VIKINGS IN AMERICA: RUNESTONES, RELICS, AND REVISIONISM

THE ART OF THE VIKINGS

COPTIC ART IN EGYPT ON SHOW IN PARIS

THE LATE ROMAN SILVER TREASURE FROM KAISERAUGST

THE GOLDEN AGE OF CHINESE ARCHAEOLOGY

TRACES OF PARADISE: THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF BAHRAIN

WEALTH AND POWER IN THE VIKING AGE

A Roman copy of the Hellenistic statue carved by Bryaxis for the Serapeum in Alexandria, c. 280 BC. Carved from a column, probably belonging to an earlier temple, the back of the head was finished in plaster.

Second half of the 2nd Century AD. H: 30 cm (11 3/4 in.)
Ex Swiss private collection formed early in the 20th century.

An exceptional sculpture with thick curly hair falling in the traditional vertical tresses, those over the brow being deeply undercut.

Serapis was the Hellenised form of the Egyptian Osiris-Apis whose cult was performed in a temple complex rebuilt by Neptanebo II over the ‘Great Chambers’ of what has become known as the Memphis Serapeum. The Greeks recognised the importance of the cult and the enormous number of foreign pilgrims who went there for cures, oracles, and dream interpretations. The first three Ptolemies built a huge temple on the Hill of Thacotis in Alexandria and commissioned the great sculptor Bryaxis to create an appropriate cult statue of a seated Zeus-like deity, in around 280 BC. This temple remained an important religious centre until the 6th century AD when Justinian’s edict, that all pagan temples and academies be closed, doomed the Serapeum to gradual dismantling. The great statue, one of the most famous and venerated in the ancient world, was hacked to pieces by Christians.

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Vikings in America:
Runestones, Relics, and Revisionism
William W. Fitzhugh

The Art of the Vikings
A selection of Viking art
Jerome M. Eisenberg

Coptic Art in Egypt
Jerome M. Eisenberg

The late Roman silver treasure from Kaiseraugst
New additions to an earlier find
Annemarie Kaufmann-Heinimann

The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology
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Traces of paradise:
The Archaeology of Bahrain
Harriet Crawford

The Egyptian Congress in Cairo
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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES:
The Forgery of Egyptian Art • Athens: Excavations Beneath the City • Ali Pasha’s Excavations at Nicopolis • Underwater Archaeology, Dor, Israel
Queen’s pyramid discovered at Saqqara

A previously unknown 6th Dynasty pyramid belonging to Ankh-Is-Perpi, the wife of Pepi I (c. 2323-2283 BC) and mother of Pepi II (c. 2278-2184 BC) has been uncovered at Saqqara. Its inner decoration of Pyramid Texts is unusual in that until now they have been known only from the pyramids of the pharaohs themselves.

New museum to be built near Deir el-Bahari

It has been announced that a museum will be constructed near Deir el-Bahari which will have on display some of the inscribed blocks from the temple of Tuthmosis III (c. 1504-1450 BC) constructed on the upper court of the famed mortuary temple of Hatshepsut, as well as some of the sculptures found there by the joint restoration teams of the Polish Mission in Cairo and the Supreme Council of Antiquities. The museum will also feature antiquities uncovered from two other Theban sites, those of Asasif, immediately southeast of Deir el-Bahari, and Deir el-Ablu-Naga, where Amarna pottery fragments, including depictions of nude female dancers, have recently been found at the tomb of Ramses-Nakht.

Third Pylon of Amenihepet III at Karnak to be restored

The massive red quartzite temple of Amenihepet III (c. 1386-1349 BC) at Karnak was partially destroyed by an earthquake in the late 19th century. The Third Pylon will now be restored jointly by the Supreme Council of Antiquities and a French archaeological mission. The project should be completed within the year. When Amenihepet III enlarged his temple, he destroyed a number of earlier monuments and reused their stone blocks for the core of the pylon. These included a chapel erected by Queen Hatshepsut for the barge of Amun-Re (the ‘Red Chapel’) which was reexcavated in part in the 1930s by another joint French and Egyptian mission. A limestone sed-festival shrine of Senusret I (the ‘White Chapel’) and an alabaster shrine of Tuthmosis III were also reconstructed at that time, the three buildings creating the well-known ‘outdoor museum’ at Karnak.

Sinaï museums to house restored antiquities

Two museums in the Sinai, one, at el Kantara Shark, already opened, and the other, at el Arish, soon to be inaugurated (see Minerva, Jan/Feb 1999, p. 3), will receive over two thousand boxes of...
objects from the pharaonic to the Islamic periods which have been stored for several years in the Egyptian Museum, where a small selection had been on display since their return by head. Most of the objects will be held at the museum in el Kantara Shark, where a scientific centre has been established. Both museums were built with the financial assistance of UNESCO.

Jerome M. Eisenberg, Ph.D.

12th century Citadel aqueduct to be restored

The Wadi El Nil Company has signed an agreement with the Supreme Council of Antiquities to restore the famous aqueduct that supplied water from the Nile to the Citadel, originally built in AD 1176 by the founder of the Ayyubid Dynasty, Salah El Din El Ayyub, know to the West as Saladin. The aqueduct reached a height of about 70 metres from El Khalaf at the Nile and then sloped downwards on a series of pointed arches for about five kilometres. Two renovations were undertaken by el Nasser Mohamed Ibn Kaloum in AD 1310 and 1340. He also built a cistern and facilities to provide water to his mosque, the Sultanate palaces, the stables, and the Citadel houses. The water was stored in wells which still exist. The aqueduct was actually in use until 1872. The first phase of the project will be to clear the immediate area of unneeded buildings, then a wider area, 30 metres on each side, which will be replaced by gardens. Then the restoration of the aqueduct and its walls will begin. The project will cost 38 million Egyptian pounds and is expected to take two years to complete.

Nagliaa el Zahlawi

TURKISH DAMS THREATEN TO DESTROY A NOBLE PAST

Water is a life-giving necessity, nowhere more so than in the countries of the Fertile Crescent and the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The great dam, the Ataturk, built in the 1990s on the upper Euphrates in Turkey, submerged many rich sites, principally Samosata, a great provincial Roman city. Now, new work on a massive hydro-electrical project which involves the construction of 22 dams on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in south-east Turkey, will destroy yet another major site, along with many more of a minor nature, as well as an unknown number yet to be discovered. They will only appear at the last moment as the work progresses and there is not the time, money or human resources to be able to even record much of this evidence.

One of the greatest losses will be the ancient city of Zeugma. It was a magnificent Graeco-Roman city, even larger than the well known Pompeii (but that disappeared by natural causes in a volcanic eruption in AD 79). French archaeologists who have been allowed to work alongside Turkish colleagues on the site of Zeugma say that it is as if a second Ephesus, that other well known magnificent site in Turkey, in AD 252, had been abandoned on the Euphrates began to fill.

Zeugma was built by Seleucus I Nicator (312-280 BC), one of Alexander the Great's successors who carved his empire up between them after Alexander's death in 323 BC. Seleucus was the longest-lived of Alexander's 'Successors', but his dynasty lost Zeugma to the Romans in 64 BC, and the city was at its most prosperous under Trajan (AD 98-117) during Rome's eastern expansion that included adding the fabled city of Petra to the province of Arabia.

Zeugma, now with the modern village of Belkis on the site, faces the other great city Seleucus built, Apamea, across the Euphrates. The two cities were a crucial point on the ancient Silk Road from China. When Rome took over, some 5000 soldiers were garrisoned in the twin cities of Zeugma-Apamea. With Rome came that symbol of civilisation the opulent villa and its attendant splendid mosaics. It is the mosaics that are the jewel of Zeugma. Some were found and removed in the 19th century and are now in Berlin and St Petersburg. The richness of the site was lost until a peasant, in 1992, found a looter's tunnel leading to a buried Roman villa. One of the finest mosaics discovered then represented the fabulously wealthy wedding of the god of wine Dionysus and Ariadne (who had been abandoned on Naxos by Theseus) (see Minerva, May/June 99, p. 5). By 1998 that mosaic had also been stolen, with accusations flying in all directions as to who was responsible for the mosaic's safety, and who had removed it.

Working against the clock, at the beginning of May Turkish archaeologists from the museum at Gaziantep found a 109 cm high bronze statue of the god Mars. It was also evidence of the chequered history of the city, since it had suffered in the fire when the Sassanian king Shapur I burnt the city in AD 252. Not helping the race against time has been the bureaucratic which even local officials have despaired of as they try to get as much help into the area as possible. Hopefully, major finds will be saved and moved to the museum at Gaziantep, but who knows how much will be lost that will not even be seen.

We go to press with the positive news that the new Turkish president Ahmet Necdet Sezer, who took office last month, has granted archaeologists a ten-day reprieve to continue working on the site. This action, which has been hailed as Mr Sezer's first important act as president, will hopefully allow the rescue of more third century mosaics. The water has risen 1050 ft above sea level, rising at a rate of 12 inches a day. Despite the reprieve, work on the current site will soon have to be abandoned and another rescue operation launched on a higher tier of villas.

Peter A. Clayton

Photo: Murat Akyay/Reuters/Popperfoto.
Yet another museum has opened in Rome to the delight of those interested in the archaeological past of the city. After Palazzo Massimo and Palazzo Altemps this is the third separate section of the Museo Nazionale Romano to open and a fourth section, devoted almost entirely to epigraphy, will open in September. The new space is named after the remains of a courtyard with porticoes known as the Crypta Balbi, located next to a theatre built in the 1st century BC by Lucius Cornelius Balbus.

This theatre was constructed as part of Emperor Augustus' overall plan for the beautification of the capital. Inaugurated in 13 BC, Balbi's theatre was the smallest of the three existing in Rome at the time. It was, however, the most lavishly decorated, its stage framed by four stupendous onyx columns. The exact shape and purpose of the Crypta itself is still not clear. It was probably a covered gallery within a courtyard linked to the theatre. Next to the Porticus Micia frumentaria, where wheat was distributed to the people of Rome, it appears in the 3rd century marble map of Rome, the Forma Urbis.

In the 1940s a 17th century con-
RECONSTRUCTING 'HIGH STREET LONDINIUM'

The 1995-1996 archaeological excavation at No 1 Poultry, in the heart of the modern City of London, uncovered the largest and most complete area of domestic housing from Roman London so far found. An exciting new exhibition at the Museum of London presents the results of these excavations within an exciting exhibition that brings the Roman city of Londinium back to life.

Evidence of over seventy buildings was found on the site, spanning 400 years of Roman occupation. The excavations provided an exciting glimpse of the bustling urban centre. Three town blocks (insulae) were uncovered, crowded with buildings, bounded to the east by a stream (later called the Walbrook) and to the south by the main arterial road running east to west through the town. Among the remains, pottery fragments, wooden barrels and jewellery from as far away as Spain and Norway have been found: evidence that even in the first century AD London was at the centre of a matrix of trading patterns.

The Romans initially began constructing Londinium in about AD 50. The early town was built of timber, using an abundant local supply. This first town was only to last ten years. British tribes, the Iceni and Trinovantes, led by Queen Boudica, destroyed it with fire, leaving a blackened layer in the archaeological record. The town was soon redeveloped and although the domestic shops and houses were rebuilt in wood, the public buildings were constructed in more substantial stone and tile. By AD 100 Londinium had become the capital of the province of Britannia, with all the public buildings either in place or under construction. This was Roman London at its peak in prosperity.

To create tantalising insights into this period of Roman London, the Museum of London has prepared a new exhibition entitled 'High Street Londinium'. It translates the evidence from a row of three buildings excavated on the Poultry site, converting the information from the archaeological remains into full-scale buildings. This is the first time that such detailed reconstructions have been attempted in London. Built by a film company, Sands Films, and sponsored by the Banca di Roma, the exhibition runs from July 2000 to early 2001. Two buildings are recreated as they were in AD 100 and one as it was in AD 60, before it was destroyed by the Boudican fire. It has provided the Museum with the fascinating and daunting task of testing out theories of how such buildings may have been constructed and experimenting with fixtures and furnishings.

The latest in the range of timber buildings from Roman Britain have been found. They must have far outnumbered stone structures but only survive when preserved in waterlogged conditions. A major excavation under Cannon Street Station in 1989 revealed a substantial Roman street revetment constructed on a foundation of oak piles, some of which had been re-used. The shaped joints and nailing systems showed that they had originally come from earlier 1st century buildings. These timbers have been on display in the Roman London Gallery at the Museum. The excavations at No 1 Poultry, enhanced by information from these earlier sites, has provided the first opportunity to reconstruct Roman London's timber-frame buildings. It was decided to reconstruct three of the buildings from the site: a bakery, a craftworker's house and a merchant's shop.

Visitors are able to wander up and down corridors and peer into backyards and along the narrow alleys that divide the buildings. Rooms are open and visitors are able to touch replica furniture and tableware. The first building is a bakery and hot food shop, constructed fronting onto the main street. By AD 100, the date chosen for the exhibition, this building had survived on the site for thirty years. This building's purpose was identified by the discovery of a hearth, made from large fragments of flat clay tiles, built into an external niche in the back wall. This oven probably functioned with the large open area behind the building where bread ovens, and what was possibly a donkey, could have stood. During the excavation various rubbish disposes around the building, fragments of wooden troughs and oven waste were found.

The second building is a craftworker's house, built shortly before AD 100. It is a narrow strip building with three rooms running from front to back and a long corridor running the length of the western side of the building. The family lived in the central room where a hearth is set in a hollow in the brick earthen floor with a tile surface beside it which acted as an adjacent hot plate. The L-shaped back room with its additional space is constructed as a carpenter's workshop with its bench and tools. The corridor leads to the backyard where an outhouse holds the family's livestock and a beehive supplies the family with honey for sweetening their food.

In the final building, visitors go back 40 years in time before the life of this new building was cut short in the Boudican fire of AD 60. It is a merchant's shop, areas of which are still under construction. The archaeological evidence showed that the shop had been stocked with red glossy samian tableware and olive green glazed vessels imported from France. Fire had caused the shop's wooden shelves to collapse and wooden and bone spoons were found on the floor. The shop sold imported beads and imported spices. Visitors will be able to walk through the shop and stockroom and see the wide range of produce from around the Empire. With the use of back projection, the visitors can see the main road beyond the shop's shutters and the hustle and bustle of the busy street beyond (see illustration).

The exhibition has been a challenge to archaeologists and archaeological methods: how to translate ground plans into the reality of original buildings? The presentation of the project is one step further on from the reconstructed rooms from wealthier houses that already prove so popular in the Roman London Gallery, which was highlighted in a previous article (see Minerva, Jul-Aug 96, pp. 55-58). The present exhibition aims to show the life style of the working classes of Roman London. Although the buildings were well-constructed and functional, the living conditions must have been basic. For many, it must have been cramped, damp, and unhealthy, without the amenities that are normally associated with the Roman way of life.

Jenny Hall
Jenny Hall is Roman Curator at the Museum of London. High Street Londinium will have its final run on display 21 July-7 January. See Calendar for further details.
THE EGYPTIAN MUSEUM OF BARCELONA INAUGURATES ITS NEW SITE

On 11 May the Egyptian Museum of Barcelona held its inauguration ceremony at its new site, a completely refurbished building, expanding its exhibition space seven fold, 900 square metres on three floors, and tripling the number of antiquities on display, now numbering nearly 500. Sponsored by the Clos Archaeological Foundation, which was founded by Jordi Clos in 1993, its growth has been nothing short of astounding.

The museum was established in 1994 with exhibition space at the five-star Hotel Claris, one of a group of hotels owned by Mr Clos, in the heart of Barcelona’s Ensanche district. It soon occupied its own space nearby on the chic Rambla Catalunya. It was, however, a victim of its own success, with attendance reaching 36,000 annually. Mr Clos then acquired a fine old five storey building at 284 Valencia, just a block away from the hotel and remodelled it in an astonishingly short time to create a state-of-the-art premises which houses the new museum. The contemporary interior design was the result of a collaboration with Maria Escalé and Mr Clos. The inaugural opening, attended by the writer, was to say the least, spectacular, with some 2000 guests partaking of a sumptuous Egyptian feast, wine and champagne, and appropriate musical entertainment throughout the evening.

Under the immediate supervision of Adolpho Lüly, the General Director of the foundation and the museum, and Prof. Luis M. González, the Curator, the expansion of the museum and its collection took place in little more than two years. The library, specialising in Egyptology, already boasts more than 9000 books and periodicals. It includes a video library and an image bank. There are audio guides in several languages, as well as a visitor’s guide and tactile aids for the blind. Guided tours are available for groups on advance request. The museum has already hosted two exhibitions: Tutankhamun: Images of a Treasure in the Egyptian Desert, and Passion for Ancient Egypt: Egypt through Collections. Its publications, in addition to the foundation’s periodical ArqueóClub, include a catalogue of the collection and an edition in Spanish of the Tutankhamun exhibition.

A study programme, established in 1994, is being expanded into classical and other ancient cultures. It offers ‘cultural expeditions’ to archaeological sites, monuments, and museums throughout the Mediterranean and beyond. In 1997 the foundation, in collaboration with the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, established a postgraduate diploma in Egyptology and the first and only chair for Egyptian studies in Spain. An Arqueológico Campus, located at Palau de Plegamans, 25 kilometres north of Barcelona, was acquired by the foundation in order to teach methods of archaeological field work and laboratory techniques.

The Clos Archaeological Foundation has been involved in a number of archaeological missions in Egypt and the Sudan since 1992, including work at the Old Kingdom necropolis at Meidum, in collaboration with the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, ArqueòCiència, and Ganna da & Garcia, at the Gebel Barkal (Karima) pyramids site; at the New Kingdom necropolis at Qurnet Mural, (Oxyrhynchus), in collaboration with the University of Barcelona; and at Jerash, in collaboration with the government of Jordan.

As the founder and continuing patron of the only private entity in Spain devoted to Egyptology, Mr Clos serves as a splendid example of how one person’s love for antiquity can bear fruit for a far wider audience. Hopefully the Clos Archaeological Foundation and the Egyptian Museum of Barcelona will serve as an inspiration to other foundations to establish similar programmes in ancient art and archeology in other countries. The writer donated two antiquities to the collection and was a donor in part of a major new acquisition – an early 26th Dynasty near-life-size limestone figure holding an Osiris naos – in honour of the reopening, with the hope of inspiring others to do the same.

