garrisons. On reaching Priene he made a further dedication to Athena in the form of a temple, on the wall of which his name was carved as a memorial of his benefaction. That inscription was found in the nineteenth-century excavation of the building (Fig 3).

Like Priene, other cities in Asia Minor were refounded in the late Classical and Hellenistic periods and, as new sculptures were commissioned to embellish the temples and sanctuaries of these cities, there was work for sculptors. The sanctuary of Demeter at Knidos was laid out at about the same time as the refounding of the city around 350 BC. It consisted of a long platform terraced into the acropolis with spectacular views of the city below and the sea beyond. The sanctuary once held a large display of marble sculptures. Many of these survive only as fragments, but the cult statue of Demeter herself is preserved remarkably intact (Fig 4). Demeter was the goddess of fertility: she governed the cycle of the seasons and the growing of grain. She was also associated with the Underworld and at Knidos she was worshipped together with Hades, consort of her daughter Persephone.

As well as sculpture, a number of other objects were recovered from the sanctuary including terracotta figures, and numerous lamps and glass bottles ranging in date from the middle of the fourth century BC to the Roman period. In addition, there was a group of curses inscribed on lead tablets. These vividly illustrate the role of the sanctuary as a focus for magical belief and practice connected with the Underworld.

Priene and Knidos were old cities refounded, but the Hellenistic period also saw the building of many new cities, not a few of them called Alexandria, forming part of the new community of Greek and Hellenised peoples. If this was the political legacy of Alexander's conquests, then the cultural legacy was equally far reaching, as the loss of autonomy at civic level prompted a new emphasis on individualism. Intellectual and artistic inventiveness were highly esteemed, and the self-conscious pursuit of cultivated taste brought into being seemingly modern activities such as writing about and collecting art. An increase in private wealth generated a new interest in luxury goods, for both private consumption and public display (Figs 5-9).

As part of this self-conscious process of acquiring Culture, the Hellenistic age developed an intense
interest in the literature and learning of the past. Old texts were lovingly collected, transcribed and commented upon, and libraries were built to house them. Fascination with the literature of the past was coupled with a demand for physical images, not only of poets but of all creative thinkers, past and present. Since poets such as Homer and Hesiod had lived before the development of portraiture, facial types had to be invented for them (Fig 10).

Portraits, both busts and full-length statues, were deployed in libraries, such as that attached to the sanctuary of Athena (goddess of learning) at Pergamon, and the more famous of the Ptolemies at Alexandria in Egypt. A Mousion was also a place for displaying such artworks, but the word had a different meaning in Hellenistic Greece from our own ‘Museum’. Literally, it meant a place connected with the Muses, who were the presiding geniuses of the literary, musical and scientific arts. A Mousion might be a shrine to the Muses, or a place of learning, where the Muses were ‘worshipped’ through study. The great Mousion of the Ptolemies at Alexandria was one such temple of learning, where the Principal held the title of priest.

The works of Homer (fl. c. 750-725 BC) were read and recited throughout antiquity and, in the Hellenistic period, he was worshipped as a god.

Fig 5 (top). Luxury glass vessels from Camosa, part of a group of ten found together in one tomb. 3rd century BC.
Fig 6 (above). Terracotta group of two women. Made at Myrina in north-west Asia Minor c. 100 BC.
Fig 7. Gold diadem of twisted ribbons with a Herakles knot. Said to be from Melos. c. 300-280 BC.
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At Alexandria in the late third century BC, Ptolemy IV Philopator (222-205 BC) and his queen Arsinoe III founded a temple of Homer. Recognisable from their portraits, the king and queen are shown in the bottom left-hand corner of a marble relief showing the apotheosis of Homer (Fig 11) behind the seated Homer. Beneath winged Ptolemy is inscribed *Chromos* (Time); beneath Arsinoe is written *Oikoumenē* (Inhabited World). They are thus portrayed not merely as mortal rulers, but as the embodiment of universal concepts.

Homer is flanked by crouching figures personifying the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, while in front of the poet stands an altar approached by a procession of worshippers, whose names are given below in Greek.

Arranged in two tiers of figures above Homer are the nine Muses. With them are Apollo and, on the extreme right, a poet holding a scroll, perhaps the dedicatee of the relief. The composition is crowned by the reclining figure of Zeus, and, looking up at him, a standing female figure, perhaps Mnemosyne, the personification of good memory and mother of the Muses.

An important part of the artistic and literary milieu of the Hellenistic Age was the theatre, and the very building itself could serve as the focus of a city's cultural identity. Monuments were erected to those who funded the often lavish productions. One such monument is associated with a marble statue of Dionysos, the god of theatre, who is shown seated wearing a *chiton* (tunic) with a panther skin over his left shoulder (Fig 12). In his left hand he probably held a *kithara*, a stringed musical instrument. The head and left arm, now missing, were made from separate pieces of marble. The back was hollowed out, perhaps to reduce weight. Probably originally placed in the Theatre of Dionysos at Athens, the statue was later moved to the so-called monument of Thrasyllus further up the slope of the Acropolis.

In 320/19 BC Thrasyllus was the *choregos* responsible for financing the chorus entered by his tribe in a dramatic competition. Victory entitled the tribe to set up a commemorative
bronze tripod, and Thrasyllus built the monument to display it. In 271/70 BC his son Thrasycles added two victory-tripods of his own. The tripods had probably already disappeared when the statue of Dionysos was placed on the monument, perhaps around AD 400. The monument was destroyed by the Turks in the Greek War of Independence, but the statue had fortunately been removed already by Lord Elgin, with whose collection it entered the British Museum in 1816.

In the Classical period Athens had enjoyed unrivalled status as the artistic centre of Greece. This role was shared with other cities in the Hellenistic age, principally Pergamon in Asia Minor and Alexandria in Egypt. Throughout the Hellenistic period, however, Athens remained the most important centre for ancient philosophy, continuing the traditions established by Plato and Aristotle. In the fourth century BC Plato and Aristotle had set out the essential systems of Greek thought. In moral and political philosophy they had taken their lead from Socrates (469-399 BC), best remembered for his penetrating examination of the human mind and questioning of the nature of knowledge. Plato’s Academy also specialised in mathematics and astronomy, while Aristotle’s Lyceum became renowned for its work in botany and zoology.

Aristotle was tutor to the young Alexander. He witnessed the rise of Macedon, the creation of Alexander’s empire and the great political, social and cultural upheaval that these events brought about. The impact of all this was felt deeply at Athens among the intellectual descendants of Plato and Aristotle. These included Zeno (335-263 BC) and Epikouros (341-270 BC) who responded with the new philosophies of Stoicism and Epicureanism. These were ethical codes that were in tune, respectively, with the cosmopolitanism and individualism of the day, and were to enjoy a long life, both in the Hellenistic age, and in the following Roman period (Fig 13).
AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BESTIARY

Animals in Egyptian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Robert S. Bianchi

Organised by Dr Dorothea Arnold, Lila Acheson Wallace Curator in Charge of the Department of Egyptian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 'An Ancient Egyptian Bestiary' reveals how extensive the collections of that department are. Approximately 170 representations of animals in a variety of materials, from alabaster to obsidian, and size, from delicate, miniature amulets to monumental stone sculpture in the round, have been drawn from the department's collections. The individual animal representations have been presented in environmental groupings showing how beasts shared the same habitat in ancient times, be it desert, marsh, or farmland. The forthcoming spring issue of the Museum's Bulletin will feature most of the objects in the exhibition.

