BATTLE FOR THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS
THE ILIAD AT THE COLOSSEUM
TUNISIAN MOSAICS AT THE GETTY VILLA
CHOLA BRONZES AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY
THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, BETHLEHEM
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MOTIF & MESSAGE IN VIKING ART
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EDITORIAL

60 Years of Dead Sea Scrolls Controversy

2007 marks the sixtieth anniversary of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, arguably the most influential archaeological discovery of the 20th century. Ever since a naive Moses Shapiro tragically took his own life in Rotterdam after his Deuteronomy Scroll - allegedly found on the east of bank of the Dead Sea in 1893 - was denounced in London as a forgery, the scrolls have courted vast controversy.

From the scandals of Dr John Allegro intimating that Christianity was adopted from pious Jewish Essenes, as characterised in the scroll's community rulebook, through to the collections' non-publication in the 1980s, this material has remained front-page news. Even today the furore refuses to die down: after personally laying out $3000 on a 1st-century BC scroll being sold by Bedouin, the enormously respected Professor Hanan Eshel from Bar-Ilan University has found himself in the dock for handling illegally looted finds. The case continues, even though Eshel made the discovery known to the Israel Antiquities Authority and ought to be applauded for saving his country's cultural heritage for the State. One thing is clear: future Bedouin finds will simply disappear over the borders on to the antiquities market. Little has been learnt about managing the Bedouin since the Muhammad ed-Dib (the 'Wolf') found the first scrolls 400m above Qumran.

The 'Qumran triangle' itself remains a battleground for scholarship, where academics examining the same sets of archaeological material are convinced by diametrically opposed theories. To the followers of Père Roland de Vaux of the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem, editor-in-chief of the Dead Sea Scrolls from 1953-71 and excavator of Qumran from 1953-6, this site was an isolated retreat for pious Jewish Essenes - the very people who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls. Other scholars, championed by the late Professor Yizhar Hirschfeld, are convinced that Qumran was a manor-house controlling the economic wealth of the Dead Sea. The very latest excavators of the 1990s interpret the site as a massive factory for pottery manufacture. Meanwhile, endless controversy even surrounds the caves themselves: were they merely convenient hiding places, religious genizas, or even Essene dwellings? Who is right? The current debate is highlighted in this issue of *Minerva* (pp. 9-14).

What is certain is that the 850 Dead Sea Scrolls will continue to fascinate the public and to divide scholarship. As Dr Adolfo Roitman, the Curator of the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Shrine of the Book at the Israel Museum told *Minerva*, 'After almost all the Dead Sea Scrolls have been published, the future of the Dead Sea Scrolls lies in producing new technical resources for the research (for example, digital photographs), in improving the dating technique as well as in putting the written documents in the historical context of Second Temple Judaism. Finally, on the basis of the new theories concerning the nature of Khirbet Qumran, the future research will have to establish the relationship between the scrolls, the buildings, and the caves'.

Dr Jerome M. Eisenberg
Dr Sean Kingsley

The Shrine of the Book with the Dead Sea Scrolls on display at the Israel Museum. Photo: Adam Bartos and © the Israel Museum.

The Shrine of the Book, the purpose-built exhibition space for the Dead Sea Scrolls. Photo: Adam Bartos and © the Israel Museum.

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MUSEUM NEWS

The Basilica of St Peter Celebrates 500 Years

‘Petros Eri, Peter is Here’ in the Braccio di Carlo Magno, the Vatican, celebrates the 500th anniversary of the building of the Basilica of St Peter: the first foundation stone was in fact set on 18 April 1506 by Pope Julius II.

The exhibition, which runs until 8 March, presents architectural models, drawings, and works of art ranging from the colossal head of the emperor Constantine found in Rome in 2005, to sarcophagi, a 4th century AD bas-relief from Aquileia, late medieval glass and ivories, to much later paintings representing St Peter by great masters like Rembrandt, Caravaggio, and El Greco. Of great interest are the exhibition’s last three sections, which concern the ancient Constantinian Basilica, the Ager Vaticanus, and its necropolis, the iconography of the apostles Peter and Paul, and the pilgrimage routes to the Memoria Apostolica.

The Ager Vaticanus was a large area beyond the River Tiber where the emperor Caligula dispatched a great number of Christian martyrs in the circus. Here a Tropaeum was built within the boundaries of an existing necropolis c. AD 150-160 in honour of the first Apostle. It was also here that in the 4th century AD the Constantinian Basilica was built and later pulled down to make room for a new Renaissance masterpiece. The first basilica, where Charlemagne was crowned in AD 800, was very large and lavishly decorated with mosaics and precious marbles of which, unfortunately, very little has been salvaged.

Dalia Jones

Aurel Stein & the Silk Road at the National Museum, New Delhi

Besides its superb and justly famous collection of Indian art, the National Museum in New Delhi houses an outstanding collection of Central Asian antiquities. These were acquired by the famous explorer and scholar Sir Marc Aurel Stein (1862-1943) at the turn of the 20th century during three major expeditions to the oasis of the Taklamakan desert undertaken from India in 1900-1, 1906-8, and 1913-16.

The collection is now beginning to be fully published, restored, and shown to the public to its best advantage. Already the catalogue of the Khust-

Yotkan Terracottas in the Collection of the National Museum, edited by Dr S.P. Gupta and Dr B.K. Sahay, is in print. An international conference on ‘The Material Legacy of Sir Aurel Stein and its Documentation’ took place in 2004 to set in motion the whole process. Another international conference is scheduled for 12-16 March, focusing on ‘The Cross Cultural Contacts of Central Asia over the Indian Subcontinent from 1st Century AD to 14th century AD’.

Of the extra-Indian collections in the National Museum, the Central Asian collection is the richest both quantitatively and qualitatively, with rare artefacts ranging from fragile wall paintings to elaborately decorated silk banners, refined sculptures in wood, stucco, coins, ceramics, and objects of gold, silver, leather, and religious and secular documents written on paper and various media in 17 different languages and 24 different scripts. These are all rare artefacts that come from sand-buried cities in the easternmost oasis of the Silk Road linking Chang-an in Central China with the Mediterranean and Rome after crossing the entire length of Chinese and Russian Central Asia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. They date from the era of the Kushans, who ruled India, Afghanistan, and large parts of present-day Russian and Chinese Central Asia, from the first three centuries of the Christian era through the Islamic conquest of Khorasan and during the conversion of its Uighur king around 1000 AD. The art produced here is predominantly Buddhist. Its genius lies in the assimilation and recreation of diverse influences into a style peculiarly distinctive, which, in turn, became the source of an art that developed further east in China, Korea, and Japan.

Minerva, January/February 2007
Dr B.K. Sahay, the curator of the Central Asian section of the museum, envisages that about 1200 objects, comprising roughly 10% of a total more than 12,000 items, will be on display by 2009 in a series of new galleries on the top floors of the museum. As many as possible of the wall paintings, which are now under restoration, will be set into wooden frames with polycarbonate sheets to protect them. The paintings, of which the largest is 5.4m high, will then be attached to the walls of the gallery permanently, while the objects will be displayed in showcases in the middle of the rooms. This will allow unhampered vision of the paintings from a distance and at a height and setting as near as possible to their original ones.

When not lost or destroyed, it is a curious fact that many important finds recovered by Aurel Stein, Sven Hedin, Paul Pelliot, Langdon Warner, Albert von Le Coq, and Count Otani remain unavailable to the general public, even in the British Museum, where a large section of Sir Aurel Stein’s collection was tucked away in the 1950s in a corner of the building, where it remained until very recently, whilst the rest was kept under storage.

The remainder of Stein’s finds was stored in the National Museum in New Delhi, built by the British Raj in 1921, where they had appropriately been deposited after having been packed into crates adventurously carried by camels over mountain passes when Stein returned from the expeditions the Government of India had sponsored. Only a small number of these rare objects and wall paintings were on public display until the decision to redesign this museum wing was taken in 2006.

*Dalai Jones*

**Plastered Syrian Skulls from the Dawn of Civilisation**

In the Neolithic period the Levantine Fertile Crescent ushered in one of the most profound cultural revolutions in the history of the Mediterranean basin. This environmentally blessed cradle of civilisation played host to modern humans as they made the crucial transition from hunter-gatherers to sedentary farmers to emerge as proto-urban societies. A conspicuous enigma of the world’s first ‘city dwellers’ was the most extraordinary ritual practice of plastering human skulls, which is attested at several major Neolithic sites, such as Jericho in the Palestinian Territories, Çatalhöyük in Turkey, and ‘Ain Ghazal in Jordan. To this list may now be added five skulls recently excavated by Danielle Storbeck of the CNRS at Tell Aswad in northern Syria.

The Syrian skulls are remarkable for their exceptional preservation, and display a bizarre, almost ‘alien’ primeval quality. They are also the oldest examples discovered. Having been radiocarbon dated to 9500 BC, they are over 2000 years older than the plastered skulls found elsewhere in the Levant, assigned to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period. The skulls were discovered in a pit and were clustered around an infant inhumation. They are plastered smooth with clay painted red, the eyes are depicted closed and underlined with black bitumen, while the mouth appears as a thin slit. The sex of the individuals concerned is yet to be established, but this discovery may perhaps mirror other examples previously unearthed at Tell Aswad and elsewhere, in which the skulls had been removed from the skeletons of both adults and children.

Not surprisingly, the apparently widespread practice of removing, plastering, and painting skulls in the region has prompted a great deal of debate about the significance of this ritual. Professor Ian Hodder, the director of excavations at Çatalhöyük, has suggested to Minerva that ‘The meanings of
these plastered skulls vary in different parts of the Middle East in the Neolithic. This new group from Syria is typical of those from the Levant and adjacent areas as the skulls are in groups. They represent collective and generic ancestors. But the example from Catalhoyuk is single and suggests a memory of an individual person. In all cases, the aim may be to “refresh” the dead as part of rites of renewal.

Danielle Stordeur relates her finds to a system of clans, social organisation, lineages, and group leaders, and has suggested that there was a clear choice in the small number of individuals selected for this special treatment, and their placement to mark cemeteries, and in the respect given to the skulls by their careful burial. She also thinks it likely that before they were placed into the pits they were exposed for a time before burial as in New Guinea, where this practice is known from ethnography. “The treatment of the face and head - the most “human” part of an individual - shows that people of this period had a conscience which specifically related to this part of the human body.”

Dr Mark Mernony

Human Sacrifice in Early Bronze Age Umm el-Marra, Syria?

Six years ago an untouched Syrian tomb came to light at Umm el-Marra, ancient Tuba, in the Jabbul plain of northern Syria. One of Syria’s first capital cities, Tuba lay at a major crossroads, 56km west of the Euphrates river. The site has now yet again amazed the archaeological world with the revelation that the original tomb is actually part of an extensive group of at least eight other mortuary structures.

Many of the newly discovered tombs contain human and animal remains, beautiful gold and silver objects, gemstones, and, not least, ceramic objects that date these tombs from about 2500 to 2200 BC, setting them in the Early Bronze Age. Tomb 6, the largest examined, held the skeletons of an adult male inside a wooden coffin, as well as gold and silver toggle pins and beads of lapis lazuli, gold, and carnelian. Two adult females and an adult male were excavated from the lower level of the two-storey Tomb 4, interred with 120 pottery vessels of c. 2400 to 2350 BC, gold and silver grave goods, ivory combs, furniture inlay, and ostrich eggshells. Alongside the three bodies in the upper, later level, gold toggle pins, silver diadems, a silver torque and seven silver vessels had been placed next to the female burial, reflecting an intriguing pattern whereby female burials were richer than the men’s. A previously unseen variety of non-cuneiform writing was also carved on to four small clay cylinders found in the upper level, a major find requiring further study.

The mortuary complex would have dominated the local landscape because the tombs were built on the highest, central part of the town, making them visible from almost any position. Glen Schwartz, co-director of the excavation and Whiting Professor of Archaeology in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Johns Hopkins University, told Minerva that “this is a way for the elite to use funerary monuments to consolidate their own power, in a way not seen before. Although less grand than the Royal Tombs of Ur, from the same period in Mesopotamia, the complex is of great importance as so far it is the only known mortuary complex from this period in Syria”.

A grisly revelation is the fact that the tombs bear signs of the ritual sacrifice of humans and animals. The animal bones predominantly comprise equids (members of the horse family), most likely donkeys and onagers, which at this time in Syria were thought of as royal animals. Puppy bones were also present. The archaeologists suspect that these animal sacrifices most probably relate to the mortuary practices of elite society. Along with the wealth found in many of the tombs, this complex - dubbed the Acropolis Centre mortuary complex - thus seems to have been a royal cemetery. Professor Schwartz suspects “that the sacrifice of these equids in our tombs has something to do with their association with the highest rank of society. It would be like a wealthy person today being buried with his or her Rolls Royce.”

Whereas animal sacrifice has been recorded throughout Syria, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and the Levant, evidence of human sacrifice is far less common, and infant sacrifice is virtually unheard of in the region at this time. Although it has so far been impossible to establish with certainty that the infants in the tombs were sacrificed, their context adjacent to equid remains suggests that infant sacrifice was deliberately associated with equid sacrifice in these elite tombs. The Umm el-Marra mortuary complex is a potential well of information for expanding our understanding of Syria’s earliest complex societies and their ruling elites.

Henriette Johansen

New Treasures from the ‘The Lake of the Idols’, Tuscany

Excavations at the so-called ‘Lake of Idols’ on Mount Falterona in Tuscany have ended after four years of fieldwork began in 2002. The site lies in a small lake measuring 50 x 25m, which is a natural amphitheatre 1400m high on the slopes of Mount Falterona. It is now ready to once again be inundated. The ‘Lake of the Idols’, whose real name is in fact Lago della Cilegita, was first emptied and researched following the discovery in 1838 on the shore of the lake of a small bronze of the god Hercules, the Etruscan equivalent of Hercules. The 19th-century excavation yielded more than 600 votive objects, all ex votos linked to what must have been an important temple nearby. These included statuettes of men and...
animals, heads, and different anatomical parts, fibulae, arrowheads, fragments of weapons, and coins. Alongside were discovered almost 1000 aes rude (crude bronze ingots), and bronze scales used for currency.