Jerome M. Eisenberg, Ph.D.

Fig 1. Egyptian polychrome sarcophagus of the Lady of the House Hes-ankh in her state-of-the-art setting. Late 22nd Dynasty, c. 850-730 BC. 170 cm.

Figs 2-3. Views of the museum, the first featuring a colossal Egyptian limestone Bes. Ptolemaic period, 305-30 BC.

Fig 4. The Minister of Culture of the Generalitat of Catalunya, Jordi Vilajoana; Mrs M. Valt-Llosera; Jordi Clos; the Mayor of Barcelona, Joan Clos; and the President of the Generalitat of Catalunya, Jordi Pujol, at the inauguration of the museum. The early 26th Dynasty near-life-size limestone figure holding an Osiris naos, behind them, has just been unveiled.

Figs 1-3: photos by Jerome M. Eisenberg.
HIGHWAYS AGENCY LAUNCHES NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRATEGY FOR ROAD SCHEMES IN ENGLAND

On 24 May Roads Minister, Lord Whitty launched a new system for preserving the past during road schemes. He announced that in addition to handing over post-excavation archaeological reports to English Heritage, the Highways Agency would start to publish a new form of report to publicise the importance of archaeological discoveries from road schemes to a wider audience.

A basic level of detail will now be required to publish a popular report for each scheme which will translate technical post-excavation reports into common English in an accessible manner for the non-expert to read.

The first report has already been prepared for the A419/A417 Swindon to Gloucester route, which runs for much of its length along the Roman Ermin Way, linking Gloucester and Cirencester. The project involved archaeologists from English Heritage and Oxford Archaeological Unit, and 35 sites were excavated, surveyed, studied and catalogued. The popular report produced for this scheme is entitled Road over the Hills, and describes the archaeological finds through to the history of the road. It is colourfully illustrated and should appeal to adults and children alike.

Lord Whitty said: 'This country has a rich heritage which should be preserved. In carrying out new schemes I have told the Highways Agency to ensure that our history is respected.'

David Miles, Chief Archaeologist at English Heritage welcomed the new procedure: 'We are delighted that the Highways Agency has developed such a professional and responsible approach to the archaeological excavations carried out as a result of road improvement work.'

Copies of The Road over the Hills brochure are available free from the Highways Agency. Contact Lyndon Baker on (44) 117 987 8007, or visit www.highways.gov.uk.

Lyndell Gattis, Jeremy Blackmore
Highways Agency

SOUTHAMPTON MUSEUM REDISCOVERS RARE STATUE

A statue recently discovered in the basement of Gods House Tower Museum of Archaeology in Southampton, England, has become a focus for interest among Egyptologists internationally.

In preparation for a small exhibition in 1995, Curator of Archaeological Collections Karen Wardley enlisted the help of two local specialists to help identify the museum's Egyptian artefacts. Hilary Wilson and Peter Funnell recognised the exceptional quality of a stone statue that Wardley had remembered spotting in the basement and raised the suggestion that it might be an important piece of Kushite sculpture.

This suspicion was confirmed by a visit from Vivian Davies, Keeper of Egyptian Antiquities, and further study and analysis by his team at the British Museum raised interesting questions regarding the statue's origin. The statue was also viewed by Edna Russmann from the Brooklyn Museum, who travelled to Southampton to photograph and record it.

The statue is 58 cm high and made from granodiorite, and very finely worked and polished all over except for the rear of the back-slab, indicating that in its original situation it was placed against a wall, very probably within a shrine. The precise identity of the god is a puzzle however; there is no identifying inscription and among the published figures of deities, the elements of his formal iconography appear to be unique in this particular combination. The style and configuration of the features are typically Kushite, finding close parallels in the royal portraiture of the 25th Dynasty and Early Napatan Period. If the features here do represent a reigning king, it is most likely to be Taharqa, who reigned between 690 and 664 BC and built extensively within both Nubia and Egypt.

The figure was placed in the Gods House Tower basement in the 1980s, and was kept prior to that in the cellars of Southampton Civic museum, the Tudor House. Gods House Tower focuses on the archaeology of the local area during the Roman, Saxon and medieval periods, but also includes a small collection of Egyptian artefacts. Such objects were probably part of the original bequests of local antiquarians and civic worthies when the Tudor House museum was established in 1912.

For Karen Wardley the most intriguing question was how the statue came to be in Southampton, as it had no label or any sort of museum identification attached to it. Receipt Books existed amongst the earliest museum records, running from 1912 to 1937, and an entry dated 3rd August 1912 attributed the donation of an 'Egyptian Black Marble Figure' to a will of Humphrey Williams, Esq. Karen Wardley has found out that he worked as an engineer for Southampton Docks between 1890 and 1910. He was probably retired at the time that this donation was made, but continued to live in Southampton until his death in 1918. The question of exactly how he came to have such an interesting statue in his possession remains however, and Karen Wardley hopes to devote more research into finding the answer.

The statue has been exhibited recently at the Southampton City Art Gallery, and will be featured in a temporary exhibition at the British Museum next year. There are no known records of it previously being on display in England.

Karen Wardley
Curator of Archaeological Collections
Southampton City Council

Appointments to view the statue whilst it is in store in Southampton may be made by contacting Karen Wardley: Southampton City Council, Cultural Services, Civic Centre, Southampton, SO14 7LP

For an extended treatment on this subject, see K. Wardley and V. Davies, 'A New Statue of the Kushite Period', Sudan and Nubia, No 3. 1999, pp. 28-29.
The year 2000 – give or take a year or two – is the thousandth anniversary of the discovery of North America by Leif Eriksson. Yet to most people, Leif is at best a shadowy figure in the early history of North America, compared to Christopher Columbus. Leif’s exploits were passed down as oral literature for more than two hundred years before being written as sagas in Iceland in the 13th century. Historians have discounted them as sources, but in 1960 the discovery of a Norse settlement in northern Newfoundland established confidence that The Saga of the Greenlanders (Fig 1) and Eric the Red’s Saga are generally correct. Since then, Viking objects found in Native American sites from northern Maine to the High Arctic have indicated a wide zone of Norse activity. Although not supporting romantic theories of Viking runestone discovery in Minnesota, they indicate that the Norse were more than accidental visitors to North America. Rather, they reveal a pattern of Norse exploration and native contacts that lasted for almost 500 years.

This West-Viking perspective is the subject of a major Smithsonian exhibition providing the first comprehensive treatment of Norse exploration and settlement of the North Atlantic between 860-1500. Vikings: the North Atlantic Saga opened on 29 April, 2000 at the National Museum of Natural History, and will travel to New York, Denver, Los Angeles, Houston, and Ottawa through 2002. The exhibition has a detailed catalogue and is supported by a website (www.mnh.si.edu/vikings); Vikings are also featured in several PBS documentary programs, including Leif Eriksson: the Man Who (Almost) Changed History (Ward Chronikle TV) and a NOVA special The Viking Saga (www.pbs.org/nova/vikings).

America’s Viking Fantasy
The first suggestion that Vikings visited North America came when the Vinland sagas were translated by the Danish scholar Carl Christian Rafn in the 1830s. Rafn’s English summary identifying Viking explorations in Helluland (slab-rock land, thought to be Baffin Island), Markland (forest land, probably Labrador), and Vinland (wine land, arguably the Canadian Maritimes) created a sensation in New England, and it became fashionable to identify Norse objects of unknown origin like the Newport Tower in Newport, Rhode Island (a 17th century windmill built by Governor Benedict Arnold) (Fig 3) and the ‘skeleton in armour’ featured in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s epic poem about a lore-lost ‘Viking’ buried in Massachusetts (a 17th century Indian buried with copper trade goods). Later, in 1898, the Kensington Stone with its long runic inscription appeared in Minnesota (probably carved by Swedish immigrant farmer Olaf Ohman). By the mid-19th century, ‘Viking’ artifacts, runes, mooring holes, and carvings appeared in Ontario, Cape Cod, Oklahoma, Maine, and Connecticut.

Even though controversy still exists about these purported finds, scholarly interest in them today has more to do with their popular culture.
Vikings in America

The Discovery of Norse Greenland

Real archaeological evidence of Vikings in the New World have been excavated from Norse houses and churches in Greenland since the mid-18th century (Fig 4). Among other finds, a small runestone found near Upernavik in northern Greenland in 1823 remains the only authentic New World runic engraving. Its message says 'Eiríksfjörður, Bjarni, Thordarson, and Enridi Oddsson built Saturday before Rogation Day a cairn.' Throughout the 19th century Danish scholars mapped the location of hundreds of Viking sites in the eastern Settlement and the Western Settlement areas, near Narsarsuaq and Nuuk, respectively (Fig 5).

Although colder and less important as a farming center, the latter gave Norse access to the Nordseetur, the rich hunting territory of Disco Bay where Greenland Norse obtained walrus ivory, walrus and seal skins, falcons, elder-down, and many other products needed for trade to Europe (see Fig 19 on p. 16 for the Lewis chessmen).

Excavations in the many Norse churches, farms, and graveyards peaked in the 1930-50s. Of the thousands of implements recovered, only a single silver arrow point made of a material similar to a distinctive Labrador chert and found in the Sandnes graveyard, suggested contact between Norse Greenlanders and Native Americans. Perhaps this arrowhead was brought back to Greenland in the body of a Norseman.

The L'Anse aux Meadows Site

The breakthrough in North American Viking studies came in 1960 when Helge Ingstad and his archaeologist wife, Anne Stine Ingstad, were searching the coast of Labrador and Newfoundland for Viking sites. At the small fishing village of L'Anse aux Meadows (LAM) (Fig 6), at a point of land indicated as 'Promontorium Vinlandiae' on the 16th century Skalholt map, there are many sod foundations that resembled Norse dwellings. Excavations the following year produced unmistakable Norse artifacts: a bronze Viking ringed pin of Celtic-Dublin style (Fig 7), a soapstone spindle-whorl, a bone pin, a small circular stone lamp, iron rivets, and other materials. The foundations confirmed to 11th-century Viking dwellings in Iceland and Greenland: three longhouses with internal room divisions and long hearths, each with an outbuilding, and a small hut where local bog iron ore had been smelted. Two of the objects found indicated contact with Dorset Eskimo culture: an oval soapstone lamp dating c.1000 found in the roof tuff of the melting hut and a soapstone spindle-whorl made from a blubber-encrusted Dorset pot or lamp. The Ingstads became convinced that they had found the remains of Leif Erikson's settlement, Lefsibudir.

Following a break in excavations, work commenced in 1973-1976 under Parks Canada direction. The new work concentrated on the bog and areas surrounding the house, and considerable amounts of iron rivets and worked wood indicated ship repair activity. It also produced butternut (white walnut) husks and butternut wood, proof that the Norse who lived at LAM had explored southern reaches of the Gulf of St Lawrence, currently the northern limit of both butternuts and grapes. Neither are thought to have ever been grown wild or domesticated along the north shore of the Gulf of St Lawrence. For this reason Birgitta Wallace believes LAM to have been a 'gateway' site at the northern boundary of Vinland, within reach of Greenland yet within close proximity to the productive Canadian Maritime coast.

Whither Vinland?

Most scholars agree with this assessment, although discussion remains as to whether LAM was also Straumfjörður, a Norse settlement location mentioned in the sagas, might be located. Saga descriptions have led some scholars to believe that Hóp might be found in the Bay of Fundy, Boston, Cape Cod, Newport, or even New York harbor. Another likely area would be St Paul Inlet or St George Bay in western Newfoundland, or at the mouth of the Miramichi or other rivers in northern New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Wallace has argued that it would be unlikely for the Eriksson family to have built a second permanent settlement in southern Vinland, and if they did, they would have been temporary quarters that left few archaeological traces.

Other evidence suggests we are not likely to find major Viking settlements south of the Gulf of St Lawrence. Aside from the severe navigation problems and large groups of well-armed and aggressive Indians, the lack of Viking artifacts in Native archaeological sites dating from the Norse period in the Canada-Newfoundland region. Later finds suggest little Viking presence in these regions. Had Vikings travelled south, Native people would have obtained Viking artifacts, and some of these would have been found in native site excavations, as they have been in the arctic (see below). Their absence can best be understood by the statements attributed to Leif and Karsen in the sagas as their reasons for abandoning Vinland: 'This is a fine land, but we will hardly be able to defend ourselves there.'

In fact, only one Viking find has come from southern mainland Newfoundland: a silver coin minted to King Olaf Kyrre, struck between 1065-1080 (Fig 8), found at the Goddard site in Penobscot Bay in Brooklin, Maine. The coin was found in 1956, badly corroded but with a suspicion of gold. Later a portion of the coin crumbled and was lost. Based on its use as an ornament, and the presence of other
Vikings in America

northern artifacts at Goddard, the coin is believed to have been traded from Labrador or Newfoundland, not given to an Indian by a Viking in Maine. The coin’s late 11th century mint date indicates continued Viking voyaging to Markland or Vinland decades after the voyages described in the sagas.

Norse in the High Arctic
In contrast with the limited evidence of Norse contacts with Natives in Vinland, evidence for Norse contacts with Natives in the far north grows stronger every year. Norse objects have been found in several Dorset sites: a pendant of smelted European copper from a 12th century Dorset site in Richmond Gulf on the east coast of Hudson’s Bay (Fig 9), spun yarn of presumed Norse fabrication made from arctic hare and goat hair from the Dorset Nunuvik site in Baffin Island, and a bronze pot fragment from a Dorset site in the Thule District, Greenland. Dorset people specialized in hunting walrus and had abundant sources of ivory (Fig 10). Their culture thrived in the eastern Arctic and northern Greenland for hundreds of years, but was replaced or assimilated between 1250-1500 by Thule culture, a whale-hunting Eskimo culture ancestral to modern Inuit.
Vikings in America

The concentration of materials that Norse would never have offered as trade goods suggests the end of a disastrous Norse venture into this dangerous, ice-choked region full of walrus, ice, and aggressive Thule people.

The dates of the Thule sites containing Norse materials are c. 1200-1400, with most falling into the period 1250-1300. The latter is the period when the Greenland Norse population peaked and the flow of ivory, skins, and other northern products to Iceland and Europe was greatest. We may imagine that Norse hunters had reduced the Disco Bay walrus stocks and were extending their territories further north in Greenland and perhaps also west into Canada. The Baffin figurine marks at least one certain meeting between Norse and Thule people. Whether or not active trade existed between Norse and Dorset or Thule people is one of the most intriguing research problems. What was a Norseman doing in the Canadian Arctic with a trader's balance? For the moment we can only guess, but as finds accumulate, the possibility of purposeful exploration and long-term structured exchange between Norse and Native Americans in northern Greenland and Canada cannot be discounted.

The Greenland Norse

The final chapter of the exhibit 'saga' relates to the growth and decline of the Greenland colonies. Demographic studies based on remains recovered from Norse cemeteries suggests that highest combined population level attained by the Eastern and Western Settlements was between 4000 and 5000. Physical anthropological studies of stature and nutrition show that the Greenland Norse were as healthy as Scandinavian Norse, with no sign of inbreeding, heavy disease loads, or genetic mixture with Inuit.

Literary and archaeological evidence suggest that the Western Settlement was abandoned about 1350, and the Eastern Settlement about one hundred years later. Norse departure from both areas seems to have been orderly, not the result of attacks by in-migrating Inuit from North Greenland. While reference to skirmishes and feuds exists in Inuit oral history, Inuit do not appear to have been a decisive force in either settlement's demise. However, once emptied, Norse territories were quickly taken up by the Inuit, who settled in the outer reaches of the fjords and prowled extensively among the Norse middens for useful Norse materials like scissors, bell-metal, hardwoods, knife blades, chisels, and other goods.

Today many factors are thought to have contributed to the gradual demise of the Greenland Norse: over-population, over-grazing, economic losses, spiritual distress from reduced European contacts and business ties, cessation of interest from Rome, pressure from Inuit, and others. However, probably the most serious of all was the cooling climate that began to cripple farming, reduced production of food and wool exports, and increased the vulnerability of ships to ever-increasing amounts of sea ice. With external

Arctic and in northern Greenland: iron and copper knives and harpoon blades, a bronze pot fragment, part of a bronze trader's scale, an Inuit-style wood figure depicting a Norseman in a tunic robe with a cross on his chest (Fig 11), and from several sites on Ellesmere Island a mass of Viking materials including large fragments of woven cloth, iron blades and wedges, European hardwoods, fragments of chain mail, and a carpenter's wood plane (Fig 12).

Fig 10. Dorset ivory antler wand. Buchanan Lake, Nanavut, Canada. 9th-10th century AD. C. 20 cm. Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull. SHV-1. Similar pieces have been found in Greenland. Photo by Harry Foster.


contacts diminishing and livestock levels falling precipitously after 1350, when the effects of the Little Ice Age took hold, only the wealthy farmers and church farms could survive more than a few bad winters. As the 15th century wore on, even the elite must have decided Norse life and society as they knew it could no longer be maintained, and emigration to Iceland or Europe accelerated. If any people sought refuge among the Inuit, or took up the example of a better-adapted Inuit culture, or sought to maintain a Norse life in North America, no trace has yet been found. By the end of the 15th century, the only people remaining in Greenland were the Inuit, and when Dutch whalers returned again in the 17th century they were found thriving as hunters among the old abandoned Norse farms. Only a few decades after the last Norse died or departed, Greenland and North America entered a new phase of history initiated by Columbus and other voyagers who probed west at more southern latitudes. By then the history of Vikings and Norsemen that had dominated this region for the previous 500 years was alive only in the Icelandic saga books and the memories of Icelandic scholars, monks, and old sea-farers. Columbus probably was aware of that knowledge before he began his own voyages to America. Thereafter, the old Norse legacy would have to be brought to life through the combined knowledge of saga literature, natural science, and archaeology.

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Vikings: The North American Saga

National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C.
Until 13 August 2000

American Museum of Natural History, New York
20 October 2000 - 20 January 2001

Museum of Natural History, Denver
2 March 2001 - 31 May 2001

Houston Museum of Natural Science
13 July 2001 - 11 October 2001

Los Angeles County Museum
23 November 2001 - 16 March 2002

Canadian Museum of Civilization, Ottawa
16 May 2002 - 14 October 2002
**THE ART OF THE VIKINGS**

A selection of Viking art featured in the exhibition Vikings: the North Atlantic Saga has been chosen by the Editor-in-Chief of Minerva, Jerome M. Eisenberg, Ph.D., to show the varying styles over a period of 400 years.