The ancient Egyptian fascination with and reverence for animals has long puzzled Western man, accustomed to asserting human superiority to and dominance over beasts, as eloquently argued by Sophocles in his play Antigone. The Greeks, and particularly the Romans, were horrified by the ancient Egyptian practice of venerating deities in animal form, as the vituperative Fifteenth Satire of the Roman poet Juvenal demonstrates. Such sentiments, however, were not confined to the criticisms of pagan co-religionists - the writings of the early Christian fathers are peppered with condemnations of many pagan practices, foremost among which is the worship of animals.

Scholars have, therefore, long sought to identify what motivated the early Egyptians to associate their deities with members of the animal kingdom. In seeking those causes, one must always bear in mind, as this exhibition clearly demonstrates, that the ancient Egyptians did not recognise any great division between the animal kingdom and mankind, as did the Greeks, Romans, and Christians. As early as the Badarian Period (before 4000 BC), the Egyptians had buried cows, jackals, and sheep, each animal wrapped in a shroud, in the same cemeteries in which they buried their dead. The practice seems to have continued into the Roman Imperial Period, to judge from the dogs and birds excavated in the tombs of people in the southernmost reaches of the Oasis of Doush. Throughout the history of pagan Egypt humans and animals were considered partners, perhaps even to a certain degree equals, because each was a living being.

However, unlike mankind, it has been argued, the successive generations of animals appeared to be indistinguishable from those which came before. This gave the animal kingdom an immutability which reflected permanence and stability, characteristics which the ancient Egyptians, it would appear, ascribed to their deities. Nevertheless, not all animals were associated with the divine; Pharaonic Egyptians do not seem to have venerated the elephant, the giraffe, or the rhinoceros, nor the horse or cockatoo.

The nature of ancient Egyptian philosophical discourse, rooted as it
for Halloween. The aesthetic concerns which govern the design of the hieroglyphs are the very same which govern the composition of such figures. Because the hieroglyphs admit the presence of composite signs in the form of common objects in uncommon combinations, so too are representations such as these acceptable.

The care with which objects such as these are crafted has led several commentators to wax eloquent about the inherent naturalism of ancient Egyptian animal representations. Whereas this might be true in individual details, it is for the most part impossible for a modern scientist to achieve exact zoological identifications of the beasts represented. In the figure of Anubis, one is not certain whether the animal head is that of an Egyptian jackal (Canis lupaster), or of a wild dog. In general, the Egyptians did not portray the species exactly when they depicted the gods Anubis, Duamutef, and Wepwawet, and it is because of these problems in the visual representations that some scholars have engaged in a futile debate about whether Anubis was a wolf, a jackal, or a wild dog.

Indeed, the question of naturalism must also address the Egyptians' almost total disregard for the true colours of the skin and hides of many animals. A faience baboon (Fig 4) in the exhibition is a case in point. Perhaps to identify it as a representation of Papio Hamadryas, called 'the Great White One' by the Egyptians, the beast is here an apple-green colour, no doubt for the symbolic values inherent not only in the colour but also in the material.

The statuette of a bronze cat (Fig 7) from the Ptolemaic Period once held the mummy of a cat. Cats were intentionally killed, a practice started at least as early as Dynasty XXX, in order to be mummified and placed as offerings in temple sanctuaries. Forensic examinations of numerous specimens of cat mummies reveal that in general the animals were young, less than two years old, and were killed by the deliberate twisting of their necks. Several mummies were made up from parts of different cats. Recent research has shown that the intentional killing of animals, which was not limited to cats, was ritually motivated, the beast being considered an emissary to the god Osiris. When dedicated in a sanctuary, the animal mummy could serve as an intermediary, conveying prayers to the deities beyond.

The exhibition contains a notable group of animal sculptures in ivory. A gazelle of tinted ivory and wood with inlays of blue pigment has been the subject of some discussion (Fig 1). Often cited as an example of 'art for art's sake' in ancient Egypt, for which there is no evidence whatsoever, this gazelle is now considered to have formed part of the funerary equipment of a rich burial of Dynasty XVIII (1570-1293 BC). The gazelle was often associated with the idea of renewed life, to the extent that an actual gazelle mummy was found buried with a Theban woman of Dynasty XXVI. In this example, the ears have been broken and the missing horns were originally of a different material.

Also of tinted ivory are a pair of cosmetic containers in the shape of wild ducks (Fig 3), which are also dated to Dynasty XVIII. Scholars have assumed that the hollow depression formed by the body was a receptacle in which costly unguents or perfumes were originally stored. To date, however, no traces of any ointment have

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Fig 6. Statuette of the god Anubis as embalmer, wood with gesso and paint. Ptolemaic Period, 304-30 BC. H: 42 cm.

Fig 7. Bronze cat from Saqqara, Ptolemaic Period, 304-30 BC. H: 28 cm.

An Ancient Egyptian Bes-tlary is at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, until 15 October.

been found in any of these so-called cosmetic spoons. Such objects appear to have formed part of the funeral furnishings of opulent tombs of the period, the dead water fowl perhaps symbolising the forces of chaos over which the deceased aspired to triumph.

The third object of tinted ivory, also dated to Dynasty XVIII, is a horse carved in a flying gallop (Fig 2). Its eyes may have been added glass inlays. The form of the horse fits well into the hand, which emphasises its functional value, and indicates its original use as the handle for a whip.

The final piece is an ivory bull (set on a modern base) (Fig 5), which has been identified as a representation of an Apis Bull on the basis of its markings, which include a white triangle on the forehead, and incised images of a vulture and winged scarab flanking a blanket on its back. The piece is dated to Dynasty XXVI (664-525 BC), when the cult of the Apis Bull at Memphis enjoyed a revival, venerated as a living embodiment of the creator god, Ptah.

The exhibition will more than repay a visit and the accompanying Bulletin will be a welcome addition to any Egyptological library.

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Museum Acquisitions

GAULISH AND NUBIAN MERCENARIES IN PTOLEMAIC EGYPT

Two terracotta figures recently acquired by the British Museum

Donald M. Bailey

Fig 1. Egyptian terracotta figure of a Nubian mercenary. H: 12.3 cm. Photo: The British Museum.

Fig 2. Egyptian terracotta figure of a Gaulish mercenary. H: 12.7 cm. Photo: The British Museum.