All of these finds were offered to the Royal Gallery in Florence, which refused acquisition. The collection was thus auctioned, and the British Museum, the Louvre, the Baltimore Museum, and possibly also the Hermitage in St. Petersburg acquired the best pieces between 1844 and 1847. Archaeologists from the Superintendency for Archaeology in Tuscany are now trying to assemble a complete inventory of these first finds.

The recent excavations, which have again scourcd the bed of the lake and its surrounding slopes over an area of almost 3000 square metres, have produced yet more votive objects: hundreds of beautiful statuette coins, and arrowheads, all dating from the 5th to 2nd century BC. Some of the latest finds were gold fragments of a necklace in the shape of a bull's head, a bearded man, and a 22cm-high bronze statuette of a woman, similar to one at the Louvre in the same style.

All of the objects are currently undergoing restoration in Florence, while the papers presented at a conference held in September at Foppio near Arezzo, focusing on ancient Etruscan and Roman ritual sites located near springs (the head of the River Arno is 500m from the lake) and believed to be especially powerful, were published in 2006.

Headless Roman Statues Beneath the Palazzo Valientini, Rome

New and important archaeological discoveries are expected in Rome in the next few months as work proceeds at the centre of the capital for the construction of a new underground system and metro stations, especially between the Piazza Venezia (beneath the Capitol) and the Forum) and the Colosseum. The final purpose of the operation is to eliminate all car traffic from this area, thus creating the largest open-air archaeological museum in the world.

The most recent finds were appropriately unearthed from the basement of the 16th-century Palazzo Valientini, the seat of the offices of the Province of Rome since 1873. Over the years the basement of the palace had filled up with discarded files and furniture. The clearance of this space throughout 2006 remarkably revealed that one of the palace walls rests on two headless 3rd-century AD marble statues of Roman men wearing togas. Further excavation has identified the basement as occupying the site of a rich Roman domus decorated with wall paintings and floor mosaics.

Archaeologists continue to work under the palace, and guided tours will allow visitors to watch the excavation unfold as it proceeds towards the extensive and rich area of Trajan's Forum nearby. Only after this area is exposed will it be clear whether the newly found domus is a private mansion or perhaps part of the external architecture surrounding Trajan's Forum.

Dali Jones

ANTiquITIES NEWS

Afghanistan

Since UNESCO has determined that Kabul is now safe enough to receive objects in the Kabul Museum, the 1300 items in safekeeping in the 'museum in exile' in Bubendorf, Switzerland, will now be returned to the director of the museum. This includes some 200 objects of archaeological interest, including two Etruscan ivories and some of the finds from Ai Khanoum. The museum was bombed in 1993, then ransacked by the Taliban in 2001, destroying much of the ancient Buddhist stupa, in the course of which the building was severely damaged. Reconstruction was completed in 2004.

The museum in Bubendorf was initially set up with the goal of temporarily storing the collection still remaining in Kabul, but the concept lacked support from UNESCO. Actually, over 22,500 objects, including the Etruscan ivories, were hidden in vaults in the Afghanistan Museum and later identified by the Kabul Museum in 1988. The Bactrian gold treasure of over 20,000 objects had previously been salted away in the presidential palace compound. Only the larger statuary (and less valuable pottery) remained in the museum and it was this that suffered such malicious damage at the hands of the Taliban.

England

The highly controversial Sevso Treasure, 14 richly decorated pieces of Roman silver dating to c. AD 350-450 and acquired in the 1980s by the Marquess of Northampton, was put on display for just a few days in October at Bonham's, London, accompanied by a deluxe catalogue and several lectures for invited academics and other guests. Viewing was by appointment only. In storage in a London bank vault for an initial brief exhibition at Sotheby's, New York, in 1990 (see Minerva, April 1990, pp. 4-11; December 1990, pp. 22-3), their provenance remains clouded by an outstanding claim that they were illegally exported from Hungary, although there have also been claims made by Croatia, even though the original documentation (later proven to be false) stated that they had been found in Lebanon.

Greece

A small fragment (20 x 8cm) of a marble frieze with an egg-and-dart decoration from the Erechtheion on the Acropolis was returned to Greece by a retired Swedish gym teacher, who said that it had been acquired by her father's brother on the Acropolis around 1895-6. It was heavily publicised as being the second sculpture from the Acropolis to be returned to Greece last year (Heidelberg University returned a marble heel from the Parthenon in January; see Minerva, March/April 2006, p. 6.). This 'minor work' was handed over by its owner, Birgit Wiger-Angner, to the Greek minister of culture Georgios Voulgarakis at a special ceremony held on the Acropolis.

Italy

In September Malcolm Rogers, the director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, formally returned 13 antiquities to the Italian Cultural Ministry that it claimed had been illegally exported. They included a large Roman marble statue of Sabina, the wife of Hadrian, and a 1st-century Roman marble relief of Mercury that might have come from Hadrian's Villa. It also included several South Italian vases, such as an ornate Apulian loutrophoros by the White Sacos Painter, an Apulian volute krater by the Daris Painter, and an Apulian bell

STOP PRESS: Gettoby Museum to return 3rd century AD statues from Antiquities to Italy

On 21 November, Michael Brind, Director of the J. Paul Getty Museum, announced that they will return 28 AD statues from its collection to Italy, 25 of which were on loan of 52 objects which the Italians claim were acquired illegally, including several highly important works of art: a Greek marble antefix of two griffins attacking a fallen doe - with an accompanying marble relief, c. 325-300 BC; an Etruscan terracotta antefix of a maenad and Silenos dancing, c. 500-475 BC; and an archaic Roman marble statue of Apollo, 2nd century AD. The other objects are a South Italian bronze askos in the shape of a siren, seven Attic vases, seven South Italian vases, two Etruscan vases, one Corinthian vase, two groups of Attic vase fragments, and Roman fresco fragments. However, the museum declared that the Italian Ministry of Culture has apparently repudiated an agreement signed on 5 October which would have included a temporary joint ownership of the monumental 'Cult Statue of a Goddess' while its title was being investigated and guaranteed long-term loans to substitute for the objects being returned.

A full illustrated report will appear in the next Minerva.

krafter by the Hoppin Painter. In return, as with the previous agreement with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Italy has agreed to loan ‘significant works’ to Boston and will send an expert from Rome to collaborate with them in archaeological excavations.

Jerome M. Eisenberg, Ph.D.

NEWS FROM EGYPT

Cemetery of Old Kingdom Dentists Found at Saqqara

An Egyptian antiques mission headed by Zahi Hawass has unearthed the first cemetery said to have been devoted exclusively to dentists. Accidentally discovered by tomb robbers, it is located close to the 3rd-dynasty Step Pyramid of King Djoser at Saqqara. Dating to the late 4th Dynasty-early 5th Dynasty, the site is characterised by three mud-brick and limestone tombs, one for the chief dentist, Ipy Myry, and the two others for the rest of the team that resided near the royal palace. These people were responsible for the dental needs of the pharaoh and his family. Their professions could be identified by the sign of an eye over a tooth in their hieroglyphic titles.

New Technique Applied for the Removal of Tomb Paintings

A new technique developed in Japan has been used for the first time in Egypt for the removal of tomb paintings. A team from Kansai University removed a mural depicting birds, food, and beer from the 5th-dynasty tomb of Princess Iput, the daughter of the pharaoh Unas. By first gluing rayon paper with resin over the parts to be removed, and then using a protective seaweed paste, they then used knives to separate the plaster backing from the limestone wall. It is the first time that this technique has been used outside Japan — the usual method is to apply synthetic resin in order to strengthen the murals. Another method used in Europe relies on an organic solvent, but since it produces hazardous gas it cannot be used underground.

Five Egyptians Held for the Illegal Sale of Antiquities

In October five Egyptians, including a former government archaeologist and a university professor, were detained while attempting to sell antiquities to an undercover agent posing as an Arab businessman. They had found five or six important antiquities, among which were statuettes of Ramses II and the gods Ra, Horus, and Sekhmet, for which they were offered by the security agent the equivalent of $2 million. The case is now under investigation.

Jerome M. Eisenberg, Ph.D.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Re: The Medici Conspiracy

As a devotee of ancient art and also a retail supplier of books on ancient art to academics, museums, collectors and dealers, I was naturally curious to read Peter Watson’s latest offering, The Medici Conspiracy. Having read the work, I am left with the impression that the picture he paints is one where the only people to have any legitimate interest in ancient art objects are closed archaeologists. One gets an image of a miserly person jealously guarding earth-encrusted orphans of pottery and not considering that anybody else has any real claim to them. In reality, my experience of archaeologists has been of much more liberal minded people who actually appreciate the enthusiasm, support, and interest shown by amateur or knowledgeable collector.

Without the private collector and benefactor, the great museums of the world would be sadly lacking material. The base collections of museums such as the British Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Louvre, Copenhagen, Köln, and Berlin, were donated by private collectors, particularly in the 19th century. The fact that these were often aristocrats, Dukes, Lords, or ambassadors, who were in powerful positions and able to gain access to the material, or employ their own ‘diggers’, is no different in essence to everything that has happened since. Is it acceptable to consider the Cesnola or Niessen collections as legitimate and yet not to accord the same validity to a 20th-century collector? Is it a case of the ‘booted’ material of the 18th/19th centuries being more respectable than the 20th or 21st?

To my mind the majority of ancient artefacts existing in museums and collections today fall into the acquired (sponsored) category and always have done. Think for example of the collections of Cesnola, Niessen, Slade, Greau, Charvet, Elgin, Carlsberg, and J.P. Morgan. If the great museums of the world had to return all the Greek, Etruscan, or Roman material bequeathed to them over the last three centuries, then alas they would be almost empty and who should they return them to?

The current citizens of Italy are far removed from the Greeks, Etruscans, or Romans, as to be almost another race. The same is true of Greece and Egypt and other ancient centres of society. A large portion of the population of Australia or America might lay equal claim to such ancestry. We are in any case all citizens of this planet and ultimately related to each other. These artefacts, made thousands of years ago, belong to nobody in particular. They are for the benefit of all mankind to behold. If a generous benefactor/collector has made these objects accessible to a wider world and public, then to my mind this has been as useful as an academic keeping them in a dusty corner of his research establishment, mainly for the viewing of himself and his colleagues.

The author mentions in rather a dissonant way the exhibition of the George Ortiz collection, held at the Royal Academy in London in 1994 entitled ‘In Pursuit of the Absolute’. For me and for a lot of other people this was one of the finest and most magnificent displays of ancient art ever put together. It was presented so beautifully and with such obvious loving care by Mr Ortiz, who personally oversaw the lighting and display of each object to present it at its best. It was a breathtaking experience to behold such amazing and beautiful objects. I am sure the public derived as much pleasure and education from this exhibition as any museum could offer them. We should remember that ultimately the State and the archaeologists are servants of society and that they have a duty to make the objects of antiquity accessible to the public. Any means that stimulates the public interest in antiquities is for the good. A healthy collector’s market in these objects helps to build a wider interest in ancient art and support for its maintenance. Most archaeologists are sympathetic to this concept and do not take the jaundiced view which seems to permeate Watson’s writing...

So let us not turn this world into an Orwellian Big Brother environment but, rather, let us recognise that collectors have always made a valuable contribution towards making these wonderful objects accessible to the wider public.

Of course the alleged industrial-scale digging operations of Medici and/or his associates is wrong. However, this couldn’t have happened if there had been better or proper security in the areas of excavation. I have been to many countries with major archaeological sites, where people can roam freely without a guard or security camera in sight. I remember being in a complete room of frescoes, at an official tourism-oriented antiquities site, that had no protection whatsoever. No guards, no glass protection, and no cameras. Let the nations that complain about their heritage being stolen do more to protect these sites and not just complain after the event.

Mr Watson in his book paints a very crude picture and one that the Berlin Painter would certainly not be pleased to be associated with. It’s not even a good reproduction.

Yours sincerely,

David G. Giles

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BATTLE FOR THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS: SIXTY YEARS OF CONTROVERSY

Sean Kingsley rounds up the latest ground-breaking research on Qumran and the mysteries of the Essenes along the western Dead Sea.

The western shore of the Dead Sea is home to one of the most alien landscapes on earth. Sickening sulphurous fumes waft off the world’s saltiest lake; desert wasteland engulfs the lowest place on the planet. Where traces of ancient settlements do hug oases, the archaeology is a mystery. So, in the heart of Ein Gedi’s mid-5th century AD synagogue (Fig 1), an Aramaic inscription cryptically reads, ‘He whose eyes wonder throughout the land and sees what is hidden, he will uproot that man and his seed will be eliminated from under the sun and all the people will say was spoiled, the same floor refers to the secrets of the town’, which must not be disclosed to outsiders. What were these tantalising mysteries?

The archaeological secrets of Israel’s western Dead Sea are today swiftly coming out of the shadows to reveal an ancient revelled picture of this no-man’s-land. Alongside the enigma of Ein Gedi, one of the most important archaeological discoveries of the 20th century is associated with this region: the ruins of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls (Figs 2-3).

2007 celebrates the 60th anniversary of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In 1947, three young Bedouin were herding their flock 400m above the ‘Salt Sea’ in the inhospitable wilderness of Judea. Tracking a lost goat to the mouth of a cave, one of them fled in fear of the desert’s evil spirits, while his friends chanced upon ten clay pots holding bewildering leather and parchment inscribed with strange writing. In Bethlehem, Muhammad ed-Dib (the ‘Wolf’) offered his scrolls to the cobbler and part-time antiquities dealer Kando, who thought he had hit the jackpot when he sold them to St Mark’s monastery in Jerusalem for £24. The secret was out of the bag.