Viking art is best known for its Nordic animal-style ornamentation. It was preceded long before by simple animal forms in the first four centuries AD, then full animal ornamentation in the early Migration period in southern Scandinavia c. AD 375-550. Band-shaped, highly stylised beasts in profile blanketing entire surfaces, subjugating the animal to the linear design, dominated pre-Viking and Viking art for several hundred years.

The Migration period Style I of pre-Viking art, which used chip-carving, openwork, and strong relief, with geometric, animal, and human ornamentation, was popular in Scandinavia in the later 5th and 6th centuries, especially as large brooches. It also occurred in northern and central Europe and in England. In Style II, from the end of the 6th century until the end of the 7th century, the animals were not organic, but rather geometric patterns of knots, plaits, and scrolls. It is found throughout eastern and southern Scandinavia, and western and central Europe, but is best known for the many finds from Vendel and Valsgärde in Uppland, Sweden. Other scholars, excavating at Valsgärde, use another finer classification arrangement for Style II: Styles A to E. Many objects of one basic style may contain elements of one or two other styles; this is also true of Viking art, which often contains elements of pre-Viking styles.

Style A = transition between Styles I and II; Style B (beasts with interlacing, undulating bodies, backward-looking heads) = Style II; Styles C (beasts with large, almost triangular bodies, sometimes with serpents), D (beasts with ribbon-like bodies with three or more parallel lines filled with hatching, circles, or lozenges; often with many serpents), and E (which, as Style III, extends into the Viking Age) are typically Scandinavia styles.

The earliest Viking style, which originated c. AD 750-800, is referred to as...
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Fig. 3 (left). Limestone picture stone. När, Gotland, Sweden. Viking Age. 126 cm. Museum of National Antiquities, Stockholm. 11521:1. The Gotland picture stones were erected to commemorate people and deeds of valour. This example, a common type, depicts a Viking ship bearing deceased warriors to Valhalla, where the two warriors above do battle. (Enhanced by modern paint.)

Fig. 5. Iron axe with gold and silver inlay. Mammen, Jutland, Denmark. Late 10th century AD. 17.5 cm. Danish National Museum, Copenhagen. c133. Decorated on one side with a stylised bird and on the other with plant designs, this national treasure defines the Mammen style.

Fig. 6. Gift copper, silver, and niello harness bow. Mammen, Jutland, Denmark. Late 10th century AD. 42 cm. Danish National Museum, Copenhagen. c1063. There is a small ‘gripping beast’ in the open mouth of the animal head terminal, thus linking this Jelling style work to the Oseberg style. Two of these bows, used as rein guides on the back of a carriage horse, were found together in a blacksmith’s workshop.

Fig. 7. Gold arm ring. Rabjerg, Zealand, Denmark. 9th century AD. 8.2 cm. Danish National Museum, Copenhagen. MMCLV. Arm rings were presented to local officials and retainers by the Viking kings and chieftains in order to secure their allegiance.

Figs 4a (above), 4b (below). Oseberg wood animal-head post. Early 9th century AD. C. 39 cm. Viking Ship Museum, Oslo. UO 0 k.51. Four of these ornate beast heads, each carved by a different artist, and all in a combination of styles, were found at the Oseberg burial, the site of a famous Viking ship and a procession of decorated sled and carriage with twelve sacrificed horses. The replica (4b) has been made to approximate the original appearance of the one carved by the ‘Barque Master’ (4a), who is best noted for his sense of plasticity.

as Style III, or by others Style E. The animal bodies varied in width and they had openwork shoulders and hips, with tendrils emanating from the body. Two animals were commonly arranged like the arms of a lyre.

The ‘gripping-beast’ style, which also originated at about the same time, consisted of a facing animal with large round eyes in a round head on a neck tendril, large muscular shoulders and hips, and paws gripping anything in sight, including even its own body. It often occurred in combination with Style III and a lattice work motif – the Broa style (Fig 14). The Oseberg Style III is a related, somewhat stiffer style.

From about 825 to 975 the Borre style dominated Viking art (see chart drawing). The body is as the same as before, but the head is triangular, with distinct eyebrows and ears; often the heads appear alone, just ornamented with ribbons. A new motif is an interlacing ring-chain. The Jelling style, late 9th to late 10th century, reverted to a long, slender, ribbon-shaped beast in profile, often with patterns or stripes on the body, which is commonly in an S-form loop, but with round eyes and a gaping jaw. There are tendrils on the nose and neck. Again, some of the traits of the ‘gripping beast’ and Jelling styles may be intermixed on the same object.
Fig 8. Silver neck ring. Lännäs, Noro, Sweden. Viking Age. 13 cm. Museum of National Antiquities, Stockholm. 7673. Made from melted Arabic coins, a common source of silver for the Vikings, these neck rings were gifted to their wives and worn as a sign of wealth.

Fig 12 (above right). The silver Birka Crucifix, Birka, Uppland, Sweden. C. AD 900. 3.4 cm. Museum of National Antiquities, Stockholm. BI660 (replica in exhibition). The earliest known Scandinavian crucifix was found in the grave of a prosperous woman, evidence of the beginning of the religious transformation of the Vikings.

Fig 9. Silver and gilt box brooch. Boge, Gotland, Sweden. Viking Age. 6.5 cm. Museum of National Antiquities, Stockholm. 10654. Massive, ornate box brooches were used by the men of Gotland, an island off the Swedish coast.

Fig 10. Silver penannular ring brooch. Lau, Gotland, Sweden. 10th century AD. 4.5 cm. Museum of National Antiquities, Stockholm. 32302. The women of Gotland wore these fashionable brooches.

A large quadruped in combat with a serpent – the struggle between good and evil? – often called the ‘great beast’s style’, starts c. AD 950 and becomes common by the late 10th and 11th centuries. A griffin struggling with a serpent is indicative of the Mammen style, c. AD 950 to c. 1065 AD, in which the animal bodies are fuller and even more interlacing (Fig 5). There is a double contour line, spiral-like shoulders and hips, and neck and tail lobes which blossom into acanthus-like crests. The Ringerike style, late 10th to late 11th centuries, is even more decorative. The beasts turn their heads

Fig 11. Silver Thor’s Hammer pendant. Romansdal, Bornholm, Denmark. 10th century AD. 3.8 cm. Danish National Museum, Copenhagen. 557. The son of Odin, a god of great strength, wielded a hammer called Mjölnir. He was probably the counterpart of the Roman Vulcan. This type of amulet is very common in Viking graves.

Fig 13. Silver, gold, and niello penannular brooch. Odense, Fyn, Denmark. 10th century AD. 31.7 cm. Danish National Museum, Copenhagen. 16750. This ringed pin, used to fasten a man’s cloak, features disks with gold filigree animals.

Fig 15. Bronze brooch with chain. Luustari, Eura, Finland. C. AD 1020-1050. C. 25 cm. Finnish National Museum. 18000140SO. These round brooches, from one of the 500 inhumation graves at Eura, are a Finnish type. Silver was rare in Finland in the 9th to 10th centuries and bronze was highly valued.

Fig 16. Silver Urnes brooch. C. AD 1100. 4 cm. Trollaskogser, Rangvarvallasla, Iceland. National Museum of Iceland, Reykjavik. 6524. This exceptional brooch, found in Iceland, is one of the finest known and no doubt was imported by a chieftain.
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back more often. The bodies are similar in fullness to the Mammen style and also have like shoulders and hips, but neck crests, wings, and tail terminate in multiple luxuriant leaves, palmettes, and entwining feathery tendrils. It was also a popular style in England and especially in Ireland.

In the last of the animalistic styles, the Urnes style, c. AD 1075-1150, we return to entwined serpents and animals with ribbon-like bodies. The great beast is interpreted as an elegant tall-legged deer with an extended neck and slender head. Serpents entangle the beast and fill up all available spaces in figure-8 loops and coils. This and the earlier Mammen style are also found in England and Ireland.

In the Middle Ages these animal styles were considered pagan and were not used by the church, however they continued to be used as decoration on peasant utensils for hundreds of years. A nationalist movement in 19th century literature and art brought them back into popular use.

This brief review of Viking art styles is based primarily upon a chapter 'Religion, Art, and Runes' by Anne-Marie Grønhøj in Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga (Washington, 2000), and the most comprehensive treatment on the subject in English: Viking Art by David M. Wilson and Ole Klint-Jensen (London, 2nd edition, 1980). A major exhibition on the Vikings, held in 1980, was organised by the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and consisted of 543 objects (including many minor pieces among the treasures) lent by 22 museums in Scandinavia and England. The handsome exhibition catalogue, The Vikings (London & New York, 1980) by James Graham-Campbell and Dafydd Kidd is highly recommended for further reading on the arts of the Vikings.


Illustration acknowledgments:

Fig 1: English Heritage; figgs 1a, b: Peter Harholdt; figs 2, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13: Carl Hansen, figgs 8, 9, 10, 18: Christer Ahlin; figs 12, 17: Museum of National Antiquities, Stockholm; fig 14: Peter Harholdt; fig 15: Finnish National Museum; fig 16: Ivar; fig 19: National Museums of Scotland.

Fig 17 (left). Bronze statuette of Frey, god of fertility, Rällinge, Södermanland, Sweden. Early 11th century AD. 6.9 cm. Museum of National Antiquities, Stockholm. 14232 (replica in exhibition). This phallic deity, according to Old Norse poetry, was also in control of the wind, rain, and sun, and sailed a magical ship, the Skidbladnir.

Fig 18 (above). Gilded copper weather vane. Söderala, Hallands, Sweden. 11th century AD. 46 cm. Museum of National Antiquities, Stockholm. 16023 (replica in exhibition). This vane is similar to others borne on Viking ships depicted on picture stones. The slender head and almond-shaped eyes of the 'Great Beast' are typical of Urnes style. The intricate design may have a social or ritual meaning.

The Borrore drawing is of a gilt-bronze mount from Borre, Vestfold, Norway (University Museum of Cultural Heritage, Oslo); the Jelling drawing is a detail from the famed Jelling silver cup from Jelling, Jutland, Denmark (Danish National Museum, Copenhagen); the Mammen drawing is of the Mammen iron axe (fig 5); the Ringerike drawing is of a weather vane ornament from Heggen, Norway (University Museum of Cultural Heritage, Oslo); and the Urnes drawing is from the north portal of the Urnes stave church, Norway. Chart prepared by Marcia Bakry and drawn by Alice Tangerini, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution.

Fig 19. The ivory Lewis chessmen. Uig, Isle of Lewis, Scotland. 12th century AD. 10 cm. National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, and the British Museum. These striking walrus ivory figurines were part of a cache of 93 pieces found in 1831 on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides. The ivory, no doubt, came from Greenland. The throne backs of the queens are intricately carved with foliage and beasts in late 12th century Scandinavian style.

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Coptic Art

Coptic Art in Egypt

The exhibition 'L'Art Copte en Egypte: 2000 Ans de Christianisme', being held only at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris until 3 September, brings together over 250 objects from museums in Europe, the United States, and, of course, Egypt, featuring some hundred works from the Coptic Museum in Cairo.

Jerome M. Eisenberg, Ph.D., an avid fan of Coptic art for over forty years, presents a selection of some of his favourite pieces on exhibit.

Coptic Egypt

The Coptic period covers the time when Egypt was ruled by the Romans and Byzantines. Until the arrival of Islam in AD 640, the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans not only borrowed from each other's cultural heritages but also intermarried. This syncretism is quite apparent in their art, with many of the same deities used in both everyday worship and in burial practices (Figs 1, 2). Osiris was transformed into Dionysos, Isis into Aphrodite, and so forth. When the pagan Copts became Christians they also continued the same themes. The Virgin nursing Jesus was no doubt adapted from the depiction of Isis nursing Harpokrates. Although Egypt was ruled by the Romans from 30 BC until the 4th century AD, its language and culture were primarily Greek. In the Byzantine period, when Egypt was ruled by Christian emperors in Constantinople, Coptic language and culture flourished.

There was a large Jewish community in Alexandria and Christianity was probably introduced there in the 1st century AD. The Egyptian Coptic church is said to have been founded by St Mark the Evangelist in Alexandria c. AD 40-49, where it is recorded that he was killed by pagans c. AD 66. In the 2nd century AD the renowned Christian Catechetical School was established in Alexandria and rapidly spread the principles of Christianity throughout Egypt. Teachers such as Clement of Alexandria and his follower Origen adapted the Hellenistic and Jewish philosophies originally established in the Ptolemaic period for their Christian disciples. Both the Platonic cult of Isis and the Jewish Platonists introduced mysticism and asceticism into the practices of early Christianity.

St Anthony (c. AD 251-353), born in Middle Egypt, is credited with founding monasticism c. AD 305 and preaching the ascetic Christian life. The first monastery was built in AD 323. Monasticism did not fall into decline here until the 8th century, and only then because a head tax was placed on monks by the Moslem rulers. A number of the monasteries have survived, and, indeed, the Monastery of St Anthony on the Red Sea is still in operation.

A Coptic school had already been organised in Alexandria in the 2nd century to teach Gnosis, a synthesis of various religions that acknowledged a heavenly power that could redeem man through knowledge. This knowledge pertained to the origin and destiny of the human soul and was based on a radical interpretation of the Jewish scriptures, particularly the Book of Genesis. Though Egypt was basically Christian by the mid 5th century, Gnosticism was still very much alive as evidenced by the many Gnostic gospels and tractates as well as bronzes (Fig 9) and other objects, that have been found dating to the Coptic period. Indeed, many of the Gnostic magic practices were incorporated by the Copts into their religious teachings and everyday life.

In AD 259 the emperor Trajan Decius issued an edict requiring everyone to worship pagan gods. The resulting persecution of the Christians ended only with his death in AD 251. It was reintroduced with The Great Persecution in AD 303, the date with which Coptic Christians began their 'Era of the Martyrs'. Christianity, however, was proclaimed the official religion in AD 313 and the Alexandrian Church became a powerful force. Many pantheon temples were soon converted to churches and monasteries. The Christians, in turn, persecuted the pagans and Jews, even though through, all of this change, many Copts were still pagan in mind. The Patriarch Theophylus destroyed the Serapeum and its library in AD 391 (Fig 19) and erected in its place a church and a convent. The emperor had ordered all of the pagan temples closed in AD 392, though some pagan schools survived until the mid-6th century and paganism was still practiced in intellectual circles up until the Arab conquest in AD 641.

At the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451, the Alexandrian Church was declared heretical due to its defence of Monophysism - the doctrine that Christ was of one divine or divine-human nature, not of two distinct natures, human and divine - and the condemned Patriarch Cyril founded the Coptic Church in Egypt. By the time of the Byzantine emperor Justinian (AD 527-565) the schism between the Coptic and Byzantine Churches

Fig 1 (right). Lime stone funerary stela. Kom Abou Billo (the classical Tereum). 3rd century AD. 28 x 20 cm. Coptic Museum, Cairo. 12347. The deceased, Apollo, is represented as an orange (praying figure) in Roman dress flanked by the horns fakon, the solar deity and bearer of life, and the Arubils jackal, the guide to the afterworld. It thus combines pharaonic and Hellenistic themes. The stela found at this site, the ancient Tereum, depicts either orantes or banqueters (The writer first published several of both types in 1959 and 1960). They were in production from the 1st to 4th centuries.

Fig 2 (right). Lime stone funerary stele. Egypt. 5th century AD. 70 x 45 cm. Coptic Museum, Cairo. 8004. This type of Coptic stele, here with a female orante, is derived directly from the Roman stela of Kom Abou Billo (Fig 1). The tomb entrance with a large scalop shell, here flanked by two crosses, symbolizes the place of the day of the last judgament. The shell motif, used by the Christians to represent the rebirth of the soul of the departed in the holy waters, has been adopted from the Classical depiction of the birth of Aphrodite in a scalop shell, which represented the rebirth of the spirit.

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had widened to the point that Byzantine garrisons were sent to Egypt to keep it within the Empire. A Persian occupation in 619, a reconquest in 629 by the Byzantine emperor Heraclius, and the Arab conquest in 641 and occupation in 646 soon put an end to the artistic and social world that revolved around Alexandria.

The conquest of Egypt by the Arabs did not lessen the effect of the Copts on its social or artistic planes. The Omayyad Arabs (AD 650-750) soon set up their capital at Fostat, close to modern Cairo, and employed many Coptic architects and artisans. Little of note was produced by the Copts during the early Abbasid dynasty (AD 750-969), as the Arab governors asserted their preeminence and there was a great tension between the two populations, while the Copts slowly became a minority.

The situation improved c. AD 870 and they resumed an active role in Egyptian life. During the later Fatimid period (AD 969-1171) the now close relationship between the two continued to flourish, until early in the 11th century, when Caliph al-Hakim persecuted them and destroyed their churches.

**Coptic art**

The earliest examples of Coptic art use themes taken almost exclusively from the mythology of Graeco-Roman Egypt (Figs 6, 7, 8). Most of the sculptures, and especially the reliefs, were executed during the two principal rather than the full three-dimensional, elegant forms of Hellenistic art. The upper level was flattened, often producing a static image in contrasting light and shade (Fig 2). In Coptic textiles the interplay of colours played an important part (Figs 3, 4, 5). The proper proportions of figures are often completely ignored in both sculptures and textiles. The faces are usually triangular, with large spherical eyes with stylised lids, an indifferent, stylised treatment of the hair, an elongated, cylindrical, and shortened dwarf-like limbs. A typical soft modeling of the figures, with an almost rubbery appearance, was introduced early in the 5th century (Figs 6, 7). By the mid-5th century the figures became stiffer, accompanied by very stylised, intertwined foliage.