Most Hellenistic kings used mercenary soldiers in addition to their Macedonian and Greek standing armies, as in earlier times pharaohs of the 26th Dynasty, and later Egyptian kings, employed Greek troops, the former for their internal affairs, the latter for defence against the Persians. Under Ptolemy II Philadelphus
the First Syrian War was fought with the Seleucids; both no doubt used many mercenaries. During this war, the King’s half-brother, Magas, Viceroy of the Cyrenaica, determined to invade Egypt in 274 BC, but was deterred by a rising of Cyrenaican nomads. Four thousand Gaulish mercenaries in the Ptolemaic army took this projected invasion as a signal to revolt. They were somehow persuaded onto an island in the Semytictic branch of the Nile and kept there until they starved to death, committed suicide, killed each other or were killed trying to escape. It was probably Philadelphus who introduced the institution of the cleruchy, whereby soldiers, including ex-mercenaries, were settled on the land in smallholdings, but required to answer a call to arms; this was more cost-effective than having mercenaries permanently employed, a drain on the Treasury, and it allowed more land to be cultivated and available for tax purposes.

The Battle of Raphia in 217 BC against Antiochus III of the Seleucid Kingdom was won by Ptolemy IV Philopator, but he found it necessary to use not only his standing army of Macedonians and Greeks, and to call up his cleruchs, including, as Polybius tells us, 4000 Gauls and Thracians, but also to employ for the first time since the reign of Ptolemy I Soter, a century earlier, a large number (20,000) of native Egyptians. These battalions of Egyptians were trained in Macedonian style warfare and thenceforth realised their own strength: subsequent to the battle there were various rebellions and parts of Egypt became ‘no-go’ areas to the Ptolemies for considerable lengths of time. One such revolt took place in 186/5 BC under Ptolemy V Epiphanes and Gauls were amongst those that besieged the rebel city of Abydos: four of them scratched their names on a chapel of Horus there. But Egyptians continued to be taken into the armed forces and this was a privileged status for them. Funerary stelae of Gauls of the third century BC have been found at Alexandria, and Gauls were recorded in the garrison stationed at Hermopolis Magna late in the second century BC and early in the first.

The sudden need for troops that the threat to Egypt by Antiochus engendered could well have occasioned the engagement of Nubian mercenaries. It seems probable also that Philopator had very close ties with the contemporary Meroitic Pharaoh Ergamenes, their beliefs and inscriptions occasionally appearing in the deep south in the same temples. The recruitment of a Nubian regiment of mercenaries in these perilous circumstances would not be unlikely, and in this Philopator, if indeed he did so, would be following a Pharaonic precedent, such troops being employed on occasion during the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms. But there is apparently no clear statement in the ancient sources of the use of black Africans as mercenaries in the Ptolemaic army.

Two terracotta figures of Egyptian manufacture recently acquired by the British Museum represent a Gaulish and a Nubian warrior. While Celtic Gauls from the fourth century BC onwards came violently into contact with the classical world of the Romans, the Macedonians, the Seleucids and the Attalids of Pergamon, and were often depicted in their art, the Nubians as warriors were less involved with the Greeks, and their fighting gear is not normally shown in sculpture. The Gauls were terrifying and appeared suddenly in the midst of civilised lands, and everyone knew of them; but the Greeks were divided from Nubians by the length of Egypt and were familiar.
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Museum Acquisitions

with them only from mythology and as slaves: the militant Nubian was largely unknown. It is thus very useful to have figures of Nubians bearing arms modelled in terracotta. Fig 1 shows such a warrior, dressed in a tunic with short sleeves, in loose trousers reaching to mid-calf, and high boots, holding a short-hafted double-axe against his right shoulder and carrying a small pointed-oval shield with a central boss; these are his entire weaponry. The top half of a similar terracotta is to be found in the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria, and the Fouquet Collection had another, similarly clothed and holding a double-axe, but depicted without a shield. Some fragmentary examples from Elnasiya were excavated by Petrie in 1904, one close to ours, but two, possibly three, are without shields, one with a short tunic and two wearing the chlamys, or short cloak; another wears a himation, a kind of shawl. One was found in a context of the fourth century AD, but is presumably residual. Another similar figure in Alexandria also has a chlamys, but appears to be wearing shorts and no upper garment: all these hold the double-axe to their right shoulder but show a wide range of clothing. A very interesting variation, in the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, apparently a cavalryman, has the shield and double-axe, but is dressed in a Greek-type cuirass over a short tunic, and wears a Phrygian cap (Fig 3). It is impossible to determine whether he is an officer of a company of soldiers such as that shown in Fig 1, or is a member of a cavalry troop recruited from the same area and comfortable with its weapons.

The Gaul (Fig 2) is largely naked, but wears a long cloak; his hair is long and rises from his head in a fashion well known from the ancient literature and in sculpture: Strabo mentions that Gauls often whitened and stiffened their hair with lime water; his phallos is outsize as befits a wild and potent personality. He has a long-sword slung from a waist-belt and carries a large oval shield, the details of which are typical of the third to second century BC. Here is no wounded or dying Gaul, or a captive, so often represented in Hellenistic art, particularly that of Pergamon, but a bold and fearless warrior, arrogant and convinced of his invincibility. Similar Egyptian Gauls, but not so finely modelled and not so proud, are known in other collections, and their Celtic shields have been passed on to other beings, to the God Bes, for example (a change from his normally round shield), and to Eros, always ready to dress up in other people's gear. A terracotta figure once in the Fouquet Collection shows the latter not only with the shield but with a torch and the Celtic trumpet, the cornu.

Why should Egyptian coroplasts make models of foreign mercenaries in the Ptolemaic army? This is part of a wider question, as Egyptian terracottas of the Graeco-Roman period are something of an enigma. They differ markedly from figures made elsewhere, and although the majority have a religious significance as votives or designed for household shrines, a large proportion are not explainable in this way. Some may be toys and many were apparently decorative, and several of these may be commemorative, the Staffordshire figures of their times. Such nationalistic representations may be part of the world view of the Mediterranean peoples, on the one hand the huge blond or red-headed Celtic warrior, heroically naked, on the other the black African, both so very different from themselves. The Nubian and Gaul were stereotypes, such as were also found in the theatre, where actors played parts identified plainly by the masks they wore: these, too, were modelled in terracotta. The Gaul was probably made during the last quarter of the third century BC or a little later (the mercenaries of Philadephos seem less likely), and the Nubian could well be of the same date: the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator, who was proud of his victory at Raphia, may have been the time when such figures were first produced.

The Greeks were divided from Nubians by the length of Egypt and were familiar with them only from mythology and as slaves: the militant Nubian was largely unknown. It is thus very useful to have figures of Nubians bearing arms modelled in terracotta...

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MINERVA 39
THE ANCIENT COIN MARKET

Exchange rate fluctuations play havoc with market

Eric J. McFadden

Collectors often ask me where in the world they can buy ancient coins at the lowest prices. The answer is that it usually does not matter much where one buys, and exchange rate fluctuations can be as important as any other influence on relative current prices. Due to the ease of transporting small objects in the jet age, prices generally do not vary greatly from place to place. For the price of an inexpensive airline ticket, a dealer can travel halfway around the world and return with a large value of coins. As the cost of transport is a minimal percentage of the value, prices naturally tend to equalise in different areas. If prices are higher in one place, dealers will recognise the situation and bring items from places where prices are lower. Moreover, many dealers sell directly to customers throughout the world, and the ease of communication and transport make the market truly international. The movement of coins to areas of greater demand is a constant process which results in an approximate price equilibrium in different countries.