Scroll fever consumed Palestine, accompanied by immense political intrigue. During the instability of the 1948 War of Independence, the Wolf’s scrolls were whisked away to America, only to be bought back for the new Jewish State by Yigael Yadin for $250,000. And in 1967, during the Six-Day War and the Israeli Defence Force’s occupation of East Jerusalem, Yadin raided Kando’s home in Bethlehem and retrieved the famous Temple Scroll hidden under floor tiles in a Bata shoe box and a cigar tin. Scroll fever and the vicious battle for ownership of the documents and academic rights of publication would rage until November 1993, when the Israel Antiquities Authority scoured the Dead Sea for forgotten caves in Operation Scroll. Today 900 scrolls are divided between Israel, America, and Jordan.

The hunt for fresh scrolls amidst the 279 caves, cracks, and crevices around the world’s Dead Sea was a desperate game of cat and mouse between the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, their academic allies, and the lightning-quick Bedouin, who were intoxicated by the glitter of gold in the Dead Sea rockpools. In 1949, the Jordanians excavated Cave 1, the hiding place of seven scrolls, with their partner Roland de Vaux of the Dominican École Biblique et Archéologique Francaise of Jerusalem. At this juncture the story of the scrolls took a dramatic twist.

Cave 1 lies just over a kilometre north of the ancient ruins of Qumran, whose excellently preserved walls sprawl across an oasis perched above the Dead Sea amidst lush date palms. The site stands at the lowest point on earth, 400m below sea level, at the base of the arid Great Rift Valley, which receives a lowly 50-100mm of rain each year but an annual evaporation rate of 2600mm. De Vaux was enchanted by Qumran and could not contain his excitement at how the broken scroll shards scattered across the site were identical to those from Cave 1. The site and cave dated to the same period and used the same types of everyday objects. Surely the isolated Qumran and caves must have been related? Qumran must have been the elusive spot where the Dead Sea Scrolls - pre-dating the Biblical books in the Cairo Geniza by 1000 years - were physically written.

At the same time as de Vaux was piecing together his miraculous story, decipherment of the first scrolls brought to light the rulebooks of a reclusive sectarian community. Typically, the 1st century BC Rule of the Congregation ordained that: ‘They shall separate from the congregation of unjust people and shall unite, with respect to doctrine and property. They shall be under the authority of the congregation in dealing with all doctrine and property’.

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Who were this mystery sect that had 'separated' from mainstream society and Jerusalem-Judaism to allow a 'Teacher of Righteousness' to escape his arch-rival, the 'Wicked Priest'. Roland de Vaux was quick to recognise the similarity between the scrolls and the characterisation of the Essenes recorded by Philo of Alexandria, Flavius Josephus, and Pliny the Elder.

Alongside the Sadducees and the Pharisees, the Essenes were a pious Jewish order, unique in forsaking impure city life for rural retreats dedicated to holiness. Wearing the same sacred robes day in day out, they observed an extremely high level of ritual purity in the food they ate and in cleansing their bodies through bathing. They never married and pledged their souls to a life of poverty. De Vaux was familiar with this image and also aware of Pliny the Elder's account in his Natural History of how the Essenes dwelt in the wilderness around the shores of the Dead Sea: 'On the west side of the Dead Sea, but out of range of the noxious exhalations of the coast, is the solitary tribe of the Essenes, which is remarkable for the way the men observe their own strict principles of their own kind of piety...'.

Ein Gedi lies 32km to the south of Qumran. Logically enough, the overall plan as conceived by ancient historians and the Dead Sea Scrolls deliberately concealed in caves next to Qumran, and the geographical proximity of both to Ein Gedi in an otherwise isolated environment, pointed to one conclusion: Qumran must have been the Essene retreat where the Bible was edited. The theory received a curious boost in 1953, when Baruch Safrai, one of the team excavating the Cave of the Letters, claimed to have glimpsed a human skeleton pinned down by boulders and clothed in a white robe and rope belt knotted in the front, the standard attire of the Essenes. Further research was prevented by a landslide.

Not unlike Heinrich Schliemann before him, arriving at 'Troy' in 1878 with Homer's Iliad in hand to illuminate the face of the Trojan Wars, de Vaux pre-judged Qumran when he decided to excavate the site from 1953 to 1956. To his delight he uncovered the nucleus of an introverted settlement occupied from the late second century BC until the end of the First Jewish Revolt in AD 68, containing a large 'monastic' refectory and next to it a pantry holding over 1000 intact plates, bowls, and jars. De Vaux also painstakingly peeled away the debris of a collapsed second-storey chamber and within it fragments of plaster from a 5m-long writing table, unique in the ancient world. The two inkwells, one still containing ink, within the debris left no shadow of doubt in the excavator's mind that this was the actual scriptorium where the Dead Sea Scrolls were written.

The defining characteristic of Qumran, however, was the densest cluster of water pools (mikvehs) ever excavated in the Near East, including six massive reservoirs inside the settlement's walls capable of holding 1200 cubic metres. This unique architecture drew immediate parallels with Flavius Josephus' assertion in his Jewish War of intense Essene observance to ritual purity, especially after sunrise when 'they are sent away by their curators, to exercise some of those arts wherein they are skilled, in which they labour with great diligence till the fifth hour. After which they assemble themselves together again into one place; and when they have clothed themselves in white veils, they then bathe their bodies in cold water'. To de Vaux, the 11 mikvehs carefully constructed at Qumran next to polluted industrial areas, and in front of the refectory, were a crystal-clear verification of this written word.

Other evidence that converged in favour of the Qumran-Essene theory were bizarre dumps of animal bones buried in clay pots around the external walls of the settlement. To de Vaux these were the remains of messianic banquets held on earth in anticipation of feasting that would accompany the arrival of the Messiah, similar to the ritual of the Last Supper. Finally, the thick destruction level sealing Qumran, which included iron arrowheads and 88 coins of the First Jewish Revolt, was evidence of brutal Jewish suppression by Rome in AD 68. The next question balancing the Dead Sea Scrolls and the settlement of Qumran with the Essenes was complete.

Ever since de Vaux's pioneering excavations, scroll fever has left a trail of intense controversy and deep animosity down the decades. The brilliant maverick Dr John Allegro of Manches-

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Fig 3. An aerial view of the ruins of Qumran, showing how carefully the site was designed. Is this the architectural vision of Essene desert hermits? Photo: Zev Radovan, Bibleland Pictures.

Fig 4. The centre of Qumran with the early 1st century BC Hasmonaeam defensive tower in the background and Intricate water channels in the foreground. Photo: Sean Kingsley.
Qumran & the Dead Sea

ter University, notably ignited the mother of all religious storms in January 1956 in a talk given to the BBC Northern Home Service. Allegro was one of the original editors of the Dead Sea Scrolls publication committee, assigned some of the 15,000 fragments from Cave 4, but was forever comment-
ning on other scholars’ unpublished material. In his broadcast the scholar waxed lyrical about Qumran, which he identified as a retreat for pious Jews founded by a Teacher of Righteousness fleeing from the Wicked Priest, who he believed to be the Hasmonaean Jewish king Alexander Janneaeus (103-76 BC).

And then Allegro dropped his bombshell: ‘Probably hardly a decade after they had established themselves in their simple buildings at Qumran, the terrible [King] Janneaeus, the Wicked Priest as they called him, stormed down to their new home, dragged forth the Teacher... gave him into the hands of his Gentile troops to be crucified... a Qumran manuscript speaks in shocked tones of the enormity of this crime. For to a Jew, this death was the most accursed of all, since the body normally found no resting place but was left to moulder on the cross.’

But when the Jewish king had left, and peace descended once more on Qumran, the scattered community returned and took down the broken body of their Master, to stand guard over it until the Judgement Day. For they believed that the terrible events of their time were surely heralding the Visitation of God Himself... In that glorious day, they believed their Master would rise again, and lead his faithful flock, the people of the New Testament, as they called themselves, to a new and purified Jerusalem.’

Thanks to a little joshing up by a journalist reporting for the New York Times, Allegro’s insinuation that Early Christianity ‘stole’ its doctrine from the pious Essene Jews of Qumran, and that the New Testament borrowed an imaginary Jesus from an historical Teacher of Righteousness, was read across the world. To an outraged Church this was heresy, and to Roland de Vaux, the excavator of Qumran, theologically obnoxious and an embarrassment to his serious work as an archaeologist.

Allegro’s outburst and refusal to play the quiet academic waiting game would expel his sack from the Dead Sea Scroll inner sanctum and, indeed, from Manchester University. Over time, his comments would give birth to incessant conspiracy theories whispering that the content of the Dead Sea Scrolls continues to be suppressed by the Vatican due to damaging texts that threaten the very foundations of the Church.

Today the media love affair with the Dead Sea Scrolls lives on in trigger-happy journalists reporting that its secret contents allude to Elvis Presley, offer a cure for AIDS, hold proof of life after death, and predict the end of the world. For these and more noble reasons the Dead Sea Scrolls is a household name. Qumran is now a world famous destination for busloads of tourists desperate to tread the holy soils where the Bible was edited. The site’s religious importance to Judaism and Christianity is immeasurable.

After 60 years of ‘Qumranology’, the facade of the Essene theory is today deeply cracked and in stark need of a face lift. The final publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls has supported radical new insights into who wrote and concealed these priceless documents. Meanwhile, extensive surveys and excavations by a research team at Jerusalem’s École Biblique has also uncovered crucial new evidence that the original excavator only let the world see a snapshot of his results that supported the Essene settlement theory. Finally, the results of a decade of work by Israeli archaeologists sponsored by the Israel Antiquities Authority have imposed an independent scientific veneer over de Vaux’s romanticised narrative.

With this new wave of research, our perception of the Dead Sea Scrolls has changed unrecognisably from the original picture of a settlement of pious Essene hermits beaverawing away over leather and papyrus parchment. Qumran has become the most controversial archaeological site in the world, fought over by defenders of Judaism and Christianity and ‘faithless’ scientists. Even though all researchers have access to the same sets of information and facts, no site on earth has yielded such divergent interpretations. Qumran has become a battleground between on the one hand Jewish and Christian scholars who see in its ruins the face of God and the origins of the Bible, and on the other secular scientists who have pounced on the anomalies exposed by the excavations. But who is right? What really happened in the ‘Qumran triangle’ 2000 years ago?

The latest research clearly proves that the image of Qumran as deliberately founded within an isolated wilderness is little short of a mirage. The ‘secrets of the town’ of Ein Gedi, recorded on its mid-5th century AD synagogue floor (Fig 1), had nothing to do with religious ideals or scrolls but was tied up with protecting the region’s

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unique economic resources. Contrary to the modern image of the Dead Sea as a no-man's land, anc. of Qumran as an isolated desert retreat, in antiquity this peculiar terrain yielded vast wealth and the covetous envy of Mediterranean rulers. The secret of Ein Gedi was *apopholis balsamum*, a viscous liquid extracted from the balsam plant that only grew in Judaea, where it was restricted to two plantations at Jericho and Ein Gedi, according to Pliny the Elder. But every other scent ranks below balsam. The only country to which this plant has been vouchsafed is Judaea, where formerly it grew in only two gardens, both belonging to the king: one of them was not more than twenty *luga* in extent and the other less.

According to the 2nd-century Greek physician Galen’s *De Antidotis*, the local product was even named after the town: ‘This is called Engadimme after the place where it grows most abundantly and is most beautiful, being superior in quality to that which grows in other parts of Palestine’. Though the largest plantation only covered 900 square metres of prime land, its harvest was worth twice its weight in silver. Professor Yizhar Hirschfeld’s latest excavations at Ein Gedi have revealed a balsam processing workshop along the village’s street (Fig 9), while Professor Joseph Patrich has unearthed a Herodian jug from a Dead Sea cave wrapped in palm fibres and holding a viscous oil believed to be balsam.

According to biblical tradition, the balsam bush was introduced to Judaea by the Queen of Sheba as a gift to King Solomon, who thanked her by writing how ‘My lover is to me a cluster of henna blossoms from the vineyards of Ein Gedi’ (Song of Solomon 1:14). After being leased to Herod by Cleopatra of Egypt for 200 talents a year, in 30 BC the young Augustus (Octavian) restored these lucrative lands to Israel. The balsam bush had a three-year growth cycle, followed by a single, brief blossom. Plantations only yielded 20 litres of oil a year, which was bottled in clay jugs and sold across the Roman Empire as perfume, along with the bush’s medicinal wood trimmings.

Pliny tells us that so guarded were Ein Gedi’s Jews of their balsam secret that when Rome descended on the Dead Sea in AD 68 to seize its economic resources, the Jews tried to burn down the groves in preference to allowing Rome to get her hands on their wonders. But as in all provinces of the Empire from Britain to Palestine, Rome eventually got its way, as Pliny’s *Natural History* confirmed to his Roman readership: ‘The balsam tree is now a subject of Rome and pays tribute together with the race to which it belongs... the immense value of even the cheapest part of the harvest, the wooden lopping, fetched only five years after the ravages of war of the destruction of the Temple, 800,000 sesterces’. Beyond the highly specialised manufacture of balsam, the Dead Sea also supported the finest dates in the Mediterranean (Fig 9), which were both exported overseas as a foodstuff and turned into date wine. As Pliny confirms in relation to this local product, ‘Their outstanding property is the unctuous juice which they exude and an extremely sweet sort of wine-flavour like that of honey’. In addition to heaps of date pits excavated throughout Ein Gedi, a date wine press was excavated at Quumran and a Roman mechanical and chemical processing plant has been unearthed at ‘En Boqeq at the southern tip of the Dead Sea, alongside a sophisticated array of ovens, stone mortars, grinding stones, raw production containers, a pressing floor, and a grinding mill.