In the 5th century Christian themes, such as Christ, the Virgin, and the saints, were introduced, slowly driving out the classical figures. The 5th to 7th centuries evidenced not only large numbers of Christian themes in church architectural reliefs (Fig 10) and wood panels and boxes (Figs 14-16), but also for everyday use in textiles, wood carvings, pottery, and other everyday objects (Figs 13, 17-18). In architectural sculpture the interlacing of vine leaves or acanthus leaves (Fig 10) often produced a lace-like effect. The 6th and 7th century basket capitals on Coptic columns, with their dense, intricate patterns of stylised vine and leaf scrolls, or of plait work, are superb in workmanship (Fig 11). Some are the direct influence of Byzantine court art.

From the early 5th century until the 7th century a growing upper class created an important cultural renaissance not seen since the Ptolemaic period. During this so-called Coptic period many of the finest artistic achievements were realised, especially in sculpture and textiles.

In the 5th and early 7th centuries saw the creation of the Coptic dynastoi, an upper class of well-educated native Egyptians holding high office, bringing about the production of magnificent codices and other deluxe works of art. The finest tapestries with a huge diversity of colours were produced during this period. Most were secular with pagan themes continuing to predominate, especially Dionysiac and Nilotic subjects. Groups of
Coptic Art

Dancers in arcades are part of the Dionysian cycle. Individual tapestry portraits were also executed in bold colours. Alexandrian ivory and bone carvers produced exceptional papyri (circular boxes), reliefs for furniture, combs (Fig 12), and other objects. The Coptic style of figural portrayal, with its static stance, symmetrical composition, odd bodily proportions, geometric hairdo, and large eyes continues to evidence itself even into the early Islamic period (Fig 20).

In the Ommayyad period an exuberant, elegant Islamic style developed which apparently slowed down the evolution of Coptic art which had become somewhat restrained and mechanical, with the natural elements becoming very stylised and often borrowing geometric patterns from Islamic art. The eight-lobed rosette and arabesque were borrowed from the Ommayyads. Bone and ivory carvings of the 7th to 9th centuries consist primarily of vine scrolls, sometimes accompanied by birds. Much of the art of this period was, in fact, Copto-Islamic. Christian funerary stelae ceased being sculptural and consisted mainly of a cross or a modified ankh within an arch, usually with a simple, flattened bird or pair of animals. Wood carvings were primarily debased imitations of earlier work.

The Fatimid period produced a true fusion of Coptic and Islamic art (Fig 28) in a rebirth of artistry, with Coptic artisans producing decorations for mosques and Arab secular buildings. Islamic foliated scrolls and arabesques were used on wood panels for both mosque and Fatimid palace decorations and for church doors. Many of the wood doors and screens of the 10th to 12th centuries were carved in Islamic style (Fig 30). Manuscript illuminations, even in Books of the Gospel, are characterized by being Islamic in style. Islamic art and culture continued to influence Coptic art after the Fatimid period. Indeed, by the 13th century, the Copts used not only Islamic elements of design, but also Arabic texts for their liturgical books (Fig 29), but the Coptic community had already been in decline and their art entered a period of obscurity from the 14th century until the early 19th century.

Exhibitions and publications
It is only in the last sixty years that Coptic art has begun to receive its due appreciation. Several landmark exhibitions and publications on Coptic art were held at the Brooklyn Museum from 1941 to 1943 under the direction of John D. Cooney. A major traveling exhibition, 'Koptische Kunst: Christen- tum am Nil', was initiated in Essen-Bredeney in 1963. The catalogue, containing 516 objects from nearly one hundred institutions and collectors, contained a lengthy introduction by Klaus Wessel. An excellent and comprehensive exhibition, the first in 26 years, 'Beyond the Pharaohs: Egypt and the Copts in the 2nd to 7th Centuries AD', was organised in 1989 by Florence D. Friedman of Museum of Art of the Rhode Island School of Design in cooperation with the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore. The catalogue included extensive essays on the historical background, everyday life, religion, art, and written materials, as well as an extensive bibliography. While the exhibition consisted of only 194 items, the entries were lengthy and well-documented.

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The current exhibition, co-curated by Dominique Bénazeth and Marie-Hélène Rutschowskaia, includes 287 carefully selected objects primarily from museums in France and Egypt, and also from Belgium, England, Greece, Russia, and the United States. The full-colour catalogue, 240 pp. and 280 illustrations, edited by Bénazeth and Rutschowskaia, is beautifully produced, with excellent colour illustrations and 14 essays by scholars in the field. It is available at the exhibition for the bargain price of just FFr 200; hardback FFr 300. A companion publication on the history of Coptic Egypt, L’Égypte copte, edited by Christian Cannuyer, 144 pp., is FFr 75.

Two conferences were held on Coptic art on 19 and 23 May, to tie in with the opening of the exhibition, but unfortunately we did not receive any notices in time to include them in Minerva’s Calendar.
Coptic Art

Fig 15. Tempera painting of Christ and Father Mena on fig wood. A monastery at el-Bawiti. Late 6th-early 7th century AD. 57 x 57 cm. Musée du Louvre. E 11565. From the excavations of J. Clédat, 1901-1902. The protective gesture of Christ is inherited from the pharaonic depictions of man and wife. Christ holds a richly embellished book which recalls other Byzantine examples. The Greek Inscription for St Mena is ‘Apâ Menu Prior’. Apa or abba translates as ‘father’. This term for a spiritual father became ‘abbot’ in medieval Europe. Christ is again signified as ‘Saviour’.

Fig 14. Wood medallions with polychrome busts of the Virgin Mary and the archangel Michael. Egypt, 5th-7th century AD. D. 8.5 and 8.4 cm. Coptic Museum, Cairo, 9104, 9105. Greek inscriptions identify the two representations. They are probably part of a processional cross, a tradition certainly inherited from the Roman military insignias, especially the labarum, in which the busts of Constantine and his sons were later replaced by the monogramme of Christ.

Fig 17. Fragment of a large pottery jar. Egypt, 6th-7th century AD. 23.3 x 19.8 cm. Coptic Museum, Cairo, 3230. Human depictions on these large storage jars are rare; they usually are decorated with images of animals or plants. This figure is probably that of a martyr, for he holds palm; the remaining top of one is surmounted by a cross.

Fig 16. Wood cover for a casket. A monastery at el-Bawiti. 6th-7th century. 29 x 22.5 cm. Coptic Museum, Cairo, 8796. From the IEAO excavations, 1913. This very schematised saint holds a roll of parchment or papyrus and stands by an altar surmounted by a peacock. The figure probably represents the patriarch Hench, the ‘scribe of justice’, known from el-Bawiti and also from the Monastery of St Jeremiah at Saqqara, and the box probably contained materials for a scribe.

Fig 18. Tapestry with the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. Egypt. 7th-8th century AD. 26 x 32 cm. Musée des Tissus, Lyon. 24400/55. Acquired from Theodor Graf (of Fayum portrait fame), Vienna, 1886. The hand of the angel of God, in the upper left field, appears in time to halt the sacrifice. The ram which will replace Isaac on the altar appears before Abraham. The names of the two participants appear in Greek in the field. Photo by Pierre Verrier.

Fig 19. Papyrus fragments illustrating the Alexandrian Chronicle. Egypt. C. 8th century AD. 22.5 x 10.5 cm; 18.3 x 8.4 cm. State Pushkin Museum, Moscow, 1.16310/8. From the Golitschek collection, acquired by the museum in 1911. There are 72 fragments existing of an illustrated papyrus manuscript in Greek drawn up by a scribe in late antiquity (previously dated as early as the 5th-6th century AD), known since 1506 in Latin translation by a Merovingian manuscript now in the Bibliothèque Nationale. The eight leaves, partially reconstructed, consist of a calendar, a list of islands and provinces, a series of Messianic prophecies, a list of the kings of Rome and Sparta, then of Macedonia and Lydia. The sixth leaf contains the Annals of the years 383 to 392 AD. On the left of Fig 19 St Theophilus, the patriarch of Alexandria, stands among the ruins of the Serapeum, symbolising the triumph of Christianity over paganism. On the right is the statue of Serapis in the Serapeum of Alexandria. The final two very fragmented leaves are decorated with biblical scenes. Photo © Pushkin State Museum.
Fig 20 (left). Copper alloy figure of a female musician holding two krotali (ancient castanets). Byzantine period or early Islamic period. 22 cm. Musée du Louvre. E 25393. Though now nude, there are traces of fabric remaining which probably covered her body. The static stance, symmetrical composition, the odd bodily proportions, the geometric hair-style, and the large eyes are all typical of Coptic art for several hundred years.

Fig 21 (left). Copper alloy bottle with musicians. Thebes, Byzantine period. 21 x 11 cm. Coptic Museum, Cairo. Acquired at Thebes for the Egyptian Museum by G. Maspero in 1885. 5088. The four feet of the vessel are four dogs in profile, reminiscent of early Islamic animals. The portico of four columns depicts four musicians playing a flute, a type of whistle, cymbals, and a tambourine. There are several vessels known of this type with musical concerts and bacchanales.

Fig 22 (above). Leather writing instrument sheath of Pamio. el-Sheikh I bada (Ancient Antinoopolis). Byzantine period. 23.5 x 8.2 cm. Musée du Louvre. AF 5158. From the excavations of A. Gayet, 1897-1898. This fine sheath holds five tubes containing seven quills and three styli. It is engraved with an image of St Theophilus, in military garb, overwhelming a demon, and a lengthy magical text. In the Coptic period the traditional Egyptian wood palette was replaced by this type of sheath accompanied by a bronze ink pot.

Fig 23 (above). Wood sarcophagus decorated with peacocks. Egypt. Byzantine period. 190 x 62 cm. Ägyptologisches Institut, Ruprecht-Karls Universität, Heidelberg, 500. The rare form of this unusual and colourful sarcophagus is paralleled by others from the Coptic necropolis at Karara. Painted sarcophagi are found only in the oasis burials. The peacock, the legendary bird of paradise, was the Christian symbol of resurrection and eternal life. Photo courtesy of the museum.

Fig 24 (above). Wood hair comb. Egypt. Byzantine period, c. 6th century AD. 25 x 7.4 cm. Musée du Louvre. E 11718. The delicate nature of this type of comb, usually made of boxwood and decorated with highly simplified openwork depictions of animals and sometimes humans, usually on horseback, probably signifies that they were most often used for wedding gifts. The comb with two sets of teeth was introduced to Egypt by the Greeks. The usual decoration of incised circles with dots is typical of the Coptic period. Other examples are shown on p. 24.

Note: The captions for this article are based on those appearing in the exhibition catalogue, most of those adapted being by Marie-Hélène Batshowcaya.

All of the photos of objects in the Louvre, and the Coptic and Islamic Museums, Cairo, are by P. Mocklaid unless otherwise noted.
**Coptic Art**

**Fig 25.** Three wood wheeled toys: Kom Aushim (Karanis), el-Bahnasa (ancient Oxyrhynchos), and Girza. Byzantine period. H. 19 cm, 18.2 cm, 5.5 cm. Coptic Museum, Cairo. 8894, 8895, 8890. These very stylised toys, a horseman, a horse, and a bird, are virtually identical to some of those being made today. The eyes of the horse and the bird are pierced for pull strings.

**Fig 26 (left).** Ormamental parchment manuscript page with representations of the Virgin and Child and two angels. Hamouli, Egypt. Dated AD 892-893. 38 x 25.5 cm. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. This is the only illustration appearing in this manuscript. The same theme appears in manuscripts and on murals in the monasteries of Mar bit and Sagara. Note the typical Coptic style, especially the staring eyes © 2000, the Pierpont Morgan Library.

**Fig 27.** Coptic-Islamic paper codex, a Book of Gospels, with text in Coptic and Arabic. Church of St Mercury (Abu-Sifain), Cairo. AD 1250. 25.5 x 18 cm. Institut Catholique, Paris, Ms. Copte 1. Each gospel is preceded by a richly painted portrait of the evangelist in an appropriate scene. All of the elements are in Islamic style, including the garments. The text is in both Coptic and Arabic. By the 13th century true Coptic art as such had disappeared. There are 66 scenes from the New Testament six to the page, in this treatise which has been reproduced worldwide for hundreds of years. Photo by Studio Janjac.

**FOR FURTHER READING:**

*Beyond the Pharaohs: Egypt and the Copts in the 2nd to 7th Centuries AD*, Brooklyn, 1989. Florence D. Friedman and ten contributing authors.


**Fig 28 (left).** Ceramic lustre ware bowl fragment with a depiction of Christ Egyptian. 11th-12th century AD. 7.2 x 11.3 cm. Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo. S397/1. His right hand shows the ring finger touching the thumb, as in medieval images of Christ in glory; his left hand holds a book of scriptures. The Byzantine-style figure still retains Coptic eyes; the stylised plants reflect Islamic art. This bowl and another in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, with a priest or Coptic monk, are the only examples of Coptic images in Fatimid (AD 967-1171) ceramics.
A Collection of Coptic Combs

The Editor-in-Chief of Minerva, Dr. Eisenberg, has been involved with Coptic Art since 1958. His Catalog of Egyptian Antiquities (1959) included 3rd century stelae from Kom Abou Billo and a large group of Coptic textiles. A 1960 Catalog of Late Egyptian and Coptic Sculptures contained 61 sculptures, all published for the first time, from such classic sites as el-Bahnasa, Kom Abou Billo, and el-Sheikh ibada, as well as a selection of Coptic wood panels and plaques from Fostat and the Fayum. His fascination with ancient and tribal naive art led to the formation of this personal collection of Coptic combs (see also Fig 24), along with combs and spoons from other ancient and sub-Saharan cultures.

Coptic combs, c. 6th century AD, from the collection of Jerome M. Eisenberg, Ph.D (Photos Jerome M. Eisenberg).
THE LATE ROMAN SILVER TREASURE FROM KAISERAUGST

New additions to an old find

Annemarie Kaufmann-Heinimann

describes the astonishing re-discovery of 18 pieces of silver plate

Two events in AD 350 and 1962

On 18 January AD 350, the imperial treasurer (comes rerum privaturn) Marcellinus gave a party at Autun in honour of his son's birthday, with all the military and civilian dignitaries of the western empire present. Suddenly, one of the officers, the popular Magnus Magnentius (Fig 1), appeared, clad in imperial robes and escorted by bodyguards. He was acclaimed as emperor by the guests, and later by the people of Autun and by the army. The legal emperor, Constantius, fled in the direction of Spain but was overtaken and killed at the foot of the Pyrenees.

On 18 February 1962 Dr Charles Bourcart, a lawyer and knowledgeable amateur historian from Basel, while on his Sunday afternoon stroll, found a large metal plate (no. 57; see Cahn below) stuck in the muddy ground of the late Roman fortress at Kaiseraugst (about 10 kms east of Basel, Switzerland). At first glance he thought that it was the lid of a modern metal dust-bin; but when, after having washed it carefully, he discovered a Latin graffito on its back (Fig 2), he rightly assumed that it must be a genuine Roman silver dish. He informed Professor Rudolf Laur-Belart, then in charge of the excavations at the Roman site of Augusta Raurica, of his discovery and they immediately went back to investigate the find-spot and search for more items.

Of these two incidents, separated by nearly 1600 years, the first one illustrates the historical precondition for hiding the silver treasure of Kaiseraugst in antiquity, whereas the second one marks the starting point of its rediscovery in modern times. A third incident, as unexpected as the second, was to follow in 1995.

The discovery in 1961/62

When, after 18 February 1962, the two men tried to search the frozen ground, the innkeeper from the restaurant nearby joined them, bringing along five more silver plates which she had picked up a month before (Fig 3): they were a small niello-inlaid platter (no. 55), a big undecorated plate (no. 56), the beaded rim of another big plate...
(no. 58, Fig 13), a big plate with a geometric medallion (no. 60) and the so-called ‘sea city dish’ with gilding and niello (no. 62, Fig 10). She told them that at that time there had been more plates lying around in the mud and that she had observed some people taking away another item.

Soon, the preceding events could be reconstructed, at least in broad outline. On 27 December 1961 the operator of a bulldozer grading the ground for a sports field to be laid out at the south-west corner of the Roman fortress (Fig 4) struck a cache of silver tableware and other valuable objects, which had most probably been stored away in a wooden crate. Not realising what was happening, he scattered most of the objects in an area of about 200 square metres, where they remained lying in the open - covered by mud and, at times, snow - for the next seven weeks. Some items were carried with the excavated material to a dump some kilometres away.

So, in February 1962, Professor Laur-Belart began trying to rescue the original group, and gradually more and more items showed up (Fig 6). A school boy had taken home the Achilles dish (no. 63, Fig 11); the Ariadne dish (no. 61, Fig 9) was recovered from a rubbish pit, where another school boy had thrown it on the orders of his teacher, who had considered it to be rubbish! The dump also produced three deep bowls (nos. 41, 51, 52) and a fish plate (no. 53). Many of the small objects were buried in a hole in the top-soil, for example the goblets (nos. 43-46) and cups (nos. 47-50), about 20 spoons, three ingots (nos. 66-68, Fig 7) and most of the coins.

**Historical context**

What was finally gathered together in April 1962 was quite extraordinary: a silver hoard, nearly 2.5 kilogrammes in weight, consisting of a luxurious table service, three ingots and 186 coins and medallions (Fig 5). Its clear chronological evidence, provided by the coins and the ingots, was also very exceptional. Most of the coins and medallions were issued by the three sons of Constantine the Great: Constantine II (AD 337-340), Constantius II (337-361) and Constans (337-340), the latest ones being from the very beginning of 350, whereas the three ingots bear the portrait of Magnentius (AD 350-353), whose usurpation was mentioned above (Fig 7). Magnentius must have issued the ingots as *donativa* (presents from an emperor to his troops), just after his successful uprising against Constans, the ruler of the western part of the empire, in January 350. It is remarkable that there are none of his coins present in the treasure, and so we might infer that the treasure was deposited not much later than 350 or perhaps 351. What we do not know - and most probably shall never know - are the reasons for hiding the valuables: did the owners, most probably men of high military rank, have to leave it behind because they were sent on detached duty? Was there a Germanic raid to be afraid of? One thing is certain. None of those in on the secret was able to go back and recover the crate with its silver hoard from its hiding-place.