As prices are dependent on supply and demand, it often seems logical that coins should be least expensive in the area from which they originally came, where they are ordinarily most plentiful. However, demand is also often the highest in the place of origin. For example, it is logical that Roman coins from the mint of Trier in Germany have often been found near the point of origin. Yet it would be a mistake to think that Trier mint coins are less expensive in Germany than elsewhere; the Germans are enthusiastic collectors of their local coinage and will pay top prices for interesting types. Likewise, I know of collectors who go to Israel to buy Judean coins, but despite that area being the original source of supply the prices are at least as high there as elsewhere due to the keen competition among Israeli collectors. Recently a large number of Bactrian coins have come onto the market, but the Pakistani collectors and dealers who bring them to Europe are often surprised that the prices in the West are little or no higher than in Pakistan, where avid and wealthy collectors have been paying strong prices for items relating to the local history.

Another factor in relative prices, and one of current importance, is currency exchange rates. If one currency is particularly strong, it becomes easier for buyers in that currency to purchase coins priced in a less strong currency. In recent months, the Swiss franc and German mark have increased in value by up to 20% in relation to the Italian lira, the U.S. dollar, and sterling. In a field of competitive pricing where dealer margins are often only 20% or less, this fluctuation in exchange rates makes a great difference in the market. All of a sudden, the Americans, British and Italians find it difficult to buy coins in Germany or Switzerland. The Swiss and Germans may now turn out in force for the New York International Coin Convention in May and the London Coin Fair in June to take advantage of the exchange rate, and the flow of supply may shift towards those countries with strong currencies. However, although a quick change in exchange rates may skew relative prices for a short time, the market does soon compensate to restore the usual equilibrium.

The problem of unexpected exchange rate fluctuations was evident in the April 2-4 auction in Zurich by Numismatica Ars Classica, whose sales are regular highlights of the spring season. Auction estimates are always determined months in advance, and with the rise in the Swiss franc many of the N.A.C. sale estimates seemed high to bidders whose currencies had not been so strong. Although the Americans arrived in usual force, many of the Italians were noticeably absent, and even those Italians in attendance were not strong bidders. As a result, a higher than usual percentage of the specialist Italian series – particularly bronzes from the Greek cities of South Italy and bronze to the Roman Republic were left unsold. Despite the strong Swiss franc, competition at the Numismatica Ars Classica sale was fierce for better coins, and the sale overall was a success with total sales in three days of auction totalling more than SF4 million.

The individual highlight of the N.A.C. sale was a silver tetradrachm of Artaxerxes II of Persia, struck c. 414-413 BC, depicting on the obverse two eagles perched on a hare and on the reverse a crab and the figure of Scylla. Estimated at SF100,000, this masterpiece of the engraver’s art fetched SF150,000. It was underbid by an Italian dealer and sold to an American dealer, indicating that the strong Swiss franc has not completely eliminated major buying from countries with weaker currencies. A silver tetradrachm of Rhegium (Fig. 2), c. 310-300 BC, depicting an elegant head of Apollo and a facing lion head, like the Akragas the finest known of its type, brought SF50,000 against an estimate of SF48,000. In the Roman series, a magnificent gold aureus of Augustus (Fig. 3), struck c. 18 BC, with obverse portrait and reverse Victory holding a shield, sold for SF20,000 against an estimate of SF18,000. A rare gold aureus of Domitian (Fig. 4), the wife of Domitian, with obverse portrait and reverse peacock, brought SF37,000 against an estimate of SF36,000.
A gathering of just under 100 scholars met at the British Museum from March 2-4 to participate in an international conference on Silver Plate in Late Antiquity. The conference was the brain-child of Catherine Johns, Curator with responsibility for Roman Britain in the Department of Prehistoric and Romano-British Antiquities in the British Museum, and of Kenneth Painter, formerly Deputy-KEEPER of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities. The welcome to the conference was made by Dr Ian Longworth, CBE, Keeper of Prehistoric and Romano-British Antiquities. As he pointed out, it was an opportune moment for such a conference in an institution holding such great silver treasures as the Esquiline, Mildenhall, Water Newton, Thetford and, most recently, Hoxne treasures. The delegates represented many nations and most of the principal world museums with collections relevant to the conference subject. A total of 14 papers were presented (including three each in German and French) of a diverse and stimulating nature.

Kenneth Painter gave the first, wide-ranging and seminal lecture on 'Silver Hoards from Britain in their Late-Roman context'. Britain has a reputation for being a relatively prolific source of Late-Roman silver, especially over the last fifty years or so. However, whilst groups had been studied in detail, no general survey of the finds, their significance, relevance to other finds, and whether they had been hidden in an emergency, as savings or as votive deposits had been attempted. Not least was the question of the evidence such hoards have produced for religion, pagan and Christian, sometimes even mixed, from their inscriptions (notably on the spoons) and their general iconography. Such an overview was extremely welcome and went a very long way to set the tone of the conference.

The myths and messages of silver plate were examined by Dr Richard Reece (Institute of Archaeology, UCL) in applying the ideas from two publications, *Die Domane als Weltbild* (Schneider) and *Modernisierte Mythen* (Raack), that deserve to be more widely known. Whilst outlining the main thesis of their arguments, and stressing that he did not always agree with them, Dr Reece was able to raise many pertinent points regarding the interpretation of the designs on the plate, many of which were taken up by later speakers. Dr Stefanie Martin-Kilcher (basel) took up allied ideas in discussing the function of Roman silver plate. Dr Max Martin (basel) drew attention to the 'magic' date of '400', so recurrent in the literature, and wondered about the apparent gap which then ensued, especially in Gaul, until the seventh century.

The question of continuity between fourth/fifth- and sixth/seventh-century silver in the Eastern Empire was examined by Dr Marlia Mango. An apparent anachronism exists between the large body of silver plate that is either dated or stylistically ascribed to the fourth century, largely from western ateliers, and a second body which can be identified by Imperial control stamps as originating in the sixth and seventh centuries. There are few objects firmly dated in between and a view needed to be taken based on the combined evidence of control stamps, inscribed silver and, not least, the find spots. Dr Mango's own recent noted work on the Severus treasure has highlighted a number of these points.

Still looking to the Eastern Empire, Dr Irena Toporovic (Beograd) examined the official and private products of the ateliers at Naissus and Sirmium and particularly drew attention to the similarities between the ornament on a number of silver plates such as the Rutichius plate that was definitely made at Naissus and the close parallels with the decoration on the foot of large cruciform fibulae. Hoard evidence of coins and examination of the plate hoards led her to suggest that the differential between official workshops for precious metal items, the mint officina and those workshops producing private commissions was difficult to identify and that Sirmium ceased production before the end of AD 317.