Remarkable new research has shown the supposedly silent shores of the lifeless Dead Sea to have been studied with small but bustling ports, quays, and warehouses at Khirbet Mazin, Rujum el-Bahr, Ein Gedi, and Callirhoe. Roman wooden anchors have recently come to light in the harbour of Ein Gedi, while opposite Qumran on the shore of Khirbet Mazin a fortified dry-dock for boats and the shipwrecked cargo of 300,000 coins minted during the reign of the Hasmonaean king Alexander Jannaeus (104-76 BC) reflect vibrant commerce (see Minerva, Sep-
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tember/October 2006, pp. 47-8).

As well as exporting dates around the lake, these ports were hubs of the highly lucrative trade in bitumen, an oxidation product of the asphalt family. The 1st-century BC historian Diodorus Siculus described how following 20 days of evil odour, lumps of petrified bitumen up to 91m long would float up to the surface of the sea, be chopped into lumps of workable size with axes and loaded into boats. Diodorus also explained that this product was then sold to Egypt 'for the embalming of the dead; for unless this is mixed with other aromatic ingredients, the preservation of the bodies cannot be permanent'. Bitumen was an extremely popular product, essential for sealing the hulls of Mediterranean ships, and an infamous hallucinogenic drug. From these improbable desert lands, bitumen was famous across the Empire, with the Roman physician Scribonius Largus' pharmaceutical treatise containing 200 grams of bituminis Judacis (Jewish bitumen) must be used 'for every fresh wound and bruise; most use it in the healing of gladiators'.

To this rich portfolio of exotic products, industrial installations excavated in the so-called 'Cave of the Column' are connected with the production of soap from potassium-rich plants of the Chenopodiaceae family, while indigo dye may have been manufactured at 'Ein Feshkha, 3km south of Qumran.

The prosperity generated by this cornucopia of Dead Sea industry can be gauged from Professor Yizhar Hirschfeld's latest excavation of one tenth of ancient Ein Gedi from 1996-2002. Despite its status as 'a very large village of Jews', according to Eusebius' 4th-century AD Onomasticon, this 250-acre remote settlement, watered by ten springs yielding at least 400 cubic metres of water per hour, was unusually sophisticated, 'an exceptional ecological niche sustaining rare tropical plants and many mammals... according to the excavator. In return for their diligence, the village's 875 workers were able to stock their homes with Nabataean and terra sigillata bowls, amphorae from Brindisi in southern Italy, glass cosmetic tubes, perfume bottles, and a beaker imported from Phoenicia or Cyprus inscribed 'Rejoice and Enjoy Yourself'. If anything, prosperity increased in the Byzantine period across the Empire (A coin of Constantine was minted as far away as London). The coins of this period unearthed include two gold roods of Anastasius (AD 491-518) and Justinian (AD 527-565), the first examples from an ancient village in Israel.

From Père Roland de Vaux's original image of an isolated community living a self-imposed life of pain and peregrinity at the fringes of the world, the stock of the Dead Sea Scrolls has today been turned upside down. In the 1st centuries BC and AD, the western shores of the Dead Sea were the ancient equivalent of America's Silicon Valley. Whoever occupied the ruins of Qumran at the foot of the cave network was not alone. How exactly were the people of Qumran related to this commercial realm?

Supporters of the Essene theory now have to make sense of the conspicuous signs of wealth associated with Qumran. As well as the 1231 silver and bronze coins recovered by de Vaux, the 1996-99 and 2004 excavations of Yizhak Magen and Yuval Peleg found another 180 scattered across the ruins. De Vaux also paid little attention to the exotic moulded wall stucco, elaborate Roman columns, and opus sectile tiles used in the settlement's architectural design, let alone the luxury objects enjoyed by Qumran's occupants, including imported Phoenician glass, Cypro-Biblical bronze, and imports from Sidon and Nabataea. Neutron Activation Analysis of calcium, potassium, sodium, chloride, arsenic, and zinc embedded in clay pots from Qumran has scientifically plotted the unique signature of the site's ceramics, revealing that only 33% originated from local sources. With provenances now identified as far afield as Jerusalem, Hebron, and Jericho, any idea that the people of Qumran were reclusive and entirely self-sufficient is bogus.

The latest excavations also leave little doubt that the Qumranites were not a single-sex community. The presence of a mixed population of men and women is now proven by cosmetic utensils, clay and glass perfume bottles, stone-set rings, and belt buckles and brooches for tying up togas. Again, this does not detract from Josephus' classic account of a community of monks with female company and wearing simple and identical white robes all their lives.

The problem of ritual purity is even more disturbing. Josephus is adamant that the Essenes bathed compulsively in cold water to maintain ritual cleanliness before God, a feature not seen in Qumran through its 11 mikvehs, the most uniquely characteristic design element of the settlement (Fig 5). Many of the ritual baths even have dividing walls running down the middle of the stairs, as if to distinguish between the entrance and exit of the suffled and purified bather.

According to Jewish law, a ritual bath must be filled with either rain or spring water, which must enter the pool unaided by human intervention, without manual or mechanical aid. Mikvehs might also hold a minimum of 750-800 litres. The largest water pool at Qumran has a vast capacity of 310 cubic metres, which simply could never have been kept topped up by the local rainfall, which was reliant on the channeling of flash-flood water. Just as fresh water was obtained into the 19th century in Palestine, well water would have been carried to the site from the nearby oasis of 'Ein Feshkha. However, as liquid drawn by human hand, this would have been unacceptable for rital pure water pools.

Rather than being chosen primarily for its isolation, hydrological studies prove that Qumran was really established at this location due to its proximity to riverbeds running from the north and west and the presence of a wide drainage area where rainwater could be collected. From here floodwater was channelled to Qumran by a 200m-long aqueduct, partly built, rock cut, and plastered (Fig 6). Again, the reliance on man-made installations

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Fig 9. Shops lining a street in the Jewish village of Ein Gedi, with balsam trade palms in the background, include one dedicated to the processing of balsam perfume. Balsam was a luxury Roman product that only grew in the Dead Sea of Judea and was the 'secret of the town' referred to in an inscription in Ein Gedi's synagogue. Photo: from Ein Gedi, 'A Very Large Village of Jews', edited by Yizhar Hirschfeld (Hecht Museum, Haifa, 2006, p. 34).
would have rendered water entering the site's water pools ritually impure. Finally, there is the evidence that the local rainfall had been far too low to keep 11 mikvehs filled throughout the years. With no constant means of replenishment, the water within the pools must have stood stagnant for up to nine months between rains. Full body immersion in such disease-ridden waters, or even the simple washing of the hands and face, would have been sufficient for the bather to contract the parasites Ascaris lumbricoides (roundworm) and Trichuris trichiura (whipworm) or other enteric-parasitic micro-organisms that are friends of cholera, hepatitis A, and shigellosis.

If the vastly impressive web of water channels, pools, and cisterns at Qumran were not designed for ritual purity, what was their function? One recent explanation is as industrial components of a pottery-making industry. Roland de Vaux discovered three pottery idnas in 1953 and over 1000 freshly thrown jars, while the 2004 excavations uncovered another dated to the late 1st century BC. The surprising new discovery of 3 tons of clay at the bottom of one of these reservoirs exploded a new theory that Qumran's water system was designed to prepare dry clay. Although the volume of the site’s pools makes this an unlikely explanation, a growing consensus links the water systems to some form of industry.

Rather than an isolated place devoted to meditation and prayer, Qumran actually seems to have been precisely the opposite: a loud, polluted centre of Jewish pottery manufacture and industry, where jars were filled with dates and wine, and balsam was poured onto shovels, all meticulously carved by Jews across the Mediterranean world. Professor Hirshfeld of the Hebrew University takes the picture even further, identifying Qumran as a manor house reminiscent of the feudal order of medieval Europe, occupied by a Jewish landowner, a farm manager, servants and slaves (fig 8). Just as de Vaux, a man of the cloth, read Qumran in theological terms, we must bear in mind that Yizhak Magen, Yuval Peleg, and Yizhar Hirshfeld embrace a secular modern Israeli society, and thus see Qumran through their own potentially rose-tinted glasses.

This battle for Qumran has escalated over the decades and is currently generating particularly heated exchanges in newspapers and journals. Despite a vast new pool of compelling contrary evidence, Qumran is still largely defended as an Essene ‘airport’ between the worlds of the impure and the pure, between the profane and the holy. For most it is still the home of the scribes of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Even in 2006 Dr Stephen Pfann of the University of the Holy Land, Jerusalem, has reaffirmed his view that: ‘In fact, there is estimated to be a 95% item-for-item agreement on habitation, lifestyle, and beliefs between the accounts of the ancient writers concerning the Essenes and the evidence derived from the Dead Sea Scrolls and the archaeology of the site of Qumran for the community that lived there... The community structure represented by the term “squab”... is consistent with the concept of the camp of Israel as comprised during the wilderness wanderings described in the Book of Moses... These camps were sacrosanct; those who lived in them lived exclusively according to their own (and heaven’s) rules and judgments, separated, by definition, from the rules of the land in which they sojourned. The rituals and products which were produced there necessarily demanded the highest level of purity... sacred food, sacred wine, holy anointing oil, sacred scrolls, and pottery vessels to contain sacred substances and objects’.

Despite this special pleading, we can now be certain that Qumran’s inhabitants were intimate with the region’s rich economic resources, developed them to the full for immense profit, and marketed them to the surrounding world on a daily basis. Financial interest is also the sole reason why the paths of Qumran echoed to the march of Roman boots in AD 68, confirmed by the presence of military outposts at ‘Ein Feshka and inside the village of Ein Gedi - former Jewish secrets, now imperial industrial concerns, had to be protected.

The people of Qumran are also unlikely to have possessed the intellectual ability to have written the Dead Sea Scrolls. Computer modelling of the documents’ palaeographic styles has recently recognised the hands of 500 different scribes writing eagerly between the 3rd and 1st centuries BC and AD 68. At the main phase of Qumran only began in the early 1st century BC. Are we to believe that the Essenes owned antique scriptures and shelved them in the Dead Sea’s cave libraries?

As unpalatable as the idea clearly is, Qumran can only have been managed by an extremely wealthy Jewish aristocrat and entrepreneur with specialist skills and sufficient collateral to develop local agriculture, industry, hydrology, and commercial trade. This points to a strongly connected royal advisor. We may never know his name, but in AD 68, at Jerusalem fell under the iron fist of Rome, this special envoy was charged with protecting the collective religious wisdom of the Holy City. He sped through his libraries and disappeared into the sunset to his oasis estate, climbing into the Dead Sea caves without leaving a trace. While the Biblical Israel was nigh. The owner of Qumran thus did hide the Dead Sea Scrolls, but not in the way Western culture has been told for the last 60 years. And if the Essenes ever really did live at Qumran, then they were radically different to the picture of a sect of reclusive hermits.

Current exhibitions on the Dead Sea Scrolls and Qumran include:

The Shrine of the Book in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem is the permanent home of the Dead Sea Scrolls and many objects excavated from Qumran. See especially ‘A Day at Qumran: The Dead Sea Sect and its Scrolls’.

‘Dead Sea Scrolls is at the Pacific Science Center Seattle 7 January 2007 and then on to Union Station, Kansas City, 2 February to 5 May, and the San Diego Natural History Museum, 29 June to 31 December.’

A new exhibition in Rome until the end of February, curated by Angelo Bottino, the Superintendent for Archaeology in Rome, focuses on Homer’s epic poem, the Iliad. Its setting amongst the arched corridors of the outer and inner ambulacrum of one of the upper tiers of the Colosseum is particularly striking. Once again the most visited monument of the Roman world - 16,000 people a day - is put to good use by helping channel viewers towards an unusual and didactic display (Fig 6). This is the first time that the Iliad has been chosen as the exclusive subject of an exhibition, and the poem’s most important episodes, gods and heroes, are illustrated through 65 remarkable works of art - ceramics, wallpaintings, statuary, gems, and glassware on loan from Italian and European museums (Figs 1-7).

Homer’s life remains a mystery, even the date and location of his birth. What is established, however, is that the 8th-century BC Iliad and Odyssey are the earliest major Greek texts to have survived. This century is when most scholars agree Homer must have lived because the social world he illuminates dates to c. 800-750 BC. Although the protagonists of the siege of Troy are mythical heroes, the poem’s hexameters reflect the style and the values of Homer’s contemporaries. He may have collated older existing narratives sung by poets, but both his masterpieces reveal extensive unity, which needed the genius of a single artist to shape it into a coherent whole.

Visitors entering the imposing rooms of the Colosseum are thus appropriately first presented with portraits of Homer, the oldest of which was found in the Sicilian island of Lipari. This small terracotta version of an original made by the sculptor Dionysius of Argos, dated to 460-450 BC, was excavated in the necropolis of Contrada Diana. It shows the poet standing and wrapped in his cloak, his blind eyes raised to the gods for inspiration. Alongside the terracotta is a bronze head of the so-called Medena type, labelled ‘Homer’ in Greek, in which the poet appears almost divinely, Zeus-like. Both the bronze portrait - a welcome loan from the Galleria Estense in Modena - and another similar one in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin, must be copies of the same 4th century BC Greek original. A more realistic, but still powerful 2nd century AD marble portrait of the bard comes from the Capitoline Museums in Rome (Fig 2) and is one of 22 known after 4th century BC Hellenistic originals.