**Contents of the treasure up to 1995**

The Kaiseraugst table service consisted of a large variety of silver used for drinking and eating. In accordance with Late Roman fashion there were only few drinking cups and no wine jugs. It is quite likely that these vessels were of glass rather than of silver and that they were, for this reason, stored away in another crate. Among the cutlery there were two types of spoons, *cochlearia* (nos. 1-21) and *ligulae* (nos. 22-25), and five multifunctional utensils combining wine- strainers, toothpicks and earpicks (nos. 36-40). It is noteworthy that one of the toothpicks (no. 35) bears at its end a ‘pram’ (Fig 8), thus being the only piece of evidence of the new officially recognised religion in the hoard. A great variety of plates was used for serving food: small and deep bowls originally containing spicy sauces, two fish plates, big dishes which were plain or decorated with geometric patterns, and three large prestigious dishes decorated with gilding and niello, or with relief. The figural decoration of these three is purely pagan. On the central panel of the Ariadne dish (no. 61) a Bacchic scene is depicted (Fig 9), whereas on the small panels on the rim cupids play with animals. Cupids are also the protagonists on the medallion of the so-called ‘sea city dish’ (no. 62; Figs 10a, 10b), whose composition reminds us of one of the Cesena (near Rimini, Italy) plates and of the hunting plate in the Sessa treasure (Minerva, April 1990, pp. 4-11).

The octagonal Achilles dish (no. 63), perhaps the most famous item of the whole silver treasure, tells us, in a sequence of eleven scenes on the flat rim, the events leading up to the story of the Greek hero Achilles from his birth to his discovery by Ulysses on the island of Skyros (Fig 11). This dish is remarkable not only for its artistic qualities but also for the fact that on the back it bears a signature: ‘of Paussalippos from Thesalonike’ (Fig 17). This is not the
April 1962 were the whole group of objects buried around the middle of the 4th century AD. Judging from modern breaks, at least two fragments of plates seemed to be missing: one of the big plates with beaded edge consisted of the rim only (no. 58), whereas from another big plate just a small fragment (no. 59) survived. By taking into account all the witnesses’ evidence, Jürg Ewald, the author of the relevant chapter in the monograph on the treasure, concluded that most certainly two, perhaps three big plates, at least, were missing. But all the authorities’ appeals for the return of the lost items proved unsuccessful.

The surprise was, therefore, all the greater when in the summer 1995, the press announced that 18 plates, belonging to the Kaiseraugst treasure, and about 22 kilograms in weight, had reappeared! Under conditions of strict anonymity the items were restored through the offices of a lawyer to their legal owner, the canton of Aargau, represented by the archaeological service (Aargaulische Kantonsarchäologie). No details about the circumstances of their discovery are known – we can only assume that between 27 December, 1961, and 19 February, 1962, one or more persons misappropriated the items, which were lying around either on the building site or at the dump, and kept them secret for more than thirty years.

It was not difficult to provide the proof that the new items really were part of the treasure discovered in 1961/62: the group includes the inner part belonging to the isolated rim (no. 115; Figs 13a, 13b) and the fragment mentioned above (no. 59; Fig 14b) seems to fit into one of the two dishes decorated with niello (no. 114; Fig 14a). On top of a big undecorated dish (no. 117) there is the impression of the foot of the Ariadne dish (no. 61). Some of the pieces are shiny, as if they had been in use during the last decades; others are badly damaged. It is clear that extensive restoration work will be needed before any attempt can be made to integrate the new group into the old one and to put the complete treasure on display at the Römermuseum at Augst. Even so, last winter (23 January to 7 March 1999), the public had a first opportunity to see the un-restored items in a temporary exhibition at the Art Gallery (Aargaulisches Kunsthau) at Aarau (Switzerland).

One question which arose soon after the surprise in 1995 was whether the two reunited groups of silver objects were not part of the entire hoard buried in the 4th century AD. It is virtually impossible to give a

only signed item: on one of the geometrically decorated dishes (no. 40), a certain Euticus from Naissus (Nis) is mentioned, whereas many of the spoons and some other dishes bear inscriptions of names indicating either the owner or the manufacturer.

In addition to the vessels for serving food, a fluted washing-bowl (no. 41), a candelabrum (no. 42), also decorated with gilding and niello, and a statuette of Venus (no. 64; Fig 12) completed the table service.

Fig 6. The Kaiseraugst silver treasure: items rescued in 1962 (ingots and coins not shown).

The legal transaction in 1995
It is not surprising that, as a result of the very unusual, detective story-like discovery of the treasure, one of the main questions was whether the items finally gathered together in

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conclusive answer and to furnish proof for this – just imagine how easily small objects like spoons or toothpicks could have been lost in the conditions mentioned above in the winter of 1961/62. There is a slight possibility, however, that another dish is still missing. The impression of a footing on the upper side of the Achilles dish (no. 63) does not correspond to any of the footring measurements known so far. So, perhaps there are still other items around and there will be more parts of this story to be written.

**The silver treasure in its new form**

At first sight, the new group of items is not of the same high artistic quality as the original find. They are mainly plain, undecorated dishes – just two with niello and gilding, and no plates with geometric or figured relief decoration (Fig 15). Much new information, however, is to be expected, once the countless fragments scattered over most of the plates are deciphered. As no scholarly research has been undertaken so far, only some general remarks concerning the types and possible use of the new items are possible at present.

As for the drinking silver, there are still no jugs and no more cups than the four already known, whereas the eating and serving silver has increased considerably. Up to 1995 there were no specimens of what we would call plates, i.e. small flat dishes with a diameter of less than 20cms or of rectangular shape, of the types found amongst the treasures from Mildenhall (Suffolk) and from the Esquiline (Rome). Now, however, there are two platters with beaded rim (nos. 101-102) and four platters with straight rim (nos. 103-106), all with a diameter of 15-16

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**Fig 7. Silver ingot (no. 68) stamped with the portrait of the usurper Magnentius. L: 8cm.**

**Fig 8 (right). Chi-rho monogram on a silver toothpick, no. 39. L: 20.7 cm.**

**Fig 9. Central panel of the Ariadne dish (no. 61). L: 11 cm.**

**Fig 10 (bottom). The ‘sea city dish’ (no. 62); a) overall view of the dish, D: 59 cm; b) the gilded central medallion, D: 16.3 cm.**
Fig 11. The central medallion of the Achilles dish (no. 63), depicting the discovery of Achilles by Ulysses amongst the daughters of Lycomedes on the island of Skyros. D: 15.3 cm

Fig 12. Statuette of Venus (no. 64). H: 12.6 cm.

Fig 13a (above top). The beaded rim (no. 58) from the original find. D: 48.5 cm.
Fig 13b (above). The inner disc (no. 115). 31.5 cm.

cms, a remarkable number of this type of vessel. What still has to be discovered is what these plates were used for in antiquity.

An entirely new type, not represented so far within the Kaiseraugst treasure, is represented by six plain hemispherical bowls, most of them bearing a stamp with inscription on the outside and a dotted inscription on the inside (nos. 107-112; Fig 16). One of these inscriptions mentions Eisa from Thessalonike, a person already known as the one who signed the Achilles dish (Fig 17). Thus, the question arises whether this name - and with it the five others, too (e.g. Fig 18) - might identify not the artist or craftsman at all but rather an official whose duty it was to supervise the production of silver. The shape and size of the six bowls seem to have close parallels with three bowls of the so-called Munich treasure, and this might also indicate a similar use. The number of big serving dishes, with a diameter of 40 to 60cms, is remarkable. There are ten dishes now - by far the largest group known from a Roman silver treasure. The biggest dish of the whole treasure (no. 113), weighing over 7kgs, is plain and undecorated. It could have been one of a pair, matching in appearance the slightly smaller dish no. 56. If we imagine them loaded with fruit, vegetables or smaller bowls, they must each have been carried by at least two people. Two dishes with a diameter of 47-48 cms (nos. 115/58 and no. 117) have characteristically Late-Roman beaded rims; they, too, might have been used as a pair.

Two of the new dishes are decorated with niello. One (no. 116) is plain except for the central medallion surrounded by a wave pattern
and composed of intertwined circles. The other one (no. 114), of almost the same size (diameter c. 54 cm), not only links the two parts of the treasure, as the fragment found in 1962 (no. 59) matches with the large break on the plate, but turns out to be a most exceptional piece within the whole treasure. Both the flat rim, as well as the central medallion, are gilded and have niello-inlaid decoration. The flat rim is decorated with geometric patterns which are divided by ten busts of young men placed within circles (Fig 19), whereas the medallion, filled with rosette-like patterns, is surrounded by a Latin
metric inscription: Augustus Con-
stars dat laeta decennia victor/spon-
dens omnius ter tegennalia faustus.
'Augustus Constans, victorious, cele-
brates and research on prosperity,
promising solemnly, after having
had auspicious omens three times, to
celebrate his thirty years' jubilee'
(translation by Rudolf Wachter, Uni-
versity of Basel) (Fig 20). Thus, the
dish is clearly characterised as a
donativum, a gift given by the
emperor Constans on the occasion of
his decennalia to an unknown officer.

New evaluation and
perspectives
It is clear that the 18 new plates not
only considerably enlarged the
Kaiseraugst treasure but they will
also lead to a new assessment of the
whole find. There will be a lot of old
and new questions to be asked, e.g.: Who
owned this quantity of silver items, was it one person or a group of
individuals? Were the objects
accumulated over a long period or
at rather short notice? Were all the ves-
sels part of a luxurious table service
and used as such? Why do some
plates bear stamps and/or inscrip-
tions and others not? How are the
personal names to be interpreted? Is
there a way to distinguish names of
owners from those of craftsmen or of
supervising officials? Were all the
items imperial gifts?
It is to be hoped that there will be
answers to at least some of these
questions once scientific examina-
tion and research on the new part of
the treasure has begun. What we can
say already is that the Kaiseraugst sil-
ver treasure is one of the most
important finds from the 4th century

AD: on the one hand, because of its
well known historical context, on
the other for its wide range of items
— simple spoons besides luxurious
plates; for its decorative techniques,
e.g. chasing, gilding, niello-inlay,
engraving, and for its combining
pagan and Christian elements, thus
illustrating in a unique way this
period of transition.

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Items that reappeared in 1995

A provisional inventory compiled by Franz Maier, Archaeological Service, Canton of Aargau.
Recently there has been a flowering of exhibitions around the world devoted to objects unearthed in China allowing us a detailed new look at the origins of Chinese culture in all its aspects: ancient religious beliefs, the development of crafts, social and political organisation, funerary practices, and contacts between China and other countries.

'The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology', a travelling exhibition currently on view at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, until 11 September, is so far one of the most ambitious in scope: aiming to illustrate the major discoveries made in almost a century of archaeological activity in China thus widening our knowledge of ancient Chinese civilisation from 5000 BC to the 10th century AD. This is done through more than 170 artefacts lent for the exhibition by 37 Chinese museums and institutions and largely coming from the most recent excavations. The earliest excavated artefacts on view were found in the 1950s - the time of the seminal discovery of an intact prehistoric village of the Yangshao culture at Banpo, Shaanxi province (c. 4800-4300 BC), while the latest date to the 1990s, and include the terracotta figure of a kneeling archer from the buried army of the First Emperor discovered at Lintong, Xi'an (c. 210 BC; Fig 6), and a stunning painted marble relief with figures of musicians (Fig 10) from a 10th century tomb excavated at Xiyanchuan (Quyang, Hebei province), with which the exhibition ends.

The formidable task of planning, organising and setting up such an exhibition, which has required full cooperation between American and Chinese authorities and institutions, was undertaken by Xiaoneng Yang, curator at the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, and the promoter of the exhibition: he worked on this project for five years. Twenty-four scholars and specialists in various fields have written the essays and entries of the massive catalogue in order to provide the reader with an overview of the current state of research. The history of modern Chinese archaeology is outlined by Xiaoneng Yang in an introductory essay, which provides a detailed account of important characters and events. Present archaeological activity in China, while benefiting from the new cooperative spirit which animates international joint-projects between Chinese and foreign scholars, has also to face problems such as the preservation of sites and clandestine diggings. However, even though many ancient sites have disappeared and many tombs have been plundered by grave robbers over the centuries, an incredible number of real treasures have come down to us, as the objects selected for the exhibition amply demonstrate.

The first of the four broad sections into which the exhibition is subdivided, 'Late Prehistoric China', outlines the cultural developments which took place in the late period of the Neolithic (c. 3500-2000 BC), and focuses on the main, regional based cultures, many of which have only recently been discovered. In the past, Chinese civilisation was believed to have originated in the central plain regions crossed by the Yellow River and to have extended from there to the peripheral, bordering areas. The discoveries made since the 80s have changed this view by bringing to light highly sophisticated cultures in areas once thought to have been at the fringes of civilisation. Such is the case of the Hongshan culture (c. 4000-2800 BC), which flourished in present-day north-eastern provinces of China, and of the Liangzhu culture (c. 3300-2200 BC).
China’s Golden Age

BC, Fig 1), whose sites have been found in Eastern China, around the Lake Tai region. Both cultures share an advanced jade industry, a material used in the manufacture of ornaments, emblems of status and ritual objects crafted for the members of their elites.

Our knowledge of the Chinese societies of the Bronze Age has also changed radically since the discoveries illustrated in the second section of the exhibition, ‘Bronze Age China’. The 1976 excavation of an unbooted late Shang tomb (13th-11th century BC) in the royal cemetery at Anyang, Henan, constituted an unprecedented event: it yielded hundreds of bronzes and jades which belonged to the person buried in the tomb, Fu Hao, one of the consorts of the king Wu Ding. Equally important were the chance discoveries at the end of the 1980s of two important Shang culture sites at Dayangzhou (Xing’an, Jiangxi, c.1400-1200 BC) and at Sanxingdui (Guanghan, Sichuan, probably 1300-1100 BC), which revealed the presence of advanced bronze-wielding cultures in previously unrecorded or scarcely investigated areas of southern China. The exhibition celebrates these discoveries with an ample selection of the outstanding bronze artefacts recovered from the two sites, including a tall sculpture portraying a standing figure from Sanxingdui and a bronze finial in the shape of a human head with two protruding, upright horns (Fig 2), discovered at Dayangzhou.

The regional character and artistic traditions of the various areas of China, at work since the Neolithic period, reached its climax during the Warring States period (475-222 BC), when the country was divided into many states contending for supremacy. Finds from this period constitute the focus of the third section of the exhibition, ‘The Flamboyance of Eastern Zhou’ focusing prevalently on artefacts discovered from princely tombs in southern China and falling within the broad definition of Chu culture, after the name of its most influential kingdom. The particular techniques employed in the construction of these southern tombs, which were sealed with charcoal, clay and earth, have guaranteed the preservation of perishable objects made in silk and lacquer: the ample use made of this latter material as a protective coating for items in wood is exemplified by the painted lacquer deer (Fig 4) found in 1978 in the tomb of Marquis Yi of the Zeng State at Leigudun (Suixian, Hubei, c.433 BC), and the lacquered coffin from the tomb of a high-ranking official of the Chu kingdom unearthed in 1987.

Fig 3 (above). Chime of twenty-six bronze bells (wooden frame reproduced). Middle Spring and Autumn Period, c.550 BC. Excavated in 1979 from tomb 2 at Xianla (Xichuan, Henan Province). Largest bell, 120.4 x 59.7 cm, Henan Museum, Zhengzhou, Henan Province.

Fig 4 (right). Painted lacquer deer, Warring States period, c.433 BC. Excavated in 1978 from the tomb of Marquis Yi, Zeng state, at Leigudun (Suixian, Hubei Province). 45 x 45 x 184 cm, Hubei Provincial Museum, Wuhan, Hubei Province.

Fig 5 (below). Painted lacquer coffin, Middle Warring States period, second half of the 4th century BC. Excavated in 1987 from a tomb at Baoshan (Jingmen, Hubei province). 45 x 45 x 184 cm, Hubei Provincial Museum, Wuhan, Hubei Province.
at Baoshan (Jingmen, Hubei province, Fig 5).

Certainly familiar to many of the visitors of the exhibition will be the terracotta soldiers and their horses and chariots from the buried army of the First Emperor at Lintong, Xi'an (c. 210 BC, Fig 6), which since their discovery in 1974 have been widely seen all over the world in travelling exhibitions. They act as an introduction to ‘Early Imperial China’, the fourth and last section of the exhibition spanning from the 3rd century BC to the 10th century AD and presenting artefacts discovered in sites of the Qin (221-207 BC), Han (206 BC-AD 220), and Tang (AD 618-907) dynasties. Han period beliefs in the afterlife and in the power jade was supposed to have in preserving the corpse of the deceased are exemplified by the jade shroud which, in 1968, was recovered from the tomb of prince Liu Sheng at Linghsan, Mancheng (Hebei, late 2nd century BC, Fig 7). Imperial China of the Tang period is illustrated through painted terracotta funerary figures and luxurious items in gold and silver manufactured for the members of the aristocracy. These same precious materials were used in the making of the reliquaries and other Buddhist ceremonial objects recovered in 1987 from the crypt underneath the pagoda in the Famen temple (Fufeng, Xi'an); a set of precious caskets (Fig 9) contained a highly venerated relic, a fragment of a fingerbone traditionally thought to be from one of the hands of the Buddha. Of great relevance for the advancement of the study of Buddhist sculptures of the 5th to 7th centuries BC was the unearthing of a hoard of statues at Qingzhou, Shandong province: three of them are on display in the American exhibition, thus providing the Western audience with an opportunity to glance at this major discovery, whose importance is only now starting to be assessed (Fig 8). Another magnificent and unique sculptural work in marble ends the exhibition: the polychrome stone relief from the tomb of Chu Zhi at Xiyanchuan (Quyang, Hebei, c. AD 907-923, Fig 10) providing an incredibly realistic representation of a musical performance and adding fresh material to the study of ancient Chinese sculpture.
China's Golden Age

The catalogue of the exhibition, *The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology: Celebrated Discoveries from the People’s Republic of China*, edited by Xizongzeng Yang (584 pages fully illustrated) has been published by Yale University Press.

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Fig 10. Painted marble relief of musicians, later Liang dynasty, AD 907-923. Excavated in 1995 from the tomb of Wang Chuzhi at Xiyangzhuang (Quyang, Hebei Province). 83 x 136 x 23 cm. Hebei Provincial Cultural Relics Institute, Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province.
Beaker (H: 17 cm) and bowl (H: 8.5 cm), Hacilar, 6th-5th millennium BC.