Michael Vickers (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) examined the weight standards in relation to gold and silver plate and came to the conclusion that prior to the first century BC precious metal plate had been manufactured against currency standard weights, thereby in effect rendering the plate as large denomination coinage. Subsequent to the development of Roman silverware in the late first century BC, State legislation limited the hitherto close connection between coins and plate and it would appear that a pre-existing standard in Asia Minor was introduced into Rome by immigrant craftsmen, together with their traditional techniques and pattern books.

Janet Lang and Dr Michael Cowell of the British Museum Research Laboratory presented some case studies of the scientific examination of Late-Roman silver and outlined some of the methods used, including X-ray fluorescence spectrometry (XRF) and scanning electron microscopy. They cited specific cases such as the examination of the 'Risley Park' larnax and the problems that it had posed before scientific techniques and detective work could postulate an answer (Minerva, Nov/Dec 1991), and the examination of objects from the Hoxne and Mildenhall treasuries.

Professor Françoise Baratte (Sorbonne, Paris) presented two papers, one an overview of recent silver treasures from Gaul and their content where a notable feature was the occurrence of some splendid large scale silver statues; the other investigated those who commissioned plate and those who owned it and some of the thoughts that arose from such an examination.

Dr Roger Bland (British Museum) examined the changing patterns of hoards of precious metal coins in the Late Empire and summarised some 300 hoards containing gold coins and over 150 with silver coins. He noted the breakdown of the fixed system of relationships between precious and base metal coinages leading to a change of pattern in third-century gold coin hoarding (more are used as ornaments), followed by a fourth-century resumption into the fifth where the hoard evidence suggests that gold coins had returned to become a significant part of the currency.

Catherine Johns, who had worked on the jewellery from the great Hoxne hoard, took it as a case study not to reiterate the contents of the hoard but to look at the background to it, such as the manner in which it had been carefully packed in its container chest. The benefit of the hoard having been professionally excavated will, upon study, lead to a re-evaluation in many instances of earlier finds and their interpretation.

It is intended that publication of the conference will take place in *Minerva* (1997) of the *Journal of Antiquités Tar- dives*, in association with the British Museum. It will certainly be a most welcome addition to the literature on this intriguing aspect of the Late-Roman Empire.

Peter A. Clayton, FSA, is the author of The Treasures of Ancient Rome.
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With the incredible resources of the British Museum literally ‘on their doorstep’ (as well as being a company owned by the Trustees of the British Museum), British Museum Press (formerly Publications) have a head start in virtually every field of antiquity and the fine arts. In 1973, when the present reviewer became BMP’s first Managing Editor, the idea of books outside of those published for and on behalf of the Trustees was a delicate topic; the Colonnade imprint for such titles was only discreetly introduced and any efforts to expand that area unduly rapidly were not met with obvious enthusiasm. Now BMP has a very flourishing after ego of non-Trustee titles, not all of them written by British Museum staff, an obvious gold mine of authoritative authors.

The first four books in the newly launched ‘Bookshelf’ series have two Egyptian and two classical titles. Papyrus, by two curators in the Department of Egyptian Antiquities, Drs Richard Parkinson and Stephen Quirke, is very succinct, well written and well illustrated. It examines that curious plant upon which the life story of a civilisation was written (once Champollion had ‘cracked the code’ of Egyptian hieroglyphs in 1822) from specific viewpoints: Natural History and Manufacture; Practical Usage; Contents and Storage, and Usage and Survival Outside Pharaonic Egypt. Illustrations throughout, both of papyri themselves, representations such as scribal statues and reliefs, and line drawings to show how the sheets are put together, are very carefully chosen and well reproduced (including the eight colour plates). The final act of the story, usage outside Egypt, an area often overlooked, even notices (and illustrates) Tony Harrison’s play The Trucifers of Oxyrhynchus to show how much classical literature only survives through the papyrus copies once in the libraries of well read Egyptians and recovered by devotees such as Grenfell and Hunt working in the Fayum area.

The second volume in the series, Boats, by Dr Dilwyn Jones, is a much needed text. There has been little published of substance that takes an overview of Egyptian boats since Landstrom’s Ships of the Pharaohs (1970). Here boats in ritual and belief, the sources of the evidence for boat building, and Egyptian boats through their long history from Predynastic times up to the Late New Kingdom, are looked at in detail. The text is very technical and so, a word of warning, the reader would be well advised to read the Glossary first – it will save a lot of the frustration of continually flicking back and forth. There are plenty of photographic illustrations but the numerous line drawings are a considerable help in clarifying nautical details. On page 30, the golden model ship (actually on wheels) from the burial of Queen Ahhotep at Thebes enters the realms of fairy tale when its dimensions are cited as ‘about 4.3m in length’ (as against 43cm!). For the reader prepared to persevere through the technical presentation of details, this is obviously a very useful book.

Professor Richard Tomlinson’s Greek and Roman Architecture spreads its net wide but it is a much shorter text than the two Egyptological titles (only 37 lines as against 46 lines per page, but still within the 128 pages format). Moving from the origins of classical architecture the text is a very readable and balanced examination of the development of classical architecture through the various forms and derivations often dictated by the buildings’ use and, not least, geographical environment. The illustrations are well chosen so that they complement the text to give a very concise and meaningful overview of a very complex subject. The numerous colour photographs by the author are a distinct advantage, along with the black and white location views and selected plans and elevations. Historically one notes that Alexander the Great was only 33 when he died in 323 BC (not aged 38, page 48), and Octavian/Augustus was the nephew and adopted son (not son, page 68) of ‘the deified Julius’.

Images of the Greek Theatre by Professors Richard Green and Eric Hundleby is the weakest volume of the four,
Handsome New Egyptian Books

Egypt: Splendours of an Ancient Civilization


Alberto Silotti’s book is a lavish volume, beautifully produced. It begins with an outline history of Egypt to the present day. This is followed by a section on the rediscovery of Egypt, highlighting a few key figures. This is an obbligatory section in any general book, but here the choice of illustration (and the slight Italian bias) adds something new. There are also several handsome pages of archive photographs of the clearance of Tutankhamun’s tomb. Some important recent discoveries are then noted.

The core of the book is an atlas of main sites. Another currently popular graphic, the ‘exploded’ diagram, is used to illustrate the tombs at Tanis, the tomb of Tutankhamun (inevitably) and the tomb of Neferari, amongst others. There are a couple of bird’s-eye reconstructions, such as the Theban region (in which the distant temple of Luxor is, bizarrely, larger than Karnak). Actual text is brief, but gives the key information accompanied by small but clear plans; more detail is given in the fairly lengthy captions.

The main pleasure of the book is the large-scale photographs which are very fine. Some will be familiar (such as those of Djenet Liepe, used in the Cairo Museum catalogue), and, it must be said, most are fairly standard images. It is good to have a wider selection of the Tanis treasures than one would usually find in such a general book (this, along with the Valley of the Queens, reflects the author’s long association with the French Institute). From a scholastic point of view this type of volume can be very useful if the images are unusual – tombs, reliefs or objects not often photographed. Unfortunately, this is not the case here. Nevertheless, this handsome volume is rather more than a coffee-table book; it is comprehensive and will doubtless appeal to visitors who want a souvenir, and to those who appreciate large-scale photographs.