Pride of place is given to the Tabula Iliaca, marble reliefs sculpted with scenes and text from the Iliad, of which 19 survive in various museums. Here on show are three fragments, of which the Tabula Iliaca Capitolina, though very worn, is the most complete, with scenes representing many episodes of the poem and a text that summarizes Books 7-24. Found at ancient Bovilla, 16km from Rome along the Appian Way, the date of the Tabula Capitolina has been much debated, but in the exhibition catalogue Mario Torelli advances the 1st century BC as most likely. This was an era when Roman families were keen to advertise their Trojan origins through Aeneas’ escape from the destruction of Troy.

Much better preserved is the 4th century AD white marble mappa showing scenes from the life of Achilles that frame a rounded inlaid with fragments of rare marble and glass tesserae, originally set in the pulpit of the Church of the Aracoeli on the Capitol, but later...
The Iliad in Rome

detached and given to the Capitoline Museums. It may have been carved in Egypt since it resembles similar terra sigillata plates and a Coptic bronze basin of the 6th century AD, decorated with the same scenes, proof of the persistence of the motif over the centuries.

Among the statues of Aphrodite – the defender of the Trojans – one of the most notable is perhaps the Aphrodite Chariis found in the Domus Tiberiana in Rome, a copy of a 4th century BC Greek model made in the reign of the emperor Hadrian (r. AD 117-138). It may originally have been set against a wall of the Temple of the Magna Mater since its back is roughly carved.

A recent reconstruction has linked the late 2nd century AD statue of Thetis, the nymph and mother of Achilles, in the National Museum of Rome, with the Ares Ludovisi – now identified as Achilles – to form a group of Thetis and Achilles. Pliny the Elder describes its original setting in the Temple of Neptune in the Campus Martius.

The large (51cm high) marble head of Ares, with its crested helmet (Fig 3), and the portrait of Achilles on a 5th century BC amphora excavated at Vulci in 1834-37, a precious loan from the Vatican Museums (Fig 4), best evoke the heroic quality of the doomed warrior at the mercy of forces unleashed by the whims of Olympian gods.

Altogether, the Colosseum’s ‘Iliad’ exhibition is a worthy endeavour which presents to a very large public, and especially school children, the tale of the fateful beauty of Helen, the anger of Achilles, his love for Patroclus, and the death of Hector expressed through great works of art: a counter-attraction to such recent Hollywood treatments as the historically flawed ‘Troy’.

The show’s catalogue, very finely illustrated, is edited by Angelo Bottini and Mario Torelli. In addition to the detailed descriptions of the objects on view there are essays on various aspects of current research concerning Homer and the Iliad by Angelo Bottini (‘The Heroic Funerary Ritual’), Mario Torelli (‘The Images of the Iliad’), Dario Del Corno (‘The Iliad: the Other Side of the Mirror’), Marla Grazia Ciani (‘Reading the Iliad’), Concetta Masseria (‘Women and War’), Domenico Musti (‘The Influence of the Iliad in Greece and Rome’), Gian Luca Grassigli (‘The Late Antique Achilles’), Donato Loscalzo (‘War, Weapons, and Words’), and Alfonso Mele (‘Society at the Time of the Iliad’). This 264-page catalogue is published by Electa at 40 euros.

Minerva, January/February 2007
MOSAICS OF ROMAN TÚNISIA
AT THE GETTY VILLA, MALIBU

Jerome M. Eisenberg, Ph.D., introduces an important outing for the mosaics of the National Museums of Tunisia in America.

In the first half of the 2nd century AD, polychrome mosaics appeared for the first time in North Africa. Though the dominant style was still geometric designs in black and white - usually checkered squares, octagons, and intersecting circles - by the second half of the 2nd century vibrant polychrome mosaics with representations of the seasons, animals (especially birds and fish), and xenia (still-life panels) became especially popular in what is now the northern half of modern Tunisia. The burgeoning prosperity of the Romanised Africans at that period of time, and their devotion to classical culture, fueled by the proximity of a number of coloured-stone quarries and an abundance of talented mosaicists, led to a golden age of mosaic production. By the 3rd century both public baths and private homes were filled with mosaics of the so-called ‘African school’ in the Hellenistic pictorial tradition with lively mythological tableaux and other scenes.

While most public monuments were usually paved with floors of monochrome slabs or simple opus sectile (shaped marble tiles in geometric, floral, or figured designs) with polychrome marble, often made of more expensive imported marbles, bathhouses were most often paved with figurative mosaics, with themes related to the marine world being especially popular (Figs 1, 9). Most of the figurative mosaic work, however, first appeared in the ‘noble’ rooms of the homes of affluent citizens. Since Bacchus was the predominant deity in Roman Africa, Dionysian themes were particularly prevalent. Elements of classical

Fig 1 (right). Roman mosaic of a colossal head of Oceanus, c. AD 250, Limestone, 223.5 x 188cm. Floor mosaic from the triclinium (cold room) of the baths at Thametra (modern Chott Meriem). Sousse Museum (VEX.2006.3.12). © J. Paul Getty Trust. In this magnificent depiction of the protective deity of all sea and river waters, the son of Uranus (Heaven) and Gaia (Earth) and the father of the nymphae, is shown rising out of the Mediterranean. Water pours from his mouth and all types of marine life inhabit his flowing hair, including lobster claws and coral. As the centerpiece of a much larger composition, he is surrounded by fishermen in boats, sailing ships, and a wide variety of fish and other sea life.

Fig 2 (right). Roman mosaic of an actor and a poet, 3rd century AD. Limestone and marble, 145.7 x 213.4cm. Floor mosaic from the House of Masks in Hadrumetum (modern Sousse). Sousse Museum (VEX.2006.3.15). © J. Paul Getty Trust. The middle-aged seated poet holds a calamus (reed pen) and a volumen (rolled scroll). To the left is a young actor holding a comedy mask. A tragic mask rests on top of a table to the left. Above the threshold to this room is a mosaic of three theatrical masks of a prostitute, an angry old man, and the principal slave representing players in a typical comedy.

All photos courtesy of the République Tunisienne, Ministère de la Culture, Institut National du Patrimoine, Tunis and © J. Paul Getty Trust. All photographs, except Fig 1, by Bruce M. White. This article and the illustration captions are based mainly on the exhibition catalogue.
Tunisian Mosaics

culture, such as the theatre scenes and depictions of poets, also entered the repertoire (Fig 2).

In the 4th century AD, elaborate scenes of daily life shded substantial light on the practices and leisure activities of the affluent, especially depictions of scenes in the amphitheatres and circuses (Fig 3). Hunting scenes (Fig 6) and the capture and slaughter of wild animals in the arena became a specialty of African mosaics, and animals hunted in the arena often featured by themselves (Fig 8). Chariot races and athletic contests (Fig 5) were also popular subjects. Due to the proximity of the Mediterranean, themes relating to the sea, such as fishing, ships, sea life, and tableaux of Neptune and his followers (Fig 9), were prevalent. Depictions of food and drink (Fig 4) - the bounty of nature - were abundantly portrayed in the small *xenia* of *triclinia* (dining rooms). The mosaics in the secondary rooms and corridors were restricted to geometric designs, which became increasingly complex. Plant elements such as florets were also introduced.

The 4th century witnessed the African style reach its maturity as geometric and floral patterns became heavily interwoven, often with correspondingly original decorative motifs. The earlier styles and themes continued in the 5th century, especially large figurative scenes (Fig 12),

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Fig 3 (above left). Roman mosaic of games' sponsors feasting in the amphitheatre arena, 3rd century AD. Limestone and marble, 168.3 x 150.8cm. Floor mosaic from a building near the amphitheatre at Thydrus (modern El Djem). El Djem Museum (VEX.2006.3.24). © J. Paul Getty Trust. The five banqueters are members of different patronies, civic groups that sponsored the wild animal game hunts in the amphitheatre. Each one holds or wears an attribute representing his particular fraternity: the ivy leaf of the Taureci or Crescentii, the three-pointed crown of the Sinenati, the five-pointed crown of the Pentavii, the millet stalk of the Lantii (see Fig 8), and the crescent-topped baton of the Telegenii (see Fig 7). Each addresses the other guests with comments such as 'Let us enjoy ourselves', 'Enough talk', and 'We have come to drink'. Five zebus rest in the foreground while one of the wine servers reprimands the men with 'Silence! Let the bulls sleep'.

Fig 4 (left). Roman mosaic of a string of thresholds, 3rd century AD. Limestone, marble, blue glass, 314 x 110.8cm. Floor mosaic from a *triclinium* in a private house in Thydrus (modern El Djem). Bardo Museum (VEX.2006.3.22). © J. Paul Getty Trust. This is one of 71 still-life panels (*xenia*) from a very large mosaic with animals and objects relating to food and drink. Among the other representations are a trussed flamingo, a parrot, fish, baskets of figs and of mussels, and a basket-wrapped flask and goblet. These *xenia* often occurred in *triclinia* in the houses in cities or the east coast of Tunisia such as Thydrus, Hadrumetum, and Acholla.
but the mythological subjects were no longer a dominant element. The geometric and floral designs now became more schematic. Christian motifs including birds drinking from a fountain, candles, and sacramental anointings appeared in basilicas and tombs, but rarely in private homes. By the 6th century a highly schematic ‘Byzantine’ style, with thick lines and red and grey colours dominant, was adopted for Christian buildings. Recent excavations, however, have shown that mythological and hunting scenes persisted through the 7th and even 8th centuries, and excavations at a 10th-century Fatimid palace have even uncovered a geometric mosaic with highly stylised birds.

The present exhibition at the Getty Villa, ‘Stories in Stone - Conserving Mosaics of Roman Africa, Masterpieces from the National Museums of Tunisia’, features 26 mosaics from the Bardo Museum in Tunis, the Carthage Museum, the Archaeological Museum at Sousse, the Archaeological Museum at El-Jem, and the Nabeul Museum. The show highlights the important collaboration between the Tunisian muse-

Fig 5 (above left). Roman mosaic of wrestling athletes and prizes, 3rd century AD. Limestone and blue glass, 185.4 x 90.2cm. From the threshold of the oculus (reception room) of the House of the Wrestlers in Utica (modern Bou Chariert). Bardo Museum (VEX:2006.5.25). © J. Paul Getty Trust. Two pairs of young men engage in wrestling bouts. The fact that they are professional athletes can be determined by their nudity and by their distinctive top-knot hairstyle. The trophy for the winners, a crown and two palm branches, are exhibited on the table in the centre.

Fig 6 (middle left). Roman mosaic of a tiger attacking one of two onagers (wild asses), 3rd century AD. Limestone and marble, 240.3 x 173.4cm. From the triclinium (dining room) of the House of the Dionysian Procession in Thysdrus (modern El Djem). El Djem Museum (VEX:2006.3.7). © J. Paul Getty Trust. In this violent and realistic depiction, the tiger sinks his claws and teeth into the terrified animal as his companion flies, turning his head back to view the vicious attack. The landscape of rocky outcrops and dusted trees is inspired by earlier Hellenistic art. In a second mosaic in the exhibition two lions attack a wild boar. The two scenes are symbolic of the power of Dionysus in his domination of nature. The inhabitants of Thysdrus had no less than three amphitheatres and had a strong liking for hunting games.

Fig 7 (left). Roman mosaic of an owl and dying birds, flanked by trees, with inscription, late 3rd-early 4th century AD. Limestone and marble, 113.3 x 125.7cm. Floor mosaic from the baths at Thysdrus (modern El Djem). El Djem Museum (VEX:2006.3.4). © J. Paul Getty Trust. The Latin inscription reads ‘The birds die of jealousy and the owl does not care’. Since the owl wears a toga he may represent an elite Roman, thus an object of envy by the common people as symbolised by the dying birds, or it may just show the birds dying of envy at the owl’s arbitrary elegance. Mosaics of this type, common in baths, were meant to ward off evil. The crescent-topped standards at either end belong to the Telegentii, a civic group that sponsored games in the local amphitheatre.
Tunisian Mosaics

ums and the Getty Conservation Institute since the 1990s in the conservation of these important but fragile works of art. In the past mosaics were almost always removed from their architectural surroundings, but increasingly nowadays they are left in situ. This is the main thrust of the Institute training programme on the conservation of mosaics. It is now accepted that the more important the mosaic as a work of art, the more essential it is to keep it in its original context.

New techniques for stabilising the mosaics in situ make it unnecessary to make a new bedding layer for tesserae. By injecting liquid mortar beneath the surface, in a technique known as grouting, it is no longer necessary to lift the mosaic from its bed. The grouting fills the voids beneath the surface and thus stabilises the detached areas between the various layers below. In the excellent, well-illustrated catalogue edited by Aicha Ben Abed, Thomas Roby discusses various in situ conservation techniques, including preventive measures, remedial treatments, site management and maintenance, and site conservation in Tunisia. Jerry Podany writes about the lifting and exhibition practices involving mosaics, including an interesting history of the process of lifting. The catalogue not only includes the mosaics in the exhibition, but also features many of the fabulous mosaics for which Tunisia is so noted. The writer was overwhelmed by the many masterworks mounted on the walls of the Bardo Museum on his first visit there in 1955 and is so very pleased that this first major exhibition in the United States devoted solely to ancient mosaics has finally been brought to us by the Getty.

"Stories in Stone - Conserving Mosaics of Roman Africa, Masterpieces from the National Museums of Tunisia".


The Getty Villa and the museum are open Thursday through Monday, 10am to 5pm, except on major holidays. Admission is free but advance, timed tickets are required for each visitor. Tel: +(1) 310 440-7300 or procure the tickets online at www.getty.edu.

The exhibition catalogue, edited by Aicha Ben Abed, is published by Getty Publications, Malibu (2006; 199pp., 160 colour illus. $75).