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TRACES OF PARADISE: The Archaeology of Bahrain

Harriet Crawford describes an important exhibition that explores the facts and legends about ancient Dilmun.

An intriguing place called Dilmun appears in some of the oldest cuneiform texts found in the ancient Near East. It is a rather baffling place with two contradictory aspects: myths and poems describe it as a remote and magical land with lush vegetation, which was one of the homes of the great Sumerian god, Enki, lord of fresh water and friend of mankind (Fig 1). It was to Dilmun that Ut-napishtim, the Babylonian Noah, and his wife were translated to enjoy eternal life as a reward for saving mankind from the great flood. It was to Dilmun that Gilgamesh, semi-divine king and hero, travelled in his fruitless search for immortality.

On the other hand, the Dilmun described in letters and business documents from Mesopotamia is far more prosaic. Most of these texts date to about 2,000 BC, although some are almost a thousand years earlier, when writing was in its infancy. Many of them mention copper ore, copper objects and strong timbers as the main items of exchange. They indicate that Dilmun was a crucial link in a chain of commercial contacts which connected resource-poor south Mesopotamia with Oman, rich in copper, and with the Indus valley whose exports included luxury goods like hard woods, ebony, semi-precious stones, exotic creatures and ivory. Mesopotamian businessmen such as Ea-Nasir of Ur, some of whose correspondence on clay tablets is included in the exhibition, travelled regularly to Dilmun to deal in these goods, offering oils, barley and textiles in exchange.

It is this second manifestation of Dilmun which is easier to identify in the archaeological record and scholars are now generally agreed that by the end of the third millennium BC it was located on the islands of Bahrain and on the adjacent coast of Arabia. Later, the term included Fallaka island off the coast of Kuwait as well. Bahrain’s geographical position, approximately half way between the mouth of the Shatt al Arab and the Straits of Hormuz, its abundant fresh water and its sheltered harbours make it a natural commercial entrepot. In addition, it could be said that the springs and luxuriant vegetation also make the islands a plausible home for Enki, thus combining both aspects of Dilmun.

The Gulf trade of the early second millennium BC led to a period of unrivalled prosperity on Bahrain and to the emergence of a distinctive culture unlike anything else in the region. When the bottom dropped out of the copper trade around 1700 BC the islands went into deep recession from which they emerged briefly as a province under the Kassites of Mesopotamia, when they supplied dates to their Kassite rulers. After this almost the only references we have to Dilmun are in the annals of some of the great Assyrian kings. Sargon II, for instance, claims that Uperi, king of Dilmun, sent him tribute.

When the islands emerge from obscurity again in the Hellenistic period they are referred to by the Greek name of Tylos. (The name al Bahrayn, the Two Seas, first appears in the third century AD.) Trade was once again the reason for their return to prosperity as Alexander wished to establish a route between India and the Eastern Mediterranean and commissioned three expeditions to explore the region with this aim in mind. The material culture of Dilmun at these vital periods in its history when trade brought it into contact with many of the most powerful countries of the ancient world has, until now, been virtually unknown outside a narrow circle of specialists.

Thanks to the initiative of Dr Pierre Lombard of the Maison de
Dilmun: Ancient Bahrain

I’Orient in Lyon and the generous co-operation of the Bahrain National Museum, the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and Information of the State of Bahrain, and the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, a major exhibition has been mounted which is introducing these cultures to the wider world. The exhibition was first seen in Paris in the summer of 1999 and then travelled to Moesgård in Denmark. Thanks to the generosity of the government of Bahrain, Investcorp, and a number of other sponsors, the exhibition will now open in London at the Brunei Gallery, School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornhaugh Street, London WC1, on 12 July 2000 for three months. The London event’s academic sponsor is the Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

The exhibition concentrates on the two periods which are arguably the most significant in the ancient history of the islands, the Early Dilmun period of the late third and early second millennia BC and the Tylos period which covers the years from about 300 BC–AD 300. There are also some important remains from the Kassite era of the mid-second millennium.

The artefacts from the Early Dilmun period are a graphic illustration of the wide-ranging contacts of the islands, combining elements from many different cultures with indigenous ones to produce something unique and totally distinctive. This amalgam of local and foreign traits can most clearly be seen in the glyptic art on display. In contrast to the cylinder seals of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Iran, and the rectangular seals of the Indus, the Early Dilmun seals are circular stamp seals usually made of softstone/steatite, although other materials such as ivory are occasionally used.

The seals bear a wide variety of scenes and motifs which are cut in a distinctive fashion using a tubular punch or drill for the heads of many of the animals depicted. This tool is also used to decorate the reverse of
first tentative steps in developing the style, while others may be provincial imitations.

Bulls are also popular motifs and some of the earliest, so-called Arabian Gulf seals depict a bull together with pictographic symbols which clearly derive from the Harappan culture of the Indus valley. These signs are sometimes used as in the Indus and sometimes to write an unknown language which, it is tempting to speculate, may have been that of the inhabitants of Dilmun, but they have never been translated and the popularity of the pictograms was short-lived.

Other motifs too had foreign origins. Gods are depicted wearing the flounced garment and horned head-dress of Mesopotamia, but in one instance at least the god drinks from a jar at his feet (Fig 3) in a scene derived from the iconography of North Syria. A hand with only three fingers visible is found in contemporary Old Assyrian glyptic. Certain erotic scenes showing female figures with arms and legs akinbo are similar to ones found in Susa, while a wheeling pattern of animal heads on long necks which join at the centre can be matched in Anatolia and Central Asia. All these borrowed features are woven together to decorate seals which in shape, material and design are immediately recognisable as early Dilmun.

The same eclecticism can be seen in other objects of the period. One of the best known pieces in the exhibition, which forms the focus of the first hall, is the copper bull’s head (Fig 4) from the famous Barbar temple, the major shrine on the island. Its size indicates that it was probably part of a piece of furniture or came perhaps from the sounding box of a musical instrument and it has features in common with both the well known bulls’ heads found decorating harps and lyres from the Royal Cemetery at Ur and a fine example whose use is unknown from the temple at Altyn Tepe in Turkmenia.

The objects from the Tylos period show less originality than those from the second millennium but are remarkable for their quality. They demonstrate the prosperity of the islands and show how firmly integrated these had become into the Hellenistic world. This is indicated by the impressive collection of glass and jewellery on display which includes a magnificent fluted and marbled glass bowl lent by the British Museum from a recently acquired private collection as well as a fine selection of flasks, bowls, and bottles made using a variety of sophisticated techniques (Fig 5). The jewellery is also of a high quality and a pair of gold earrings with pearls and green semi-precious stones showing Eros riding on a goat

the seals. Characteristic are elegant horned animals of several types which include gazelle and oryx as well as other species less easy to identify with certainty. Typically, they stand with arched necks and their heads turned back over their shoulders. They often look at a palm tree in the centre of the design, on the other side of which is a second figure which may be another animal or a human. It is tempting to suggest that, then as now, these creatures were seen as symbols of beauty and good fortune. Such simple well balanced compositions, often executed with fine detail, are typical of the genre.

Other compositions are less well organised and in some instances the figures gallop across the surface of the seal in chaotic life. A seal in the exhibition illustrates this well (Fig 2). It shows four small horned animals, one in the characteristic pose described above, one with its legs tucked under it, while a third is ridiculously elongated in order to fit into the available space. A turtle or tortoise completes the menagerie. Some figures are finely incised while other may be clumsily cut with deeply gouged hodies and little attempt at detail. Some of these cruder examples may represent the
are exceptional (Fig 6). Other pieces include a fine cameo ring and a selection of necklaces made up with a wide variety of beads which include finely granulated gold examples and others made of agate, carnelian, coral and glass.

An unusual series of grave stele are strikingly displayed and range from the schematic spirit stele, known as nephesh, the earliest of which date to the end of the first millennium BC, to the more realistic statues in the artistic tradition of the early centuries AD, many of which are comparable to examples from Palmyra and Hatra. These figurative stele show men and women, each standing in a small niche, with the details of their dress lovingly depicted (Fig 8). One shows a man with a luxurious beard and moustache wearing a sort of stole on his left shoulder which may suggest he was a priest (Fig 9). Statues in the round are rarer, but two remarkable examples complete the sequence and represent young women with small high breasts and serene expressions who almost seem to echo characteristics of archaic Greek statues (Fig 7).

By no means all graves were associated with a stela but where they were present they were sometimes found within the mounds which covered the actual tombs and it is thought that they were intended as a faithful representation of the deceased rather than as external grave markers.

The range and quality of the pieces in this exhibition are remarkable and it acts as an impressive showcase for a culture and a region which in the past has often been overlooked by archaeologists and art historians alike. It is also a mine of information for anyone interested in identifying the traces of the myriad peoples who have travelled the waters of the Arabian Gulf over the last four millennia in search of raw materials and precious artefacts. The links between past and present are strong in Bahrain. It is still a vital commercial entrepot and its people still weave together influences from many sources to form a distinctive culture as they have always done. The traditions of Dilmun and Tylos are not forgotten.

Fig 8. Funerary stele of a young man standing in a niche holding a bird and bunch of grapes. The style is much influenced by earlier Roman sculpture and found in later Coptic (Christian) sculpture in Egypt. 2nd-3rd century AD. Limestone. H: 36 cm. Manama, Bahrain National Museum.

Fig 9. Funerary stele of a bearded man, his right hand raised and a stole over his left shoulder, possibly indicating that he was a priest. Tylos Period, 2nd-3rd century AD. Limestone. H: 46 cm. Manama, Bahrain National Museum.
THE EGYPTIAN CONGRESS
IN CAIRO

The 8th International Congress of Egyptologists was held in Cairo 28 March – 3 April. Jerome M. Eisenberg, Ph.D., selects some of the more interesting papers for this report.

Zahi Hawass, the Chairman of the Organising Committee, put together a selected range of debates on eight major themes of Egyptology, ambitiously called the Millennium Debates, which will be published by the American University in Cairo Press. The themes were Research on Egyptian Literature, Site Management and Conservation, the Problems and Priorities in Egyptian Linguistics, Egyptian Archaeology in the 21st Century, The Writing of Egyptian History within the Context of Egyptology, The State of Egyptology at the End of the Millennium: Art, Museum and Marketing – A Contradiction?, History of the Study of Ancient Egyptian Religion and its Future.

Dr Hawass, on discussing Site Management and Conservation, warns us that major portions of ancient sites in Egypt will be lost in 100 years and even sooner for some specific sites. The problems and threats include tourism, inadequate restoration, the increase of excavation proper preservation, urban growth around sites, rising water tables, environmental pollution, and vehicular traffic. To aid in site protection, it has been recommended that all excavation work be stopped completely in Upper Egypt, from Giza to Aswan, for ten years to encourage preservation, conservation, epigraphy, publication of unpublished documents, maps for all sites. (This proposal is not supported by Dr Gaballa A. Gaballa, Secretary-General of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, who wants these excavations to continue, however he is concerned that they should be completed, even if the Supreme Council must aid them financially). Salvage archaeology will be encouraged, as will excavation in the Delta, for the rising water table and the extension of agriculture and housing projects will soon destroy nearly all of the sites.

Dr Gaballa, who was also the President of the Congress, spoke on the many projects being undertaken by the Council. Dr B. Mathieu presented a paper on the recent work of the French Institute for Oriental Archaeology. The activities of the German Institute of Archaeology were discussed by Dr G. Dreyer. Finally, Dr Mark Easton covered in detail the expeditions and conservation projects of the American Research Centre in Egypt.

The Understanding of Early Kingship at the End of the 2nd Millennium AD (María Joao de Sousa Machado).

Kheper, one of the oldest Egyptian goddesses, dating back to the Late Predynastic period, lost her importance after the unification. In the Predynastic period she is often associated with some enigmatic female figures who are larger in size than male figures. Could these be the rulers of these early communities? She points out the major factors that might have led to a change from a possible matriarchal society, with its worship of Neith, to the Dynastic kingships.

Some Remarks Concerning the Superstructure of Some Mastabas at Abusir (All Radwan).

A group of large late 1st Dynasty mastaba tombs has been uncovered by the Cairo University. One contained a boat grave in a state of good preservation. Four other graves built inside the enclosure wall of one of the mastabas give evidence that cult ceremonies were held outside the mastabas. Smaller subsidiary graves, some in mastaba form, were found outside the enclosure walls.

The Great Sphinx of Giza – A Creation of Khufu/Chephes (Rainer Stadelmann).

The so-called Dream Stela of Tuthmosis IV does not mention that the Great Sphinx was created by Khafre (Chephren), but the older stela of Amenhotep II mentions both Khufu and Khafre. It is located within the quarries of Khufu. Since the causeway of Khafre runs slightly to the southeast, rather than straight to the east, and since his valley temple lies beyond the axis of his pyramid complex, also toward the southeast, it is suggested that it was to avoid something important that already stood there – the Great Sphinx. The features also point to Khufu – the square face and broad chin, the pleated nemes without a band, the wide open eyes and large ears, and the fact that the statue was beardless in the Old Kingdom.

Methods of Optimising Sculptor’s Work During the Old Kingdom (Słowomir Reepka).

The tendency to make the most efficient use of the material available may explain a common feature of Old Kingdom seated stone statues – that the rear surface of the seat is not vertical, but leans backwards. Thus the rear surface of the statue is the remains of the surface of the original block of stone. This resulted in a saving of about 15% to 20% of the volume needed. The proportion of a block needed for this type of seated statue is about 2:1 (height to depth), rather than 1.5:1 for a normal seated statue. Since a standing statue required a block of about 2.5:1, ‘universal’ blocks could be used for both standing and seated statues with relatively little waste.

The Voice of Menmon (Massimo Pettorino).

One of the two Colossi of Menmon, the 65-foot statues of Amenhotep III (1386-1349) erected on the west bank of Luxor, was famed for the moaning sounds that emanated from it when hit by the sun’s rays at dawn and dusk. This phenomenon endured for about 200 years, until AD 196, when the statue was restored following an earthquake. Most hypotheses ascribe these sounds to natural causes such as temperature and rarefaction of the air; Pettorino and his colleague Antonella Gianninini believe that they were due to a thin pipe of water placed in a cavity, still visible, on the statue’s left knee which would cause a hissing sound when air was forced into it, the creation of Heron of Alexandria who worked with such devices – in conspiracy with the priests of the Temple of Amenhotep III. This ‘voice of Menmon’ brought instant fame to the ‘talking’ statue and attracted countless pilgrims.

The Identity of the King and Queen on Tutankhamun’s Golden Throne (Earl L. Ertman).

Recently, several researchers, especially Claude Vandersleyen, have suggested that even though the cartouches behind the heads of the king and queen on the golden throne of Tutankhamun identify them as Tutankhamun and his queen Ankhesenamun, they may be another royal pair. Specific characteristic are pointed out that indicate that the portrayal is of another king. Thus the throne was not originally created for Tutankhamun, but for another pharaoh. Ertman furnishes comparisons to support this thesis. [Ed: One of the four great canopic shrines had also been reused, as were the gold canopic coffinettes, all of which had been made for Smenkhkare, a co-regent of Akhenaten, who died a few months before him – the previous names had been erased. The middle coffin was also probably intended for Smenkhkare.]

Sculptors’ Models and Unfinished Works of Ancient Egyptian Masters: A Problem of the Creative Method of an Ancient Egyptian

MINERVA 42
Sculptor (Natalia Pomerantseva)
Egyptian art does not consist only of masterpieces; there is a special class of objects made specifically for instructive purposes - the so-called sculptural models. They are small, of varying quality, and consist of various representations - standing figures, heads, busts, torsos, feet, various animals, birds, and hieroglyphs. Egyptian master sculptors usually created a full standing figure and defective figures could not be used for any ritual function. Some exceptions are the so-called Old Kingdom 'reserve' heads, the bust of Prince Ankh-haf in Boston and the New Kingdom Salt head in the Louvre. Most sculptural models are problematic and are probably derived from the Graeco-Roman devices of modelling sculptures in the round and reliefs. Many of the model royal busts were left unfinished deliberately to demonstrate distinct stages of work. Traces of incised lines and grids of squares probably represent the canonical proportions, here presented in visual realisation.

The Rediscovery of Two Royal Bronze Figures of Alexander Helios (Guy Well Goudchaux)
Two life-size bronze figures of youths wearing 'Eastern Anatolian', costume have most recently considered to be genii, similar to the lamp-carrying Erotes, or personifications perhaps either of the kingdoms of Armenia and Commagene, or of Armenia Major or Armenia Minor. They have been on display for many years in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Walters Art Gallery for nearly a century without having been attributed to a particular individual. After a careful reading of some ancient writers describing this youth in special regal attires during the ceremony of the donations in Alexandria in AD 34, Goudchaux realised that they are depictions of Alexander Helios, the eldest son of Marc Anthony and Cleopatra and the twin of Cleopatra Selene, born in 40 BC. It allows us to better understand the cult of the rulers and demonstrates how the propaganda of Cleopatra and Marc Anthony developed in the direction of the East.

Redefining Funerary Objects (Geraldine Pinch)
Recent analyses of some 'funerary text' have suggested that they were derived from rituals conducted for the living. She suggests that the same may apply for many types of 'funerary objects' such as amulets and figurines and that their significance in religion or magic in daily life he examined. Although some object types are best known from tomb deposits, isolated examples may be found in temple or domestic sites. It is argued that relatively few objects were made exclusively for funerary use.

The Origin of the Ankh: A Theory in Support of Ancient Egyptian Intelligence (Stephen Tredinnick)
The ankh, an Egyptian hieroglyph denoting 'life' has been given various interpretations: a sandal strap, an amuletic knot, a mirror, or even a penis sheath. It is suggested that it is an ideogram composed of two symbols: the s3 sign and the 'girdle knot', thus representing both female and male reproductive elements. The view that the s3 sign, meaning 'protection', represents the vagina and uterus is supported by the writer. The 'girdle knot' has two meanings: 'knot' and 'vertebra'. The ancient Egyptians believed that semen came from a man's bones; vertebra represented the male principle, for example, the djet-column. The ankh, therefore, represents a vertebra bound to the junction of a vagina and uterus. He contends that it is 'an intelligent symbolism containing the essential elements required to create life.'