Because of its beautiful vignettes, the papyrus of Ani is very often used for illustration. The Egyptian Book of the Dead reproduces the whole papyrus, using Budge’s folio edition as its source. The layout is excellent, with Raymond Faulkner’s translation of the appropriate sections beneath each plate. Faulkner’s translation was of an ‘ideal’ text, and occasionally, where Ani differs markedly, a new translation has been supplied by Ogden Goelet. Despite the merits of Faulkner’s translation, it might have been more valuable to have had a complete translation of the text as it appears in the Ani Papyrus, with all of its anomalies. Goelet supplies a commentary on the papyrus and an introduction to the Book of the Dead and many aspects of its contents, all of which will be of value to the reader. Particularly useful are the black and white key plates with each chapter marked. These plates also allow a view of the whole, now somewhat dismembered, papyrus, and one can appreciate the ordering of the chapters. A translation is also supplied of all the missing chapters.

This is a very attractive production, which will doubtless be of immense value to students of these texts, and might stimulate a more detailed reassessment of this important document. The familiar, and oft reproduced vignettes can now be seen in their context, and the less well-known ones appreciated as well. There is also considerable pleasure to be had from looking at the pages without vignettes – the clear and certain hand of the scribe has produced a remarkably elegant text. It is a pity that nothing more is known about the owner of the papyrus, allowing it to be put more closely into its context.

Robert Markot

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Historic Scotland is accountable to the Scottish Secretary and is tasked
with protecting the Scottish built environment and promoting its understanding and enjoyment. The Batsford collaboration is apt, allowing IS to display its spectrum of knowledge and experience against a spectacular illustrative background.

There is a welcome promise that the series will be extended beyond the sixteen presently scheduled. The story of Scotland’s archaeology and history is much longer and more complex than may appear to those who have only seen it compacted into a fraction of the average British history book. Under the general editorship of Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments David Breeze, IS have assembled a competent list of authors. This is an intriguing series which undertakes a useful role in amplifying the record.

The enthusiasm with which the opening volumes in the series were met – the first, Viking Scotland, is already reprinted – suggests that the project has identified a need and is filling a gap.

Caroline Wickham-Jones, author of Scotland’s First Settlers, is a freelance archaeologist. Any volume on Scottish prehistory must cover stone extensively, so her lengthy specialisation on the technology of stone tools is particularly relevant. Her innovative archaeological techniques and her current work on the earliest Scottish settlements ensure that her volume is up-to-date.

Ms Wickham-Jones acknowledges the evidence for Scottish palaeolithic settlements is scant and sometimes indeterminate. The position of palaeolithic-era ice fields kept wandering tribes away from the northern zones, and though some hunters may have followed the herds, it is the ice that remains, much of the evidence they left has been dislodged and buried by subsequent ice movement.

She maintains that palaeolithic settlement was more widespread than the available evidence suggests, and that much will appear some day from under surfaces which have changed across the millennia. That justifies a digression into a study, fascinating in its own right, of the pan-British palaeolithic story, setting the Scottish aspects into place.

The mesolithic form the main platform for the tale, using as planks a group of chapters on the origins and environment of mesolithic settlers – the first recorded on Rum, in the Hebrides, 8500 years ago – and noting the incoming of their successors from present-day England and Scandinavia. There is a helpful mixture of instructive and informative input, and examination, in manageable detail, of the background to what is outlined elsewhere in the volume.

It would be easy in this context of scant and sometimes controversial evidence to drift into conjecture. Ms Wickham-Jones’s study, though, often with reference to specific sites, is conducted chiefly in the light of tool design and use, and of lithic artefacts. It clearly benefits from her extensive expertise. A useful glossary, bibliography and index complete a worthwhile acquisition.

This is not a book for the specialist academic. It is, though, one which in a well-reasoned and carefully-stepped way introduces an interesting subject to the enthusiastic student and to many who have progressed some way along the road towards an understanding of archaeology and of Scotland’s prehistory. Many such readers will find the reiteration that much remains to be discovered an intriguing prospect. There are thousands of Scottish acres which have never been ploughed. Who knows what future field-walker will discover which Scotland’s First Settlers should find a home in every municipal and school library – not just the Scottish ones – and on many other bookshelves besides.

Dr Richard Fawcett, Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments at Historic Scotland, has special interest in medieval church architecture, an interest continuing through current researches. Unsurprisingly, his contribution to the Batsford/Historic Scotland series, on Scotland’s medieval monastic heritage, is a mass of intriguing facts about Scottish monastic history, architecture and lifestyle.

In successive sectors he moves through a meticulous detail study, century by century, of the millennium from the dawn of Scottish Christianity to the Reformation. Dr Fawcett uses his wide knowledge and obviously painstaking research to review the influences on church development begun by Malcolm III and his pious wife St Margaret and continued by later kings and their leading subjects.

He highlights the trans-national influences introduced by years spent at the English court by David I and others, by the pan-European nature of many of the orders involved in the Scottish church, and by the Cistercian attitudes which progressed the transition of Scottish church architecture from the Romanesque to the Gothic.

There is discussion of the people who entered religious life and of those who worked with them. Explanations about the rooms in which they lived and worked – sacristy, chapter-house, dormitory, refectory – are illustrated by textual and photographic details from specific buildings.

A summary outlines the philosophies of the various orders discussed – from Augustinian canons to Dominikan friars to Valliscalan monks. A generally helpful gazetteer of the monastic sites where there are significant remains, with useful annotations indicating those still used for worship, and a bibliography and efficient index complete a worthwhile volume.

It is unfortunate that only about a third of the floor plans face photographs of the same buildings today, necessitating much page-turning to compare one with the other. It is disappointing too not to find a map to help in identifying sites of some of the lesser edifices.

There is much here for those at the threshold of an interest in the subject and its period. For the second-stage enthusiast a wealth of material guides easily towards more advanced levels of the study.

We criticise current generations for the apathy which allows our built heritage to deteriorate – though Historic Scotland is slowing that deterioration. Modern man is less blame-worthy than those zealots who used the Reformation for a programme of destruction. We have the consolation that much survives to form the subject matter of Dr Fawcett’s fascinating study.

Geoffrey Borwick

Books Received

The inclusion of a title in this list does not preclude its review in a later issue of Minerva.


Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire, by John Blair. Alan Sutton, Stroud, 1994. xvi + 230 pp. 102 illus. Hardback, £25. A concise, well presented and printed study of the development of the society and landscape of Oxfordshire from the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon settlement to the twelfth century. The author makes full use of archaeology and archives to present a rounded picture that will be of interest to all Anglo-Saxon students, not just those concerned with the county.