Fig 8. Roman mosaic of a lion with inscription, 4th century AD. Lime stone and marble, 102.2 x 160cm. Floor mosaic from mosaics at Uzita (near Henchir el Makhtcha), Bardo Museum (VEK.2006.3.18). © J. Paul Getty Trust. The lion is flanked by stalks of millet, a symbol of the local fraternity of the Leontii, another civic group that sponsored amphitheatres games. This plant was thought to bring good fortune and ward off evil. The inscription translates 'O Leo, you have planned, prepared, and dedicated', no doubt praising the individual who built and dedicated the baths.

Fig 9. Roman mosaic of Neptune driving a sea chariot of hippocamps (sea horses), 4th century AD. Lime stone and blue and green glass, 161 x 189cm. From a house in Oued Bilbaine in Hadrumetum (modern Sousse). Sousse Museum (VEK.2006.3.14). © J. Paul Getty Trust. The bearded divine ruler of the rivers and seas rides a chariot drawn by two hippocamps, especially appropriate since he was also the patron god of horses. He controls the waters with his trident. The rapid movement of the chariot is emphasised by Neptune's billowing garment, the galloping hippocamps, and the dolphin darting below.
Fig 10 (right). Roman mosaic of Athena, Marsyas, and a river god, 4th century AD. Limestone and marble, 142.2 x 193.7cm. Floor mosaic from a monument in Cilicia (modern Kilbibi), Nabul Museum (VEX.2006.3.5). © J. Paul Getty Trust. The helmeted goddess of wisdom, war, and arts and crafts has played the aulos (double pipes, said to have been her invention), and now appears to ask the bearded, elderly river god about her reflection in the waters or perhaps about her performance. The satyr-Marsyas watches from behind the rocky landscape. Marsyas later picks up the discarded aulos and challenges Apollo to a musical contest. Losing, he was played alive for his audacity in challenging the god of music.

Fig 11 (below left). Roman mosaic of a chained shoemaker with inscription, 4th century AD. Limestone and marble, 131.1 x 105.3cm. Floor mosaic from a room in a house in Cilicia (modern Kilbibi). El Djem Museum (VEX.2006.3.10). © J. Paul Getty Trust. In this strange depiction a bearded cobbler is chained to the floor. He holds an awl and a piece of leather. Hanging above are two shoe soles and a shoe last. The inscription reads ‘Insipidous shoemaker, the cause of your despair is plain. Remain in your chains’. It may relate to a story told by Pliny in which a cobbler criticized a painting by the famed Greek painter Apelles, bringing about the response by the artist ‘Let a shoemaker stick to his last’, or it may have a more pertinent local explanation.

Fig 12 (below right). Roman mosaic of a woman pouring water from a vessel into a basin, early 5th century AD. Limestone, marble, and glass, 198.8 x 146.7cm. Floor mosaic from a triclinium (cold room) of the baths in a villa at Sidi Ghrhib, Carthage Museum (VEX.2006.3.3). © J. Paul Getty Trust. This sensual depiction of a nearly nude female is one of four similar scenes in enclosures that surrounded the central mosaic of the triclinium representing the nuptials of Neptune and a Nereid and nearby a scene with Venus adorning herself. The four female figures, all with rosebushes behind them, may be celebrating the festival of the May rose harvest or they may represent springtime. The rose is associated both with springtime and with Venus. A second mosaic, also in the exhibition, depicts another half-nude woman pouring rosebuds from a wicker basket.
Indian Chola Art

DIVINE BEAUTY: SACRED MEDIEVAL BRONZES FROM SOUTHERN INDIA

Adrian K. Locke introduces a new exhibition on Chola sculpture at the Royal Academy of Arts.

Before the middle of the 9th century AD, the Cholas were one of a number of independent cultural groups jockeying for position in southern India - the region today known as the state of Tamil Nadu. Their principal rivals were the Pallavas, the Pandayas, the Cheras and, further to the north, the Chalukyas. These various groups vied for control over the fertile flood plains of southern India, centred around the sacred River Kaveri. Little is known about the early Cholas before the victorious exploits of Vijayalaya (r. AD 848-871), which were recorded in contemporary temple inscriptions.

Vijayalaya took advantage of a conflict between the Pallavas and the Pandayas to capture the town of Thanjavur, where he established a royal court and founded the dynastic imperial line of the Cholas. The Chola capital was later moved to Gangaiakondacholapuram and Thanjavur, Kanchipuram, and Madurai were established as important regional centres. The Chola dynasty ruled for a further 400 years, during which time their fortunes fluctuated, although at their zenith they were the most powerful political group in the region. Their domain encompassed much of southern India, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, parts of Indonesia, and northwards along the coast of the Bay of Bengal to the Godavari basin.

The most celebrated rulers during the medieval period were Vijayalaya, Rajaraja I (r. AD 985-1014), who adopted an aggressive policy of territorial and maritime expansion, and his son Rajendra I (r. AD 1012-1044), who consolidated Chola power throughout the region. The great agricultural wealth of southern India, combined with the control of the eastern seaboard, gave the Cholas access to the prosperous maritime trade routes which included the Tang dynasty in China, Jewish traders in Aden (Yemen), the Srivijaya Empire in the Malaysian archipelago, and the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad.

After the medieval period the Cholas formed political alliances through intermarriage with the Chalukya dynasty to consolidate their regional position. The Chaluka-Chola period lasted from AD 1070 to 1279, during which time Kulothunga I (r. AD 1070-1125), who oversaw an important flourishing of the arts, is perhaps the most celebrated ruler. This period witnessed the gradual decline of the Cholas, beginning with the loss of Sri Lanka and the increasing threat of a revitalised Pandyan Empire to the south, and the Hoyasalas to the north. Following the death of Rajendra III (c. AD 1246-1279), the shrinking Chola Empire was absorbed by the increasingly forceful Pandayan monarchs.

Throughout their rule the Cholas were great patrons of the arts and, as

Fig 1 (above left), Krishna dancing on Katya. Copper alloy, late 10th/early 11th century AD. H. 87.6cm. Asia Society, New York, 3rd Collection of Mr and Mrs John D. Rockefeller, Inv. no. 1979.022. Photo courtesy of Eyton Gardiner.

Fig 2 (above right), Shiva as Shrikantha (Lord of the Auspicious Neck). Bronze, c. AD 970. H. 99cm. The Trustees of The British Museum. Photo: © The Trustees of The British Museum.

Fig 3 (above), Shiva as Tripuravijaya (Victor of the Three Cities) and Consort. Bronze, c. AD 950. The Cleveland Museum of Art. Inv. no. 1961.94. Photo © The Cleveland Museum of Art.

Dr Adrian Locke is Exhibitions Curator at the Royal Academy of Arts, London.
Shivaites, oversaw an extensive programme of temple construction dedicated to the great Hindu god Shiva, and these were adorned with splendid stone sculpture statues of deities. During the early period this amounted to the reconstruction of existing brick temples. Queen Sembiyana Mahadevi, grandmother of Rajaraja I, is widely considered to be one of the greatest patrons of the arts. Her first known temple donation was in AD 941 and she continued to patronise the arts until her death in 1006.

The great boom in temple construction was accompanied by rich endowments, which provided the temples with lavish gifts of gold, jewellery, textiles, bronze processional images, as well as meeting the cost of providing food, sandal wood paste, incense, and lamps. The Cholas decreed that a proportion of income levied from local communities would be used to support the temples. This ostentatious display of wealth clearly reflects the political and economic power of the Cholas. The 65m-high Rajarajeshwara temple at Thanjavur, for example, completed in 1010, was the tallest building in India at the time, and was endowed with a gift of 60 bronzes, of which 22 were given by King Rajaraja I.

Although the Pallavas had worked with bronze, producing small portable temple sculptures, the Cholas adapted and perfected the art, taking it to new, unsurpassed heights by increasing productivity and making larger and more refined bronzes. A splendid collection of these bronzes is presently displayed in an exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in London called 'Chola: Sacred Bronzes of Southern India'.

The greatest example of this new style in Chola art is encapsulated in the celebrated representation of Shiva as Nataraja (a composite of natar-dance and rajakink), seen by many as the quintessential image of the Cholas (Fig 7). Based on earlier iconography associated with the Pallavas, it was adopted and developed by the Cholan monarchs to become established as a type of royal emblem.

Processional bronzes were produced to allow those individuals unable to enter the temple precincts (or access the inner sanctum where the central object of devotion was located) an opportunity to communicate directly with the gods through the process of darshan (literally contact through the eyes). Treated as physical manifestations of the gods, these bronzes were ritually bathed, dressed, and decorated with jewels and garlands of flowers. Great festivities and celebration accompanied these processions, which served a social and religious function and continue to this day. Interestingly, it was only after a campaign by Mahatma Gandhi that the inner sanctum of Hindu temples was made accessible to Indians of all castes in 1936.

Chola bronzes were made using the lost wax process. Essentially the process is an Intricate one imbued with religious meaning, and the various proscribed stages are laid down in an unwritten law. Beeswax mixed with dammar (resin of the shal tree: sallow-wood, Shorea robusna), the sacred tree under which Buddha lay down to die, is softened and used to create the desired image using a wooden chisel. Once complete, the wax model is hardened in cold water before being encased in three layers of a finely ground clay. The mould is then fired, melting the wax, which drains out through specially positioned spouts. Molten bronze, an alloy of copper, tin, zinc, traces of silver, and gold, is then poured in to fill the now empty mould. Finally, once the bronze has been allowed to cool down, the mould is broken open and any finishing touches are made. Since the clay mould is destroyed in order to remove the solid bronze sculpture, each individual piece is unique.

Today many of the bronzes have unusual patinas, and the surfaces are often pitted and discoloured. This is in sharp contrast to the often highly polished bronzes (brought about by cleaning with tamarind) of images still worshipped in temples in the modern era. These blemishes were caused when the sculptures were buried to avoid looting when Muslim armies invaded the region from the Chola era onwards. Sculptures were also hidden within temples. Statues
which were worshipped within temples have worn surfaces due to the ritual bathing they received. The eyes were also often re-cut to allow for the essential ritual of darshan.

There can be little doubt that the Cholas had a major impact on the development of culture across southern India. Although the dynasty only lasted some 400 years, it left a lasting and highly visible legacy throughout the region. Its influence is most tangible through the numerous temple complexes the Cholas built and the large corpus of magnificent bronze sculptures produced. Many would indeed argue that their quality has never been equalled. In some cases these statues are still worshipped in temples today, a thousand years after they were cast. In promoting the cult of Shiva Nataraja, the Cholas also created one of the most recognisable, widely used, and enduring symbols that has come to epitomise India.


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Britain has one of the richest and most varied collections of figured mosaics from the Roman world. Among the figures popularly chosen to adorn the floors of the province's prestigious dwellings were images of the major deities. Fortunately, many of these mosaics can still be enjoyed in situ or in museums, while superb antiquarian illustrations record others found in previous centuries, but now lost. Mostly created in the 4th century AD, with a few dated to the 2nd or 3rd century, they constitute a tessellated guide to gods and goddesses. Some of the finest examples are highlighted in this article.

Jupiter, the father of many of the other deities, was portrayed most frequently in the guises he adopted in pursuit of his amorous adventures. As a placid and handsome bull, he was able to abduct Europa by slowly gaining her trust before swimming away with her seated on his back. In one of a series of mythological scenes from the Keynsham villa, Somerset, Europa perches rather tentatively on the recumbent bull, one foot still firmly on the ground.

The sequel to this episode can be seen still in situ in the apse mosaic at the English Heritage site of Lullingstone villa, Kent. Here the bull speeds across the sea as Europa's veil billows in the breeze and her left foot trails in the water. The accompanying inscription refers to Jupiter's long-suffering wife, Juno.

Among his other conquests, Jupiter was notorious for carrying off Ganymede to become cup-bearer to the gods, transforming himself into a majestic eagle and snatching up the object of his desire in his talons. An exquisite portrayal of this scene is shown in a mosaic at the Bignor villa, Sussex.

Jupiter's brother, Neptune, is easily recognised when he is shown with his trident (Fig 1). This not only identifies him as god of the sea but serves to distinguish him from Oceanus, the personification of the river that was thought to encircle the world. It was evidently not essential, however, for Neptune always to be accompanied by this attribute. He was named in an inscription in the mosaic from Frampton, Dorset (Fig 2), now lost, even though no trident is depicted.

Neptune's connection with water unsurprisingly made him a suitable choice for baths. A fragmentary mosaic showing the head or bust of Neptune with a strikingly curly beard, surrounded by fishes and dolphins, was found in the bath suite of the Rudston villa, Yorkshire, and is now in the Hull and East Riding Museum, Hull (Minerva November/December 2002, p. 7).

Another majestic bust of Neptune was found in the bath suite of the Hemsworth villa, Dorset, and may be viewed in the Dorset County Museum, Dorchester. The god's face is superimposed on the body of a crab whose folded claws are represented by the two orange shapes on the top of his head, while the jagged lines on either side of his face represent the crab's legs.

Neptune's trident is prominent in a panel from the Orpheus mosaic found...
at Withington, Gloucestershire, now in the British Museum, London (Fig 1). Two dolphins swim out of his beard while crabs' claws and pincers emerge from his hair. The apex of a mosaic from Fordington High Street, Dorchester, now in the Dorset County Museum, has a simplified layout of a similar scene, with a single dolphin and fish on either side of the god's head. The well-known mosaic from Verulamium, Hertfordshire, now in the Verulamium Museum, St Albans, shows an impressive bust of Neptune with a pair of crab's claws prominently protruding from his head.

A Neptune mask, again with crabs' claws in the hair, appears in alignment with Orpheus in the outer circular border of the Great Pavement at Woodchester, Gloucestershire. Although the original mosaic has not been uncovered for many years, an accurate replica made by Robert and John Woodward may be viewed at Prinknash Abbey, Gloucester.

Ceres was an important and respected deity thanks to her role as goddess of agriculture, but depictions of Ceres are rare in mosaics. An exception is the Seasons mosaic at the Bradbury villa, Isle of Wight, where she is shown holding an ear of corn to Triptolemus (see Minerva January/February 2005, p. 31).