The American University Press in Cairo has published the volume of abstracts and will produce both the Millennium Debates and the Congress Proceedings as separate volumes. One final note: the writer was rather taken aback by the rather inefficient communications, or, rather, lack of communications from the Organising Committee. He submitted an abstract (on some unrecorded Egyptian pantheistic deities from the Graeco-Roman period, following up his paper at the previous Congress), which was neither acknowledged nor, so he thought, accepted. The program, which was scheduled to be sent in advance of the Congress, was never received and he received no notification of the website which was set up under the rather unusual name 'http://guardians.net/hawass/congress2000'. Imagine his surprise when he found his name and paper listed on the schedule and later saw an abstract of his paper in the book of abstracts presented at the Congress - much too late to prepare the paper. He trusts that the organisation of future Congresses will be held to a higher standard, as was the previous Congress at Cambridge, England.
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We are pleased to announce that the July issue of Apollo will be devoted again to Antiquities and Ancient Art. Articles cover Egyptian cosmetic containers, Sigmund Freud's collection of antiquities, sculpture in Roman Britain, the new Cypriot Galleries at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, 'Reading' personifications and more. Copies are available from the London office £10 (inc p&p worldwide). e-mail: subs@apollemag.com. All major credit cards accepted. The above back issues are still available.

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Viking Silver Wealth

WEALTH AND POWER
IN THE VIKING AGE

Gareth Williams

The word Viking immediately brings to mind the traditional image of bloodthirsty pirates, raiding defenceless monasteries in search of plunder, raping and pillaging. Since the 1970s, however, a new picture has emerged of the Vikings, which emphasises the more peaceful aspects of life in the Viking Age, including trade, craftsmanship and agriculture. Viking society is often presented in terms of a polarised debate on which of these two views of the Vikings is the right one, often simplified to the question ‘Were the Vikings raiders or traders?’. Most archaeologists and historians today would accept that the situation is not as black and white as these polarised positions suggest. Some Vikings were undoubtedly savage raiders, although not necessarily more savage than their Anglo-Saxon, Celtic and Frankish contemporaries, but there is equally no doubt that such men were not representative of the whole society, and that the Viking Age saw a huge expansion in trade and urbanisation, while the importance of craftsmanship in the Viking Age is clear from the many surviving artefacts.

What all these different aspects of Viking society share is some concept of wealth. Although raiders made their journeys in search of plunder, and traders in search of more legitimate profits, both set out with the intention of coming home richer than when they went away. The development of towns occurred because they generated wealth as centres both of production and trade. Craftsmen produced their work either under the private patronage of rich kings, chief-tains and priests, or sold their goods more widely in the marketplace. Most important of all, the farmers produced the food which fed the population, and which allowed wealthy landowners to raise a following for war, or provided a surplus which could be exchanged for other forms of wealth.

In the course of the Viking Age, from the late 8th century to the mid-11th century, there were many changes in Scandinavian society. The Vikings adopted Christianity, and new kingdoms were carved out of what had been a realisation of authority. Among other changes, the concept of wealth developed considerably in this period. Land ownership alone remained an absolutely stable form of wealth throughout the Viking Age, and land was often granted by kings and chieftains to their followers as a reward for loyalty and service. Whether in the 8th century or the 11th, landowners were wealthy and important people, even if they had little ready money. Viking-Age Scandinavia had only a very small formal aristocracy, the very limited number of families whose members carried the title king or jarl (‘earl’). Below this level, the free farmer represented a very broad social and economic class.

At one end of the scale were small farmers who possessed only enough land to support their own families, and who depended to some extent on the patronage of their more powerful neighbours. At the other end of the scale were powerful chief-tains, who might be as rich and powerful as the kings or jarls, but who did not come from families which carried those titles. Such chief-tains supported not only their own families, but large retinues of free followers and slaves. Svein Asdeifason, a chief-tain in the Orkneys, was said to keep 80 men over the winter in his hall at his own expense. Such followers helped to work Svein’s land, but also accompanied him on his raids, and it was the combination of the produce from his lands and the profit from his raids which allowed him to support so many men. Svein lived in the 12th century, after the Viking Age is generally thought to be over, but his lifestyle was that of a typical Viking chief-tain.

The other main measure of wealth in the Viking Age was precious metal, particularly silver. Gold was considered even more valuable, but it was very rare, while the use of silver was extremely widespread. Even so, gold jewellery from the Viking Age is known, including ear-rings, finger-rings, arm-rings and neck-rings. Showing off wealth in the form of expensive jewellery (Fig 1) was the main use for precious metal at the beginning of the Viking Age, and coins were hardly used at all. Both men and women wore jewellery to show how rich they were, and rich men also had their weapons decorated with precious metal. Only the wealthiest could afford gold, but silver was more common, and for those who could not afford pure silver, gilt bronze was often used.

Like land, both jewellery and ornate weapons were used to reward loyal followers for their service. A particularly popular form of wealth within this ‘status economy’ seems to have been the arm-ring. Arm-rings are one of the most common categories of jewellery to be found, and poems and sagas often refer to kings and chief-tains rewarding their warriors with arm-rings. It was important for a lord to be seen to be generous, and ‘ring-giving’ was a common symbol of both lordship and generosity in early poems.

Jewellery required a supply of precious metal, and the Vikings first became interested in coins as a source of silver to be melted down for jewellery. Large quantities of Islamic coins entered Scandinavia as a result of trade along the great Russian river systems (Fig 2). The Arab writer Ibn Fadlan describes meeting the ‘Rus’, a term used both for the Vikings in Russia and their Slavic subjects. He describes how the Vikings sold their trade goods in exchange for thousands of silver dirhams, which were then turned into arm-rings for the traders’ wives. For the Arabs, the coins were a means of exchange, but for the Vikings they were no more than a raw material for

Gareth Williams, an assistant keeper in the Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, is curator of the exhibition, ‘Paid in burnt silver: Wealth and power in the Viking Age.’

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Fig 1 (below), Two silver thistle brooches from the Irish Sea area, early 10th century. Such brooches make an impressive display of wealth but are heavy and impractical to wear.

Fig 2 (left), Silver dirham of the Unayyad dynasty, Coins of several Islamic dynasties, including the Umayyads, the Abbasids and the Samanids, are found in large numbers in Viking hoards, and formed an important raw material for Viking jewellery.

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Viking Silver Wealth

intact pieces of jewellery together with the rest. The famous hoard from Cuerdale in Lancashire (Fig 5), buried around AD 905-910 is remarkable for its size, but represents a fairly typical mixture of different types of silver objects, including over 7,000 coins. It also shows the geographical spread of Viking contacts, with Byzantine (Fig 6) and Islamic coins alongside coins and jewellery from the British Isles.

The use of silver by weight is reflected in finds of scales (Fig 7) and weights in many Viking settlements and graves. The *eyrir* (ounce) of c. 24-26.6g and the *ertog* (third of an ounce) were widely used, although here was apparently considerable variation in the precise weight standards in different parts of the Viking world, and at different periods. Scales and weights are particularly common from urban sites such as Hedeby (at that time in Denmark, now in northern Germany) and Dublin, and clearly played an important part in trade, but they were also useful for dividing up loot. Loot in precious metal was clearly a major target for Viking raids, but precious metal was also an important means of exchange for long distance trade within and beyond Scandinavia before the Vikings adopted the use of coins.

One particular type of weight reflects the Vikings’ growing familiarity with coinage. These weights are flat cylinders or blobs of lead, with Anglo-Saxon coins set into the top (Fig 8). They were probably produced in the Viking settlements in northern England in the late 9th century, the period just before the Vikings started to issue coins of their own.

The valuation of silver by weight as a means of exchange could also be incorporated with the ‘status economy’ of ostentatious display. By manufacturing jewellery to recognise weight-standards, it was possible to produce items of jewellery which could be used for the personal display of wealth, but which also had a clear value as a result of their weight. Weight-adjusted jewellery was produced in a number of areas. The most famous examples are the so-called ‘Percian rings’ (Fig 9). These were neck-rings of twisted silver from northern Russia, which are sometimes found coiled into spirals for use as arm-rings. They normally seem to have weights in multiples of 100g, around four Viking ounces, a weight which the Vikings had probably adopted from Islamic coins. The same weight-units appear in certain type of arm-rings known as ‘ring-money’ from Sweden, and ‘ring-money’ based on a slightly lighter ounce was also produced in Scotland.

The Scottish ‘ring-money’ circulated alongside coinage, ingots and hack-silver as part of a mixed silver bullion economy. We know this from the archaeological evidence, but this also finds support in the sagas. Although these are not reliable, they often seem to agree with other forms of evidence. *Eyrbyggja saga* gives an account of the conquest of the Isle of Man by Earl Sigurd of Orkney in the late 10th century, and goes on to mention that:

‘He imposed tribute on the inhabited lands of Man. And when they had come to terms, the earl set men behind [him] to wait for the tax, and that was mostly paid in burnt silver [i.e. refined silver].’

Another saga reference to the same period describes silver functioning in a number of different types of exchange in Iceland. *Heimskringla* includes an
account of how the poet Eyvind the
Plagiarist wrote a poem about Iceland
that pleased the farmers so much that
each contributed a 'tribute penny'
equivalent to three weighed pennies of
refined silver. These were then con-
verted into a brooch weighing
50 marks (somewhere around 10kg).
A brooch that heavy would have been
much too heavy to wear, and Eyvind
had it broken up and used the pieces
to buy cattle. This account mentions
silver pennies as the basis of a system
of weight, a payment in silver bullion,
the creation of a high-status display
object, and the breaking up of that
object into hack-silver to be used as a
means of exchange.

The fact that silver bullion served as
a means of exchange makes it interest-
ing that the Vikings eventually intro-
duced coinage of their own. For purely
economic reasons, they did not need
to do this, since they tested silver for
purity by cutting into it with knives,
and were able to value it by weight and
purity without needing to go to the
additional trouble of melting the silver
down, hammering it flat, stamping
designs on it and cutting it into small
discs. The Introduction of coinage
needs to be seen in the context of
broader social changes which came about as a result of increasing contact
with Western Europe in the course of
the Viking Age.

By the late 8th century, most of the
kingdoms in Western Europe shared a
common idea of kingship. This was
promoted by the Papacy, andulti-
mately derived from the Late Roman
Empire, combining elements of Roman
legends with Christianity. Within this
common concept of kingship, the king had
duties, but he also had a number of
rights, and among these was the right
to issue coinage. In this respect, it is
interesting to note that the kingdoms
of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales,
which did not embrace a particularly Roman
type of Christianity, also failed to develop
coinage of their own, despite trading
contacts with England and the Conti-
nent, and a broadly similar level of
material culture. It was only when
Norman influence brought about the
reform of both Church and govern-
ment in Scotland and Wales that
coinage was established there, while
coinage was first introduced in Ireland
by the Viking settlers.

The Vikings first produced coins in
large numbers in England in the late
9th century. The 'great army' of 865
conquered first Northumbria, then
East Anglia, and then a large part of Mercia.
All three kingdoms had well-estab-
lished traditions of coinage, and the
Vikings were quick to adopt the use of
currency as they tried to take over the
roles of the kings they had displaced.
An element of continuity is particu-
larly visible in East Anglia, where the
last Anglo-Saxon ruler, Edmund, was
killed by the Vikings. His death
involved an element of martyrdom,
and Edmund quickly became regarded
as a saint. What is particularly striking,
however, is that within a generation of
his death, his sanctity was proclaimed
on coins of the East Anglian Vikings.
Their issue silver pennies identical to
those of Edmund himself, but placing
SC for sanctus before the king's name
(Fig 10).

Other coins in both East Anglia and
Mercia imitated the coins of the one
surviving Anglo-Saxon king, Alfred the
Great of Wessex. When Alfred defeated
the Vikings at Edington in 878, the
Viking leader adopted Christianity and
became king of East Anglia under
Alfred's patronage. He took the
baptismal name Athelstan, and issued
coins with blundered versions of this
name, copying Alfred's last main coin
type, the so-called Two-line type. In
Viking Mercia, anonymous imitations
were also produced of Alfred's slightly
earlier London monogram coinage
(Fig 11).

With the exception of the 'Athel-
stan' coins, the coins of the southern
Danelaw largely missed the point that
coinage was a symbol of royal power as
well as of Christian authority. Both of
these are apparent in Viking coins
from north of the Humber. A few of
the Northumbrian pennies are also
anonymous, carrying religious legends like 'Lord God and King' or 'He has done wonderful things' (Fig 12), and a substantial coinage was produced at York in the name of St Peter in the early 10th century. However, a large number of the coins carry the name of Viking kings, some of whom are only known to us from their coins, like a King Cnut who reigned in Northumbria around the turn of that century. As in the Anglo-Saxon and Frankish kingdoms, however, coinage remained fundamentally a royal prerogative. With the exception of an extremely rare coinage in the name of an Earl Sihtric, all the names on the coins of the Danes in the 940s are of kings, although some of the anonymous coins may have been issued under the auspices of the church.

The coinage of the Danes shows a certain confusion about the newly adopted role of Christian kings. A few of the coin types show Thor's hammer, but this generally appears in combination with the name of St Peter (Fig 13), and probably represents a period of religious co-existence. Only a few coins carry the hammer alone, and even these include a cross within the inscription so none of the coins appear to be wholly pagan. A few of the coins are more distinctively Scandinavian in character, however. One type of Anlaf Guthfrithsson who ruled briefly from 939-941 carries the king's title in Old Norse, rather than Latin, and shows what can be interpreted as an eagle or a raven, both birds associated with Odin, but again combined with Christian crosses (Fig 14). Later in the 940s, the brothers Anlaf and Sihtric Sihtricsson issued coins with a typically Viking geometric pattern on one side, and a war banner or wind vane on the other, and again gave their royal titles in Old Norse (Fig 15). The coinage of Viking Northumbria ceased, however, when the death of Eric Bloodaxe (Fig 16) brought Northumbria back under lastingly Anglo-Saxon authority.

The end of the Viking coins in England came just before their adoption in Scandinavia itself. Apart from a small experimental coinage in the early 9th century, coinage began in Scandinavia in Denmark in the mid-10th century. This was in the reign of Harald Bluetooth, who also left a fine rune stone at Jelling in Jutland (Fig 17), which tells us that Harald ruled all of Denmark and Norway, and made the Danes Christian. Harald’s power can be seen in a number of building works, including several circular fortresses and a huge bridge across the Vejle valley not far from Jelling (Fig 18). His Christianity can also be observed in his coins, most of which feature crosses in their designs. One even carries what looks like three crosses on a hill, probably a representation of the three crosses of Calvary (Fig 19). Harald thus fits the broader pattern of a strong Christian king issuing coins, although none of his coins carry his name.

The next development in Viking coinage came in the last few years of the century. Coins were issued in Denmark, Norway and Sweden in the late 990s, imitating the CRVE type of Ethelred II of England. The coins carry the names of the three kings, Sven Forkbeard, Olaf Tryggvason and Olaf Tribute-king (Fig 20) respectively. Around the same time, imitations of Ethelred’s pennies were also produced in the name of Sihtric Sihtricsson, king of Dublin. The early 11th century saw the conquest of England by the Danes, and the establishment both of Christianity and a strong kingdom in Denmark. Cnut’s conquest of England brought contact with the sophisticated Anglo-Saxon network of mints, and a more modest national network appeared in Denmark under Cnut’s son Harthacnut (Fig 21), and later under Sven Estridsen (1047-74). Many of the coins copied Anglo-Saxon designs, but others copied Byzantine coins brought back to Scandinavia by mercenaries returning from service in the Byzantine army (Fig 22), or German coins as a result of expanding trade with the Rhinelan. Others show purely Scandinavian geometric designs.

Christianity and firm kingship, and coinage with them, took slightly longer to become established in Norway, and coinage there only really began on a large scale under Harald Hardruler (1047-66) and his son Olaf the Peaceful (1066-93) (Fig 23). In Sweden, both Christianity and central royal power collapsed, and with them the coinage, and it was only in the mid-12th century that coinage was introduced on a lasting basis in a newly re-unified kingdom. Nevertheless, the same processes of Christianisation and the development of national royal authority took place in all three kingdoms. The development of coinage and a fully monarchical economy can thus be linked with state formation, and social and religious changes, as well as with major developments in trade.

At the beginning of the Viking Age, Scandinavia was an assortment of petty kingdoms and chieftaincies, completely peripheral to the rest of Europe. By the end of the period, Viking raiders had humbled many of the greatest European powers, a trading network had been established from the Black Sea to the North Atlantic, and the Viking kingdoms were evolving into typical Christian European states. The development of coinage and the transformation of the silver economy reflect these wide changes.

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THE ANCIENT COIN MARKET
Leu Sale is Spring Highlight

Eric J. McFadden

In its May sale, Leu Numismatics of Zurich offered the second installment of a fine private collection of Greek coins, augmented by a particularly good offering of Late Roman and Byzantine gold.

The Greek coins, although not as fine overall as the first portion of the collection sold in October 1999, were still a beautiful group selected for their aesthetic appeal. A splendid Macedonian archaic silver stater, usually attributed to Lebes, was struck from dies of exceptional artistic style. It depicts a nude Silenos grabbing the arm of a nymph. Estimated at SF32,000, it sold to Zurich dealer Tkalec for SF68,000 (Fig 1). An Athens decadrachm, a highlight of any sale, was estimated at SF240,000 but remained unsold at SF190,000. Although otherwise attractive, the surfaces of the coin were somewhat corroded, and its failure to sell reflects the premium placed in the current market on high quality. The most beautiful coin of the sale, in contrast, exceeded all expectations. A splendid silver tetradrachm of the Arcadian League, circa 360 BC, was estimated at SF80,000. Several bidders were still interested at just over SF100,000, but the bidding then narrowed to a contest between a private Greek museum and Geneva dealer Tradart. The museum finally prevailed at SF245,000. This piece will be one of the highlights of their collection (Fig 2). The emphasis on quality was again apparent in the small group of electrum included in the sale. The best pieces, two electrum staters of Kyzikos, sold for well above estimate. One bearing a head of Silenos brought SF40,000 against an estimate of SF32,000, while a wonderful example of the issue bearing a portrait of Philip II of Macedon fetched SF54,000 against an estimate of SF30,000.

Among the Roman coins, a group of exceptional quality silver denarii of the Republic were hotly contested, bringing prices justifiable only by their unusual freshness. The fine offering of Late Roman and Byzantine gold also sold well.