Cruelty and Civilization: the Roman Games, by Roland Auguet. Routledge, London, 1994. 222 pp., 24 illus. Hardback, £35, paperback, £12.99. An examination of the Roman love of blood entertainments, especially those involving human blood, and the mentality that made such great spectacles a part of the city life. M. Auguet makes full use of the literature as well as the material remains of objects and so many of the substantial upstanding monuments, amphitheatres, etc, to paint a broad picture of an ‘entertainment’ that was peculiarly Roman, and highly political when one recalls Juvenal’s advice on keeping the Roman mob happy: ‘Give them bread and circuses’.

Peter A. Clayton
MOSAICS IN PERIL FROM THE SEA

Last summer, in a race against time, archaeologists managed to remove Byzantine mosaics from a cliff top in Turkey which were on the point of collapsing into the Black Sea below.

Stephen Hill

A new archaeological rescue project to survey, excavate and protect the remains at Çiftlik, a Classical and Byzantine site near Sinop on the Turkish coast of the Black Sea, began in August 1994 under the direction of the author. The work was a collaborative project involving staff and students from the Department of Classics and Ancient History of the University of Warwick, and staff from the Sinop Museum and the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, which has adopted the excavation as a new in-house project. The Department of Archaeology of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne collaborated with the post-excavation work in producing computer images of the topography and the mosaic designs.

The remains at Çiftlik lie at the mouth of a valley on the west side of the great bay in the Black Sea which runs in south of the Sinop peninsula (Fig 1). The remains of two buildings, a church and a villa or small palace, were investigated in 1994. Both were originally built on silty soil which was washed down to the bottom of the valley over thousands of years. The project is very much concerned with rescue, since the coastline in this area is being seriously eroded by the sea. At least 1.5 metres of the church have been eroded since 1990, and the low shelf in the water beside what survives has remains from various Classical and Byzantine buildings. The traces of what were presumably ancient wharfs can be seen some 30 metres out from the present coastline and about four metres under water on the upper edge of a steep drop into deeper water. Given that the level of the Black Sea is known to have risen only one metre since late antiquity, it is clear that the ground is subsiding, with the result that the sea is washing away the soft soil which was deposited in the valley bottom in antiquity.

The main objective for the first season was originally to study the remains of an early Byzantine church, on the south side of the stream which runs past the village of Çiftlik down to the sea. The foundations survive in a field beside the sea, and coastal erosion has cut a section 1.5 to 2 metres high through the building and its mosaic floors. The primary intention was to conduct a study of the building in order to prepare a longer term research plan for its future excavation and conservation, but upon arrival at the site it became clear that there was a larger and more pressing problem on the north side of the stream. The sea’s action during the winter had removed a large stretch of the cliff at this point, exposing a section through a second building with a mosaic floor, fragments of which were lying on the beach five metres below. There had been no intention whatsoever to lift mosaics this season, even though conservation in situ is unlikely to be a realistic option given the unstable marl subsoil and the coastal erosion. In the case of the north building, however, there was no alternative but to immediately remove the mosaic to the safety of the Sinop Museum depot, and, accordingly, this extra

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work had to be undertaken immediately.

The North Building (Villa?)

Work here was extremely dangerous with material constantly slipping over the edge of the cliff. The floor of the building, when exposed, proved to have very deep cracks extending several metres into the clay, and it is very unlikely that this section of the structure will survive much longer (Fig 3). The entire east (seaward) wall had recently fallen onto the beach, and the remaining walls had suffered robbing for stonework. The stability of the site had also been weakened by the digging of a recent deep trench, which was apparently the work of treasure hunters. The robber trench had the effect of cutting diagonally through a room some seven metres square, and we were able to retrieve the triangle of mosaic floor from the north-eastern section of the room.

In these emergency circumstances the main concern was to rescue the floor itself, and it will be necessary to conduct further geophysical survey and excavation in order to ascertain the nature of the building as a whole. We intend to return to this problem during the next season. Our first priority had to be to concentrate on retrieving as much as possible as quickly as possible without loss of life, since it would have been completely unrealistic to attempt to protect a five-metre-high clay cliff. The mosaic, when exposed, proved to have a complex stratigraphic history. The original central panel (Fig 4), which has a complex scrollwork pattern, was supplemented by the addition of a broad border with macander patterns, waves, and swastika peltae with guilloche knots (Fig 5). One of the latter was particularly poorly composed and proved to be a repair over the collapse of a drain which had been cut by the north wall of the room which contained our pavement. Furthermore, the north side of the pavement had been altered by the insertion of a threshold panel and the re-laying of the section against the north wall. Upon lifting the mosaic, further tesserae, presumably from a predecessor, were found in the mortar beds. Although the palette used is unambiguously (white, red, blue and yellow), the execution, especially of the central panel, is of good quality. Comparable examples are known from late antique sites in the eastern Mediterranean, but these are often less subtle in their use of colours.

Lifting the mosaic was relatively simple, since the instability and massive subsidence of the site had broken it into numerous small pieces, and the mortar for the pavement sat on a levelling deposit of loose beach sand.
A Roman marble torso of Aphrodite; circa 1st century A.D., 20 1/2 in. (52 cm.) high

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The mosaic was bandaged with calico attached with water-soluble glue, the whole marked out with a grid, and then cut into sections along the natural cracks (Fig 7). With the tesserae held in position it was a simple, though perilous, task to lever up the fragments, complete with all their original bedding material (Fig 8). The mosaic is now stored in the depot of the Sinop Museum and we hope to reassemble it next year.

The Church

The assumption that the south building was a church was based on the observation that large sections from a curved wall, presumably an apse, had fallen into the sea (Fig 2). Closer study of the exposed section and trial excavations have proved that this assumption is well-founded. The fragments of wall in the sea can be joined together in plan on paper to form an apse with an internal diameter of seven metres. A trial trench at the eastern end of the building revealed stylobates for colonnades which divided the building into a nave (8.2 metres wide) and two aisles (each 3 metres wide). The west end of the building could be discerned from the results of the soil-resistivity survey, and a trial excavation revealed the north-west corner of the north aisle and the north end of the narthex (entrance porch). The main dimensions of the building are 28 metres from east to west and 17 metres from north to south, making it unusually short and squat when compared with the familiar longitudinal basilicas of southern and western Asia Minor, but it may be compared with a few early Byzantine churches known in Cappadocia and Lycaonia.

Excavation revealed the presence of subsidiary chambers on the north side of the church at both east and west ends, and the resistivity survey suggests that there are also subsidiary structures against the south side of the church. The identification of these subsidiary chambers is uncertain, but it seems most likely that the matched side-chambers projecting to north and south at the east end of the church served as prothesis (to house the Eucharistic elements) and diaconicon (to house sacred vessels). Their unusual positioning – against the aisles, rather than flanking the apse – may represent a regional variation in the standard plan of early Byzantine churches. Fragments of a marble chancel screen were retrieved from the east end of the church, and if this was originally placed to the west of the doors into the side-chambers the main body of the church to the west of the chancel screen would have

Fig 10. View along the trench at the east end of the Church looking from south to north. The edge of the mosaic in the south aisle (visible in the foreground of the picture) was cut by the sea, and spoil from the excavation has been piled against it for protection.