A bust usually referred to as 'Ceres' may be viewed in a mosaic displayed in the foyer of Scunthorpe's Civic Centre, Lincolnshire. When discovered at nearby Winterton in 1747, a motif visible showed her right shoulder came to be interpreted as ears of corn. However, during re-exavation in 1958-1959 it was found that part of this motif still survived and included several blue and purple tesserae, the wrong colour for corn. The small hand believed to suggest that the object was a peacock feather, an attribute often found with Venus. Ironically, following lifting and inaccurate restoration, the bust is now a long way from embodying female beauty.

Proserpina was the daughter of Jupiter and Ceres, famous for being snatched by the god of the underworld and taken to live in the nether regions, where she was forced to remain for part of each year. Two of the female figures in the mosaic at Littlecote Park, Wiltshire, have been interpreted as Ceres and her daughter. This mosaic was originally found in the early 18th century and feared lost until its exciting re-discovery and restoration some 250 years later. The female figures are thought to represent the goddesses with Ceres and Proserpina standing for Autumn and Winter.

Another of Jupiter's daughters, Minerva, was born fully armed from his head. Among her many talents, she was credited with inventing the flute. This incident is recalled in another panel from the Keynsham villa showing Minerva looking at her reflection in a pool as she blows somewhat indecorously into flutes. On the right, a nymph pours water from an urn. Apollo, like his father Jupiter, was often involved in amorous pursuits. The fragmentary scene of a naked male chasing an alarmed female at the Bradbury villa probably depicts Apollo's attempt to woo Daphne, while his cultural role as god of music was exemplified by the popular story of the musical contest with the satyr Marsyas. The two contestants - Apollo, seated and playing his lyre, and Marsyas, dancing as he plays his flutes - may be viewed in a mosaic from Lenthal Green, Dorset, now displayed in the tea room in the house at Newton, near Wimborne.

Mars' status as god of war and father of Romulus and Remus often overshadows the equally important role he played as a god of nature protecting crops and herds. The agricultural aspect of Mars is probably recalled in the figure of Bacchus, Hampshire, now in private hands, while a lost mosaic found in the temple at Lynden Park, Gloucestershire, recorded a dedication to the god Mars Nodens, indicating that here the Roman god had been conflated with Nodens, a local deity. The god of wine, Bacchus was also an agricultural deity regarded as master of nature and of the seasons. He was usually portrayed naked, save for a cloak, often holding a drinking-cup and thyrsus, and frequently accompanied by his panther. His hair was invariably long and he wore a wreath decked with ivy- or vine-leaves and grapes.

Bacchus' involvement with Ariadne was the most popular story from his life to receive artistic expression. As a couple, Bacchus and Ariadne are shown regally seated in the focal position of the triclinium mosaic at Chedworth, Gloucestershire (The National Trust).

One of the most sybaritic images of Bacchus is found in a mosaic from Leadenhall Street, London, now in the British Museum (Fig 5). It shows him languidly reclining on a tigeress, his toes peeping out from his leopard-skin boots. The remains of a second Bacchus mosaic in the British Museum were found at Thruxton, Hampshire, in 1823 (Fig 6). The central medallion showing Bacchus seated on a leopard has now virtually disappeared but the three surviving Seasons can still be made out in the spandrels.

When Bacchus is portrayed as a full-length figure, his identity is usually apparent. However, establishing whether a bust represents the god is more difficult, particularly since his effeminate appearance can easily mislead the viewer. The presence of grapes and/or a thyrsus are helpful clues, but are not conclusive as they could also indicate a satyr, maenad, or a personification of Autumn.

If the bust occupies the central position within a design, it seems probable that Bacchus was intended, while a subsidiary location would suggest one of his attendants. This seems to be the case in the Bacchus mosaic at the Bradbury villa, where the central bust is usually interpreted as Bacchus (Fig 3) and the surviving corner bust as a satyr. Each has a thyrsus.

More difficult to identify is a bust in the Yorkshire Museum, York, which is invariably described as 'female'. The large 'bunches' of hair at
the side of the face are in fact consistent with a male hairstyle, and the end of a cloak on the bust’s right shoulder is shown in the style of male figures. When excavated at Aldwark, York, this mosaic decorated the entrance corridor of a Roman house. This location makes it probable that an important figure was meant and Bacchus, for whom an effeminate appearance was common, is the most likely candidate.

The attributes of Mercury, the messenger of the gods, included the caduceus and a winged hat. A bust of Mercury appears in a narrow panel bordering the Venus mosaic from Rudston, Yorkshire, now in the Hull and East Riding Museum. The caduceus by his right shoulder is well drawn, but his cap has a leaf emerging from either side. The leaves are often interpreted as misunderstood wings, but the wings already seem to be present in the two dark lines sprouting tuft-like from the top of his head. Instead of a poorly understood depiction of Mercury, perhaps the Rudston bust was close to the traditional representation, but with the addition of vine-leaves to complement the grape-laden vines on either side.

Of all the female deities depicted in Romano-British mosaics, Venus was by far the most popular. She is central, both literally and metaphorically, to the story of Dido and Aeneas depicted in the Low Ham mosaic, Somerset, now on display in the Somerset County Museum, Taunton. She is also thought to have been the subject of the corner compartments of one of the Frampton mosaics, Dorset, where she appeared in one scene assertively addressing a thoughtfully Paris (Fig 4).

The masterly depiction of Venus in the apsidal room at Bignor, Sussex, shows the goddess as if reflected in a mirror hanging from the leafy swags on either side. Another bust of Venus decorates the central medallion of a mosaic from Kingscote, Gloucestershire, now in the Corinium Museum, Cirencester, where she has a mirror lying across her shoulder.

Venus’ marine associations are evoked in the main panel of the Rudston mosaic, where she is accompanied by a Triton. The somewhat pear-shaped goddess delicately holds in her right fingers the golden apple, her prize in the beauty contest judged by Paris, while a mirror is shown below her left hand. The marine theme is emphasised in the horseshoe-shaped panel from the Hensworth mosaic, Dorset, now in the British Museum, where Venus stands in front of a large scallop shell, surrounded by an outer border of dolphins, fishes, and crustacea.

As well as their importance in their own right, some deities represented the different days of the week. A collection of deities, each with their identifying attributes, was found on a mosaic at the Bramdean Villa, Hampshire, in 1823 (see Minerva, November/December 2002, p. 43). Sadly this mosaic, the only one of its kind known from this country, no longer survives although similar pavements have been preserved elsewhere.

The gods and goddesses chosen to decorate the floors of high-status houses in Roman Britain range from the ubiquitously popular Bacchus, Venus, and Neptune to scenes rarely represented in mosaic art, such as Ceres with Triptolemus or with her daughter Proserpina. This variety presents an interesting contrast and challenges the notion that subjects were selected from pattern books in the same way as modern home-owners select wallpaper. There is much to enjoy, and even more to learn, from a continuing study of mosaics such as these.

ROME is ever-present amidst the cultural landscape of Britain. To touch base with the past you only have to visit Hadrian’s Wall, drive up the linear A5 overlying its Roman predecessor, or visit one of the many Roman villas open to the general public. Those with a penchant for Roman art, however, would do well to visit the displays at the Hull and East Riding Museum, not least because assembled here is one of the best collections of Roman polychrome mosaics in Britain.

These floors originate from villas to the north and south of the Humber at Rudston, Brantingham (County of the East Riding of Yorkshire), Horkstow (North Lincolnshire), and Harpham (East Yorkshire) - once vital cogs in a prosperous agricultural landscape. The two oblong regional elite expressed their wealth and status through conspicuous artistic displays of wealth, in much the same way as a modern host would hang a painting by Matisse or Picasso in their dining room to impress dinner guests.

Discovered in 1839 and excavated in 1933-37, 1962-66, and 1970-72, Rudston villa yielded several geometric and figurative mosaics. One of the best known of these was lifted from Building 1 - a reception room - originally measuring 4.67 x 3.20m, comprising geometric panels and a square panel (Fig 1). The square panel is flanked by four semicircles: a lion and the inscription [LEO] F[II]JAMMEFEBR, (‘the bull [called] man killer’); four corner quarter-circles, each enclosing a bird (probably a dove pecking at fruit); three interspaces filled with naked hunters (a fourth is now lost); and a central circle depicting Venus and a Triton. A two-stranded guilloche frames the square panel and demarcates the individual figures around the central panel. There is an outer frame of black tesserae. The oblong panel above Venus, nearly completely intact, displays a bust of Mercury or Bacchus and a vine issuing from a canthus. Very little is preserved of the lower oblong panel, but this probably had similar decoration.

Much has been made of the rather poor and ungainly style of these floors, especially the depiction of Venus - a pale shadow of examples in other provinces of the Roman Empire. In a refreshing new reading of the mosaics in the Hull Museums, D.J. Smith, who pioneered theory about ‘schools’ and ‘workshops’ in Britain, suggests a plausible explanation whereby ‘this mosaic might afford evidence of a degeneration of Roman standards or a shortage of skilled mosaicists in the later 3rd century, it may testify from another standpoint to the vitality of Roman culture on the northern fringe of the civilised world.’

An equally famous floor, the Charioteer Mosaic (3 square metres), was preserved in Building 8 - originally also a reception room - of the same villa (Fig 2). The central round panel depicts a victorious charioteer standing in his four-horse chariot (quadriga) holding a palm frond in his left hand and a wreath in his right hand (both symbols of victory). This panel is framed by a three-stranded guilloche. Three of the Four Seasons are depicted in the circular corner panels, although Winter is completely destroyed and Autumn mostly unpreserved. Interpersed between these are four rectangular panels, each depicting a bird (possibly pheasants, perhaps a symbol of good fortune) and fruits. The panels are framed by a three-stranded guilloche, which is in turn framed by two crude geometric borders: one filled with T-shaped motifs; the other, a simple row of squares. Adjoining the charioteer floor is a small rectangular panel depicting two leopards flanking a canthus (2.52 x 1m), which may allude to the cult of Dionysus.

Interestingly, D.J. Smith proposes that the juxtaposition of a charioteer and the Four Seasons may reflect the circus as an allegory of the Cosmic Circus. The quadriga perhaps symbolising the daily course of the sun, while the Seasons may represent the four racing factions: the ‘greens’ standing for Spring, the ‘reds’ Summer, the ‘blues’ Autumn, and the ‘whites’, Winter.

On the basis of archaeological material and the style of the floors in Buildings 1 and 8, it has been proposed that the Venus Mosaic was laid towards the end of the 3rd century.
AD, while the Charioteer Mosaic was laid in the following century, c. AD 325-50, by more skilful mosaists. None of the Rudston floors has been assigned to any of the so-called mosaic schools of the 4th century, which commonly feature in discussions of Romano-British mosaics.

In the Brantingham villa, discovered in 1941 and excavated in 1962, the most elaborate mosaic features the so-called 'Tyche' or Figured Mosaic of the 4th century (Fig 3). This comprises a central panel, 5.23m square, flanked by two sets of rectangular panels at each end depicting busts, most likely the Hunted and Hunted Panel. Two borders of rectangles are inset with lozenges on each side. Although the floor has been damaged in many places, its overall design is reasonably well preserved. The centre-piece of the panel shows a bust of a Tyche - the semi-divine personification of a province, tribe, or city - within a rounded set in an octagonal frame. This is isolated from eight semicircular compartments by short 'spokes' of two-stranded guilloche, which also frame the three panels. Each compartment contains a reclining semi-nude woman, perhaps relating to the nine Muses or each possibly representing a local river. There are also eight interspaces depicting a kantharos, and a pelta in each of the four corners.

Another particularly interesting mosaic of the 4th century was discovered at Horkestone, North Lincolnshire, in 1797 and drawn shortly afterwards by William Fowler and Samuel Lysons. Unfortunately, much of the floor has been destroyed, but a good impression of its original splendour may be gleaned from a reconstructed drawing by Richard Smirke (Fig 4). This was a large mosaic, c. 16 x 7m in area, consisting of a well preserved oblong panel depicting a chariot race, and two poorly preserved panels, separated by a border of intersecting circles, known as the Orpheus Panel and the Tainted Circle Panel, which appear to contain subject matter related to the Roman mythological themes of Orpheus and Bacchus. These circular designs are demarcated by two-stranded guilloche 'spokes', while the middle panel was framed by a particularly impressive broad, multi-stranded guilloche border. All three panels originally had an outer crown-step border and an outer five-banded frame.

The best known mosaic from the Harpham group in East Yorkshire is the Labyrinth Mosaic (Fig 5), discovered in 1905. This was characterized by a central floral motif, and depicted a rectangular maze c. 3m square representing the mythical labyrinth of Crete where Theseus slew the Minotaur. A coin of AD 305 found beneath gives this floor a reliable 4th century terminus post quem after which it was laid.

It is often rightly claimed that Roman mosaics reflect both public and private aspects in the life of the patron who commissioned them. This factor makes the Hull and East Riding Museums collection particularly interesting, because collectively they provide a special insight into Romano-British villa life in the 3rd and 4th centuries, not least the spread of Romanisation to the coldest, northern outposts of the Empire. The mythological themes present reveal the pervasive spread of Roman religion to the homes of the Romano-British elite, and the depictions of public spectacle, notably chariot racing, imply that the individuals with the wealth to commission mosaics in their private homes also had the considerable financial means to sponsor public events of this kind. It may have been grim in the north, but the Roman high life remained vibrant.

This article is based on material presented in Roman Mosaics at Hull by D. J. Smith (and revised by Martin Foreman); Hull Museums and Art Gallery 2005, 50pp, 21 colour illus. Paperback, £4.99.