Fig 1 (top). Silver Stater of Lebes, circa 490 BC, sold in Leu sale for SF68,000 against an estimate of SF32,000. Size: x2.

Fig 2 (below). Silver Stater of the Arcadian League, c. 360 BC, fetched SF245,000 in Leu sale against an estimate of SF80,000. Size: x2.

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AUCTIONS FEATURING ANCIENT COINS
12 July. STACKS COIN GALLERIES. New York. Auction. Tel: (1) 212 582 5955 Fax: (1) 212 245 5018.
13 July. SPINK & SON LTD. London. The Dr. Anton C.R. Dreissmann Collection, Part II - Byzantine and Early European Gold Coins. Tel: (44) 20 7563 4000 Fax: (44) 20 7563 4066
14 July. SPINK & SON LTD. London. Auction. Tel: (44) 20 7563 4000 Fax: (44) 20 7563 4066.

FAIRS
9 - 13 August. AMERICAN NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION WORLD’S FAIR OF MONEY. Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia.

CONFERENCES & LECTURES
8 July. EASTERN COUNTIES NUMISMATICS: SPECIAL ONE-DAY MEETING, Colchester Castle Museum. Contact Charles Farthing, BNS, c/o Warburg Inst. Woburn Sq., London WC1. Tel: (44) 1329 284 661.
14 - 15 September. COUNTERFEITING: ANCIENT AND MODERN. Society of Antiquities, Burlington House, Piccadilly. Contact: Mike Cowell, Department of Scientific Research, British Museum, London WC1. Tel: (44) 020 7323 8277. Fax: (44) 20 7323 8276. E-mail: m.cowell@british-museum.ac.uk.

EXHIBITIONS
CYPRUS
NICOSIA

ISRAEL
JERUSALEM
MORE THAN MONEY: AN EXHIBITION IN MEMORY OF ABRAHAM BROMBERG. Mr Bromberg, who died in 1998, assembled the world’s most important private collection of ancient Jewish coins. This exhibition includes coins not previously shown, plus recent purchases from his bequest. THE ISRAEL MUSEUM (792) 2-6708-811.

ITALY
AOSTA
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UNITED KINGDOM
BIRMINGHAM
MONEY & COMMERCE. The concepts of money, consumerism, value and exchange from ancient times until the present. BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY. (44) 121 303 2834. July-September.

LONDON

READING
THE ZENACA COIN HOARD is on temporary display in one of the seven new galleries at Reading Museum. Tel: (44) (0) 118 959 9800. Web site: www.readingmuseum.org. (See Minerva, Mar/Apr, pp. 50-51.)

OXFORD
INDO-SCYTHIAN AND INDO-PARTHIAN COINS. ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM (44) 1865 278 000. Until December.

UNITED STATES
NEW YORK
AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY (1) 212 234-3130. Opening hours for the exhibition halls, coin rooms, and library have been changed to Tuesday through Friday, 9am - 4:30pm.

WASHINGTON, D.C.
THE ART OF AFRICAN MONEY. Different objects that have been used to facilitate trade and measure wealth, including metal blades and gold weights. NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART (1) 202 357-4600. Until 23 July.

AWARDS
Maria R. Alford, Professor of Numismatics at the University of Frankfurt, was awarded the Huntington Medal by the American Numismatic Society.

APPOINTMENTS
The American Numismatic Society is seeking a new Margaret Thompson Curator of Greek Coins for their collection of some 100,000 ancient Greek and Roman Provincial coins. For more information, please visit their web-site: www.amnumsoc.org.
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FROM CLASSICAL CATS TO THE MAYA

Peter Clayton reviews some contrasting books on the ancient world.

Classical Cats: The rise and fall of the sacred cat

This book includes cats from periods far wider than its title suggests since the author charts the history and significance of cats from ancient Egypt to the Middle Ages. Concomitant with the history of cats there is, of course, that of their natural enemies: mice and rats. These therefore also have a large part to play in recounting here the story of cats across the millennia. Engels’s Introduction gives the background to cats and discusses them in the wild before they became the lord and master of so many households - one only has to note the long-running musical Cats based on the poems of T.S. Eliot to recognise the influence of cats in so many aspects of modern life. They were an essential element of earlier households in keeping the carriers of disease at bay and until 1975 it was mandatory for a cat to be carried aboard ships of the British Royal Navy.

Most people’s idea of a sacred cat immediately runs to the cat in ancient Egypt and the tales of the high regard in which it was held. Not least, as Dio Diodorus Siculus records, even the wrath of Rome falling upon the inhabitants could not stop them from lynching a Roman envoy who had accidentally killed a cat in 59 BC. Cats in ancient Egypt occupy some 30 pages of the book, and Engels notes that the subject is covered in far more detail than he is able in Jaromir Malek’s excellent The Cat in Ancient Egypt (London, 1993).

The core of the book is the cat in the classical world of Greece and Rome (pp. 48-137) and the associations of the cats with goddesses is well discussed (many of them having their antecedents in the Egyptian goddesses Isis and Bastet), and its place in both literature and art is well noted. The Mycenaean cats hunting ducks in a papyrus marsh are a superb representation in niello on a dagger blade from Shaft Grave V (Grave Circle V, sic, p. 50) at Mycenae, and the love of and interest in cats in ancient Greece is well represented in many spheres of art, including vase painting and, more rarely, even on coins. Appendix 2 has a very useful and interesting list of cat remains found from Greek and Roman sites.

Under Rome, with the wider adoption of the ‘Oriental’ cults (i.e. the Egyptian gods) and their association with Diana, cats take up an important place. Charming reflections of cats in Rome cross the centuries with the tombstone of Calpurnia Felicia (‘Kitten’) and the relief of a small cat or kitten on it, or the tombstone of Laetus’ daughter who stands holding her pet cat (but surely, it is a puppy dog) up under its forepaws facing the onlooker.

Cats had a hard time, a really ‘bad press’ by comparison, in the Middle Ages, from c. 1000 to 1700. They and their owners, so often strange, old eccentric women who were quickly dubbed witches, were invariably brought to trial and to death. Much of the reaction against cats had its roots in religious fanaticism seeking to overcome all aspects that could be seen as having pagan antecedents. This led to the ‘Great Cat Massacre’ when the cat was anathematised, especially black ones that were said to be Satan incarnate and roundly condemned in Pope Gregory IX’s bull, Vox in Rama, 13 June 1233. Pope Innocent VIII excommunicated all cats, decreeing that any found belonging to ‘witches’ should be burnt along with them. Under torture so many women confessed to demonic practices, and their cats with them, that the number of cats killed was vast. With the wholesale removal of the cats, rats and mice had the field to themselves - dirt and grime proliferated, and so the plague swept across Europe; you might call it the ‘cats’ retribution’.

Donald Engels’ book is a delight for all cat lovers, and an extremely well written and informative source for those who would dig deeper into ‘cat lore’ and their history in relation to Man.

The Ancient Olympic Games

The date of the first Olympic Games, 776 BC, became the chronological ‘peg’ upon which Greek chronology was hung, like that of Rome with its legendary foundation in 753 BC (aus, ab urbe condita - from the founding of the city), or the Christian AD (anno Domini). The Games continued at four-yearly intervals down until AD 395 when Christian emperors banned such pagan festivals and finally closed the pagan temples. The Games did, however, manage to live on in their ‘sanctified’ form in the great Byzantine capital of Istanbul, but they were a different animal. There followed a long gap until 1896 when the French Baron Pierre de Coubertin revived them in Athens (it was a pity that the anniversary Games were not held there in 1996). Within this broad sweep of a subject, which virtually everyone in the modern world recognises as an exercise in excellence, Dr Swaddling has produced an indispensable guide to the ancient Games.

There is much more to the story of the Games than the central athletic competitions. Here we learn of how the Games originated, the reasons for the choice of the site (the various parts of which seen today are described in detail), the records and the regulations involved, the preparation and training - all receive exemplary treatment.

The focal point at the great sanctuary of Olympia was the 13-metre tall chryselephantine seated statue of Zeus, created by the master sculptor Phidias and rated as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. No more complete evidence of the great sculptor could be asked for than when excavations in 1968 below the 5th-century church, said to be built on the site of the master’s workshop, produced a fragmentary black-glazed mug of c. 440-430 BC with the scratched inscription on its base phedi o eimi – ‘I am the property of Phidias’. Sadly, having been removed from Olympia to Istanbul in the 4th century, the statue perished in a fire in AD 475 in the palace of the Chalcedonian Lausus, along with other cult statues that had been looted from the old pagan temples as they were closed down.

Descriptions and quotations from ancient sources present the individual events that featured in the Games. At first these were very few;
the foot races of varying lengths, then wrestling and boxing were introduced, and it was not until 580 BC that chariot racing, followed by horse racing, became one of the contests. There are abundant illustrations from Greek vase paintings, statues, reliefs and coins that depict all aspects of the Games, and the book has a well-chosen selection to bring out the many different aspects. A lot of what was tolerated at Olympia would find an immediate ban nowadays. The violence allowed to the pankratists was a great crowd-puler, but gouging eyes was a foul, as is illustrated on a red-figure kylix (drinking cup) where the trainer/refereree lashes out with a cleft stick to separate the fouler and his victim. When the local river at Olympia, the Alpheus, changed its course in late antiquity, the demise of the sacred site was complete. It lay lost and forgotten until the German archaeological excavations of the last century began to bring it back to life to the tourist 'Mecca' that it is today with its fine new museum. Jucith Swaddling's book is a worthy companion to that splendid and numinous site.

**City in the Sand**


36 Illus, 1 map. Paperback, £12.95.

Following on from her delightful account of work at the Egyptian site of Tell el-Amarna (*Minerva, Jul/Aug 1999, p. 60*), Mary Chubb went to the site of the ancient city of Eshnunna in Iraq, working for the Oriental Institute of Chicago. Once more her perceptive and kindly eye brings alive the life on a remote dig in the early 1930s. It is an archaeological world that is almost magical in its way - she first describes a walking holiday in Greece before making her way to Iraq. Who can now envisage a Mesopotamian village in the area or a day's outing to a city such as Nineveh? But Eshnunna, a vassal city of the great Biblical Ur of the Chaldees, lay miles away from Baghdad across virtually trackless desert. For the last 20 odd miles of the bumpy car journey there drivers would have to focus on the light kept on the top of the dig house tower to act as a lonesome beacon for the car. It was clearly known to be out in the desert. In those days, archaeology was archaeology - good digging and often incredible flashes of inspiration, coupled with professional knowledge and intuition, that could bring a line of mud brick wall alive, and the circumstances, date and data of its origin. Mary Chubb's delightful prose brings this all to the fore - it is almost impossible to imagine what such a dig was like 70 years ago with none of the modern impediments of technology and bureaucracy. Her book is as fresh today as when it was first published in 1957, and that was some four decades after the events it describes - and the 95-year old author is still hale and hearty enough to contribute an Epilogue.

**Studies in Egyptian Antiquities: A Tribute to T.G.H. James**


In May 1988 Harry James retired from the British Museum after a career of 37 years in the Department of Egyptian Antiquities, the last 14 of them being spent as the Keeper of the Department. To mark his 75th birthday in May 1998 this volume of essays was prepared by his former Department. Harry James' name is one respected as a scholar of the highest calibre throughout the Egyptological world - his research and editing (especially over many years for the Egypt Exploration Society, and others) is impeccable - the 15 papers here bear witness to this widespread recognition. These 15 papers cover a very wide prospectus of Egyptological subjects, in periods from the Predynastic through to the Ptolemaic and Graeco-Roman period, to the British acquisition as 'spoils of war', after the Treaty of Alexandria, 1801, of the Rosetta Stone. Many of the papers are concerned with objects in the BM collections that have been waiting patiently, almost like lost souls, for their case to be taken up and for them to see the light of publication. Amongst them are some curious amulets, a very late (the last?) Book of the Dead, some statuary, and a most curious toe-prosthesis made of cartonage for the right foot to ensure that its owner was complete when he appeared in the next world. One of the longest contributions is a triumph of reconstruction - not building up a piece but in bringing an assemblage together. Hitherto the burial equipment of the Lady of Piaynebty was best known for her splendid gilded inner coffin most recently displayed in a side room off the Lower Egyptian Gallery. Now, her assemblage has been brought together in the new Roxie Walker Galleries of Egyptian Art (see *Minerva*, Jan/Feb 2000, pp. 18-21). Purchased by Wallis Budge for the BM over a period of years (1905 to 1913) the publication and illustration of this virtually complete assemblage is a most welcome addition to our knowledge of a high status burial of the Ramesside period. Her unusual funerary papyrus escaped Wallis Budge but, having been given to the Museum of Reading, it has been graciously loaned to rejoin its companion pieces.

Although a most worthy production, the interested public will tend to miss this book, tucked away as a BM occasional paper; it should have had a proper title, with the present one, appropriately indicating its content, as a subtitle. Be that as it may, there is here a very fine and well deserved tribute to Harry James, his Keepership and his place in Egyptology.

**Maya Art and Architecture**


This is yet another volume in the splendid and justly world-renowned World of Art series. The archaeology of Central and South America has received a lot of prominence in British publications in the last decade, and the present book is a most useful addition to the field. The Maya civilisation has always been counted amongst the most enigmatic of all ancient civilisations - it is only in recent years that the conundrum of Maya hieroglyphs has at last been 'cracked' by a Russian scholar. In the light of this, the author has been able to provide new interpretations of Maya sculpture and ceramics. Maya architecture is examined, and also the materials of Maya art before leading into sculpture, murals, codices, ceramics, and small scale objects. In covering all these aspects of the Maya the author is able to discuss them in relation to different time periods and regions, bringing in such famous sites as Bonampak and also the recently found remarkable and brightly coloured painting at Cacaxtla.

As has come to be expected of the World of Art series, here is provided an objective, up-to-date and readable account of the subject that puts the understanding of the Maya within the grasp of all.
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BOSTON, Massachusetts

THE ART OF AFRICA, OCEANIA, AND THE AMERICAS. A selection of new galleries opened in December 1997 including an exceptional collection of Maya polychrome ceramics, Olmec stone sculptures and Anasazi textiles, as well as an unusual group of terracotta figures made by the African Igbo people, some of which are among the earliest in the first millennium BC. THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON (1) 17 267-9300. Ongoing exhibitions.

CORKING, New Hampshire
TREASURES FROM THE CORNING MUSEUM OF GLASS. 200 masterpieces in glass covering 3500 years of glassmaking, including a number of well-known ancient vessels. CORNING MUSEUM OF GLASS (1) 607 973-5371. Until 31 July.

HANOVER, New Hampshire

HONOLULU, Hawaii
HUNTING FOR ANCIENT EGYPT: ART, ARCHITECTURE AND ARTEFACTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA MUSEUM. The final venue for this important exhibition of 138 Egyptian antiquities from the University of Pennsylvania Museum including part of the Old Kingdom funerary chapel of Kaperu and the four-ton false door, 10,000 Egyptian artefacts from the 19th Dynasty Palace of King Merenptah, a red granite head of Tuthmosis III, funer- ary sarcophagi, and a fine selection of jewellery. HONOLULU ACADEMY OF ARTS (1) 808 532-8700. (See Minerva, Nov/Dec 1997, pp. 26-27). Catalogue. Until 28 July.

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama
THE ART AND CULTURE OF THE INUIT, MUSEUM OF ART (1) 205 533-4506. 6 August - 19 November.

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana
SELECTIONS FROM THE ASIAN COLLECTION. Sculpture and other objects from China and Japan with extensive holdings. INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART (1) 317 927-1331. Until 6 August.

LOS ANGELES, California
ANCIENT ART FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION. A temporary exhibition, including some of the recent acquisitions from the Fleischman collection, until the Paul Getty Museum in Malibu is reopened, now scheduled for 2003. THE GETTY CENTER (1) 310 440-7300.

GOLD OF THE NOMADS. LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART (1) 323 857-6000. 2 July - 24 September (then to Cleveland and Rome). The exhibition travels to Paris. Catalogue $29.95, hardback $60. (See Minerva, Nov/Dec 1999, pp. 24-33; reprints are available from Minerva at $5 each or at the venue).

MALIBU, California
THE GETTY MUSEUM CLOSED. It should be noted that the Getty Villa Museum, which houses the noted collection of Greek and Roman art, closed on 6 July 1997 for an extensive renovation and will probably reopen in 2001. There is a centre for comparative archaeology and culture. (See above.)
MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, & SYMPOSIA

London. Contact: Judith Herrin, Department of Classics, KCL, Strand, WC2R 2LS. E-mail: jherrin@kcl.ac.uk.

4 July. NEW EXCAVATIONS IN THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS: THE AMARNA ROYAL TOMBS PROJECT. Geoffrey Martin. The Egypt Exploration Society Northern Branch. Main Arts Theatre, University of Kent at Canterbury, Canterbury, main arts theatre, 7pm (to be followed by the Northern Branch summer party). (44) 161 275 2647.


26 July. THE RAMSSES TOMB AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SACRED SPACE. Daymond and Beverley Sacker: Foundation Distinguished Lecture in Egyptology(Brunel) Gallery Lecture Theatre, Brunel University, Uxbridge. £9.50. E-mail: Games-Festivals@hotmail.com. Website: http://www.arts.ed.ac.uk/classics.

APPOINTMENTS

Eleni Vassilika, currently Keeper of Antiquities at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England, has been appointed Executive Director of the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, Hildesheim, Germany. The present Director, Arne Eggebrecht, is retiring.

IN MEMORIAM

De Courtney Fales Jr (1908-2000), archaeologist and professor of art history at Oberlin College, the John Lemson College. He was the author of many articles on the most important sacred black-figure vase, the François Vase, and its artists Kleitias, and excavated at Kourion in Cyprus.

Homer A. Thompson (1906-2000), professor and director of the Classical Archaeology at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, since 1977, and a faculty member since 1947, was most noted for his work in the excavation and reconstruction of the Athenian Agora for 39 years.

Exhibition dates are subject to change. Before planning a visit, contact the museum to confirm the dates and opening times.

Calendar listings are free. Please send details of UK and other European exhibitions, meetings, conferences, and auctions, at least 6 weeks in advance of publication, to:

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