Fig 11. Tracing the design of the mosaic in the north aisle of the Church onto acetate film.
Excavation

been nearly square.

The building history of the church has so far proved relatively straightforward. Worn floor surfaces and blocked doorways in the narthex suggest a lengthy period of occupation, but only the north-east side-chamber shows clear evidence of two floor levels. A buttress against the west wall of the narthex appear also to be a later addition.

The church was very expensively equipped with geometric floor mosaics and marble wall veneers throughout. Glass tesserae of many colours were retrieved, including gilded, red, blue, brown, white, and several shades of green. These tesserae were found at both ends of the building suggesting that glass mosaics were not restricted to the apse of the church. This possibility is borne out by the observation that building debris found in the west trench may have come from vaulted structures. Architectural pieces from the main part of the church included a pink marble column from the south colonnade at ground level, fragments of capitals and screens and a large number of thin cut marble slabs from walls and floors. A complete marble column which had fallen from the gallery was found lying on the mosaic of the north side of the nave (Fig 9). The presence of galleries may explain chambers at either end of the narthex, which may have housed staircases (Fig 14). The chamber at the north end of the narthex was found by excavation; its southern equivalent can be seen on the plot from the soil resistivity survey.

The floor mosaics which were uncovered in the church were exclusively geometric, but there was considerable variety of pattern. Both ailes had relatively simple designs with interlocking circles, but the nave was decorated with a mass of different panels with scrolls, maenadis, and chequer board patterns enclosing panels with elaborate circular and square designs employing a wide variety of colours. As yet no figured designs or mosaic inscriptions have been revealed, and the mosaics can be seen to have patterns resembling those of textiles. The mosaics of the ailes, which were presumably protected by the lower roofing systems at these points in the building, are relatively well-preserved, but the small area of nave mosaic which was exposed has been heavily damaged by fallen architectural members.

The whole building has suffered considerably from stone-robbing, some of which took place about 60 years ago for the construction of the road south from Çiftlik Village. The robbing has seriously disturbed the post-church stratigraphic sequences, and burning associated with the extraction of marble and other building stones has damaged floor surfaces, especially in the area of the narthex. The church appears to have been built at one time, and was constructed with walls with faces of cut stone (or beach-stone in the foundations) outside a mortar and rubble core, with regular tile bonding courses which stretched through the width of the walls. In view of the need to leave floors in position, analysis of the pre-church archaeology was only possible in a small area of the south-west chamber where stone-robbing had cut through the floor surface. Larger mosaic tesserae than those employed in the church were retrieved from this area and presumably originated from an earlier structure. In the same area were also found small fragments of Hellenistic and Roman pottery and two pieces of Hellenistic black-glazed ware. These earlier artefacts were found in silty deposits and were associated with no obvious earlier structures. It seemed likely that they had been washed down from other sites in the valley before the construction of the church. The same silty deposits with fragments of earlier pottery and even part of a small limestone column were found immediately west of the north-west chamber.

The mosaic panel from the Church (north side of the nave): this colour image of the mosaic was produced by Richard Bayliss and Mark Gillings of the Survey, CAD and GIS Facility of the Department of Archaeology, University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Digital reproduction was by Arlène Rankin of Ravensworth Design. Although the mosaics were carefully traced onto acetate film, we also took photographs with fixed reference points accurately surveyed into the overall site plan. Through a combination of image processing and vector digitising techniques, the original photograph of this section of the mosaic was converted to a GIS-based digital map. The image, produced using specially-written software, marks a new approach to the technical problem of recording mosaic designs.

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Excavation

Fig 14. Excavation at the west end of the Church, showing the mosaic floors of the aisle and narthex, as well as the north-west side chamber, which may have contained a staircase.

Post-exavation Work
Richard Bayliss and Mark Gillings of the Department of Archaeology of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne produced the rectified drawing (via GIS and CAD) of the nave mosaic based on oblique photographs and the results of the topographical survey. Site plans and publication drawings from the tessera by tessera drawings of the mosaics which were made on the site have been prepared by Brian Williams. Rupert Howell from the University of Warwick has analysed the findings from the soil resistivity survey.

Preliminary Conclusions
Sufficient information about the church has been retrieved to demonstrate that it had an interesting and unusual plan and superstructure and was elaborately decorated. It is a type of building which has not been excavated in this region before and it is thus of importance if only for that reason.

As well as its tessellated floor, the north building is presumably the source of a large statue base which fell onto the beach in 1993, and it must have been a structure of considerable pretension. Immediately to the north and south of the site there are wasters from the production of the characteristic fat-bellied Sinopian amphorae, and a French team is excavating one of these deposits. Given the agricultural wealth of the valley, and its industrial activity, it seems most likely that there was a rich estate here in the Roman and Late Roman period. The church, with its precinct, may well have been added in the fourth or fifth century. If so, it was most likely a small monastic compound of the type which was established, at Annesi in the Pontus, in the family estate of the great Cappadocian Church Father, St Basil.

Future plans
We intend to return to Çiftlik in 1995 in order to continue the excavation of the church and the north building, to extend the geophysical survey, conduct fieldwork in the Çiftlik valley, and to survey the surviving underwater features. The author is currently learning scuba diving for this purpose.

Acknowledgements
As well as the already mentioned, we are grateful to the Turkish Ministry of Culture for permission to excavate. The work at Çiftlik was supported by grants from the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara and the University of Warwick, as well as the collaboration of the Director, Ismail Taflican, and the archaeologist, Fuat Dereli, the Sinop Museum provided local transport and accommodation.
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MEETINGS & SYMPOSIUMS

MAY 23-27 May: INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON MIGRATION ART IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM. Contact: Deborah Youde

31 May 1 June: ISRAEL SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF CLASSICAL STUDIES, 24th Annual Conference. University of Haifa, Dr. Richter Center, Dept. of History, Tel Aviv University, Ramat Aviv, Israel 69798. Fax: (972) 3-640-6547

JUNE 14-18 June: THE IMAGE AND REALITY OF WOMEN IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN SOCIETY. Contact: Dr. Elizabeth L. DeMarte, The Humanities Institute, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912. Phone: (401) 863-3300; fax: (401) 863-3398

3-5 July: ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE, Liverpool. Contact: The Science Conference Organization, Department of Archaeology, 14 Abercromby Square, University of Liverpool, L69 7BD, Liverpool, L69 3BX

AUGUST 30-August 8, 1994, INTERNATIONAL ROCK ART CONGRESS, Pirineo-Turóli, Italy. Contact: Instituto de Investigaciones Etnograficas; Rock Art Research Association, P.O. Box 216, Caulfield South, Victoria 3162, Australia.

TOURS

ROMAN TRIER AND THE MOSSELE 6-13 August. Moschin Tours in conjunction with the University of Trier, Germany. Contact: Church St., Gadby, Leicester, LE2 5DB (0116) 271 9922/4582.
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