For further details: www.hullcc.gov.uk/museums.
The Church of the Nativity

THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY:
A BYZANTINE TREASURY IN BETHLEHEM

Joan E. Taylor

The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem is one of the main treasures of Palestinian cultural heritage. Unfortunately, it is often bypassed by tourists to the Holy Land owing to the deterring aspect of the 8.5m-high Israeli wall that has been constructed, so that now many foreign visitors only come to Bethlehem in organised bus tours.

However, this extraordinary building provides much for independent travellers willing to give it more time and attention. It is the only major church in the Holy Land that survives intact from the 6th century AD (Early Byzantine period). The Grotto of the Nativity beneath it has been the focus of Christian veneration for at least 18 centuries. In the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, Jesus’ birth is clearly given as being in Bethlehem in Judaea. Already in the 2nd century there were stories about Jesus being born in a specific cave in or near Bethlehem and, in the 3rd century, Christians identified the site with a cave also used for the worship of Adonis by the pagan population of the time.

Fig 1. Lithograph of the choir and southern entrance to the sacred Grotto in the Church of the Nativity by David Roberts, 1839. Photo courtesy of Peter Clayton.

Fig 2 (below left). Main entrance to the Church of the Nativity showing the large rectangular Byzantine portal, largely blocked, with a smaller Frankish arched entrance. The present tiny doorway was created sometime before the 17th century to stop horsemen from riding into the church. Photo: Jim Hobberman.

The Grotto of the Nativity is entered on the right side and exited on the left. On either side of the doorways is considerable evidence of pilgrim graffiti dating from the 12th century onwards, including Arabic graffiti testifying to both Arabic-speaking Christian and Muslim visitors. Pilgrims today are shown the place of Christ’s birth, marked by a star, and the spot where his manger was laid. The Grotto was part of a larger system of subterranean caverns that were utilised from the Byzantine period onwards as part of the Christian structures. They seem to have originally been used for agricultural practices, in which subterranean caverns were employed for a number of different industries, including wine or olive oil production, storage, and, perhaps, the stabling of animals.

Visible architectural remains stretch back to the 4th century AD, in the form of beautiful mosaics from the first

Fig 3. Plan of the Church of the Nativity by Bernardino Amico, from his Trattato delle piane et imagini de i sacri edifici di Terra Santa (Florence: Cecconcelli, 1620).
'Gazing at the numerous pillars gleaming with gold, a work decorated with marvellous art, I would dispel the clouds of care, from these marvels of works of art the grace of the heavens shines forth' (tr. G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville).

It was thanks to the wall mosaics that the church survived a second wave of destruction. According to a letter of the Three Patriarchs to Emperor Theophilus in 836, the Persians, invading in 614, apparently saw a mosaic of the three Magi dressed - as usual in Christian art - in Persian clothing, and left the building untouched.

Caliph Omar, taking Jerusalem for Islam in 638, respected the church, the birthplace of the prophet Jesus, and guaranteed its integrity. Local Muslims came to the Grotto of the Nativity and prayed there, as they do in the present day. For similar reasons, Bethlehem was spared the destruction wrought by the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim, who obliterated Constantine's basilica of the Holy Cross and the Tomb of Christ in Jerusalem in 1009, along with numerous other ancient churches.

When the Crusaders (Franks) took the town in 1099 they established it, as a Latin parish and an Augustinian cloister was built, with further cloisters also established by the Greeks and Armenians. Bethlehem was under Frankish control from 1099 to 1187, and again from 1229 to 1244. The Franks restored the Byzantine building, adding marble portals to the access points to the Grotto of the Nativity. The two side entrances to the church were blocked, the main entrance was reduced in size (Fig 2), and a bell-tower was built in the south.

The Franks created new mosaics (Figs 7, 8) and decorated the marble pillars, but only five glimmering sections of these beautiful mosaics survive: on the north wall is part of the genealogy of Christ according to St Luke with provincial councils above; on the south wall the genealogy of Christ according to Matthew, with other councils above.
The Church of the Nativity complex was maintained, with support provided for the refurbishment of the church. Two carved wooden doors were added, with inscriptions in Arabic and Armenian. Co-operation continued between different Christian groups in terms of the maintenance of the church when the lead roof was replaced in 1480 as a gift from Edward IV of England and his sister, the Duchess of Burgundy, who donated the wood, an operation carried out by Venetian craftsmen.

While the history of the church gives us instances of respect and sensitivity between the Latin and Orthodox churches and also co-operation between Christians and Muslims, there are also many instances where such goodwill has broken down. In Mamluk and Ottoman times exploitation of the lead of the roof and use of the nave as a Khan created problems. Given the Muslim prohibition on images, both Mamluk and Ottoman soldiers, as well as pillaging Redouin, engaged in iconoclastic destruction, which has resulted in the loss of most of the Frankish mosaics. The archedFrankish entrance way was blocked to prevent horsemen from riding straight into the church (Fig 2). In the 17th century there was a brief attempt to claim the building for Islam. In fact, this resulted in an official Ottoman policy to discourage the Muslim veneration of the site, ensuring it was firmly under Christian control. Around this time the plan of the church was sketched and recorded, most notably by the Franciscan Custos Bernardino Amico in 1620 (Fig 3).

Complex tensions concerning the ownership of the church have been played out between the Christian communities with far-reaching ramifications, and the legacy of these disputes continues to exist today, though everything is moderated by the application of the so-called 'Status Quo'. This 19th century agreement has frozen the dispute between the Christian communities, which remains unresolved.

Repairs to the building are greatly needed. The church suffered damage from the Israeli siege in 2002, and bullet holes may be seen on the exterior of the ancient walls. Currently, the church is on the list of proposed World Heritage sites to be submitted by the Palestine Authority to UNESCO, which may help its profile and ensure some funding for repairs. UNESCO has already examined the state of the church’s roof. Despite its antiquity, beauty, and significance, the church (especially its roof) is in a state of neglect, and much needs to be done to raise awareness of the plight internationally to secure the funds to carry out the restoration.

The significance of the church and its potential as a unifying inter-religious and inter-denominational symbol in the Palestinian Authority remains. It serves as a focal point for visitors. The church door is open to all, and it is a site for foreigners to visit. Taxis can drive tourists from Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem to the checkpoint at Bethlehem, where you need to walk through (with identification) to an opening in the wall. On the other side, taxis take you swiftly to Manger Square, where there are taxis ready also for your return journey. An independent traveller can also take advantage of the excellent modern facilities of the Bethlehem Peace Centre, where you can see a model of the Church of the Nativity within the context of the town.

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NORMAN POWER IN BYZANTINE ART:
MEDIEVAL MOSAICS IN SICILY

Mark Merrony

or those who embark on the modern Grand Tour of Classi-
cal sites in the Mediterranean a first port of call should be Sicily because it has the best preserved temples in the Greek world (at Agrigento and Segesta) and the best in situ Roman mosaics anywhere within the former Roman Empire (Piazza Arme-
rina). Yet even these are surpassed by the splendid Norman sites in Cefalù, Monreale, and Palermo, which com-
bine the monumentality of the Classical temples with the splendour of the Roman mosaics on the island to pro-
duce the most exquisite and well preserved concentration of mosaics from any era.

After the Norman conquest of Sicily, the royal court of Roger II (r. 1130-
1154) was established at a large palace in Palermo, which was originally built by the Arabs, but much enlarged under the Norman monarchs. From this new seat of power the Normans were to hold sway over much of Europe, but they were effectively counterbalanced by the maritime power of the Venetians’ control of much of the Medi-
erranean and its trade in the same period. The jewel within this new complex is the Palatine Chapel constructed by Roger II. This has the conventional design of an Early Byzantine basilica with a nave, two aisles, narthex, and sanctuary, but fused with the Middle Byzantine touch of a central cupola. This design provides the optimum platform from which the most exquisitely decorated churches in the world, comprising ten Roman columns of granite and cipollino marble, and a splendid carved and painted ceiling of Lebanese cedar (Fig 1), inspired by a contempo-
rary Arab style.

The mosaics are the most spectacu-
lar artistic component, with Old and New Testament scenes rendered in gold enhanced with silver tesserae (Figs 2-3). These were laid by Byzantine mosaicists in two phases. The first, in the east part of the chapel (c. 1140-50), depict the Pantocrator (Christ as the ruler of the universe) surrounded by Angels and Archangels (the cupola), David, Solomon, Zachariah, and John the Baptist (drum), the Four Evangelists (pen-
dentives); the Annunciation (triumphal arch); Joseph’s Dream and the Flight into Egypt (nave arch); Presentation in the Temple; the Baptism; Transfiguration; Raising of Lazarus, Entry into Jerusalem (lower south wall); the Pantocrator (above main apse), and several other biblical scenes. The mosaics in the second phase (c. 1150-71) illustrate the book of Genesis in two tiers. Finally, the aisles depict scenes from the lives of Saints Peter and Paul, and other biblical scenes. As is the case with all Norman mosaics in Sicily, they are accompanied by Greek inscriptions (Greek and Latin in Monreale), which name the figures or scenes depicted and reveal the lan-
guage of the artisans responsible.

The mosaics in the Palatine Chapel are typically Middle Byzantine in style, characterised by a linear, two-dimen-
sional abstractness which had already matured in the Early Byzantine period (4th-7th century AD). This is especially the case with drapery, which does not hang or fold in a free manner, but is markedly schematised into stereotypi-
cal zig zags, but the overall effect of the figurative programme is nonetheless charming and, given the relatively small size of the tesserae used, and their quality, these are a technical and artistic cut above many Early Byzantine floor mosaics. This is not surprising given that these were royal commis-
sions, and the patron had the financial means to import the best craftsmen available from Byzantium.

Essentially, the figurative pro-
gramme also adopts the hierarchical concept of Middle Byzantine art, in which there is a clearly defined sequence of importance in the way iconography is placed. The Pantocrator appears in domes and above main apses and there is a descending pecking order which reflects the relative impor-
tance of the figures and scenes depicted, such as the Evangelists lower down in the dome pendentives, Saints Peter and Paul on the aisle wall, and so on. The hierarchical scheme depicted therefore reflects the celestial order of the universe. This concept is enhanced by the stylised poses and gestures of the figures represented, their hieratic gait, and the luminous effect provided by the gold background of the mosaics.

Slightly different in design is the contemporary La Martorana in Palermo, a small cross-in-square church which is distinctly Middle Byzantine in style, inspired by the monasteries of Hosios Loukas in Greece (built c. 1011-
12), Nea Moni in Chios (c. 1050), and Daphni near Athens (c. 1080). Although the subject matter in the mosaics of these three sites is the pro-

Fig. 1. Intricately carved painted ceiling of Lebanese cedar, rendered in an Arab style, the Palatine Chapel, Palermo, c. 1132-40.

Fig. 2. Gold mosaic depicting Christ surrounded by Angels and Archangels in the dome of the Palatine Chapel, c. 1132-40.

Fig. 3. The nave, aisles, and sanctuary of the Palatine Chapel viewed from the west, c. 1132-40 (first phase); c. 1150-71 (second phase).

Minerva, January/February 2007
gramme of iconography known as the Feast Cycle, the Norman church mosaics also derive their inspiration from them, both stylistically and in the way the art is fused with the architecture. This clearly demonstrates how the new Norman establishment drew its inspiration from the architectural and artistic canons of the Byzantine Empire. The splendid gold mosaics of the interior (Figs 4-7) are thought to be contemporary with the first phase of the nave mosaics in the Palatine Chapel (dating from the first half of the 12th century), and these blend beautifully with later ceiling frescoes painted by Guglielmo Borremans in 1717. These depict Christ and the four Archangels (dome); Prophet and the Evangelists (drum); the Annunciation (triangular arch), and so on. At the west end of the church are depictions of George of Antioch at the Feet of the Virgin and, intriguingly, Roger II being crowned by Christ.

This is especially interesting because it borrows the Byzantine visual concept which expressed the emperor and empress as God’s rulers on earth. This was a neat ideological device employed to give imperial rule a ring of divine legitimacy, and there are two gold wall mosaics in St Sophia, Istanbul which link the imperial couple with divinity. The first 6th-century example shows Justinian I (r. AD 527-65) and Theodora respectively offering St Sophia and Constantinople to the Virgin Mary; the second 12th century mosaic depicts the Virgin Mary and Child receiving a donation from Johannes Komnenos II (r. AD 1118-1143) and empress Irene.

In terms of their style the La Martorana mosaics do not differ markedly from the contemporary figurative programme in the Palatine Chapel. This is perfectly logical given that the mosaics at both sites were almost certainly laid by artisans from Constantinople. There are of course subtle differences. For instance the stern face of the Pantocrator in the apse of the Palatine Chapel differs markedly from the more serene expression of the Pantocrator in the apse of La Martorana, but this, along with other perceived nuances, is perhaps best explained by the work of different teams.

The largest monument built by Roger II was the duomo (cathedral) in Cefalu about 100km along the coast from Palermo to the east. This is an architecturally imposing basilica with a Romanesque façade flanked by two large towers - suitably grandiose as Roger’s chosen burial place, although Frederick II did not consecrate it until 1267. Interestingly, the duomo has 16 colossal naves supported by Corinthian capitals, which originally supported the porch of the Roman temple of Diana further to the south.

The gold mosaics of the interior are restricted to the sanctuary area, but are extremely impressive, and dominated by a colossal figure of the Pantocrator, widely thought to be the best artistic depiction of Christ in pre-Modern art (Fig 8). Other representations include: the Virgin in Prayer between the Four Archangels (below); the Apostles (bottom); angels and seraphim (vault); prophets, in the two registers under the dome; prophets, deacon martyrs, and Latin Bishop saints (left wall); and prophets, warrior saints, and Greek patriarchs and theologians. The completion of the mosaics is commemorated by an inscription of 1148.

The superior style of Christ Pantocrator over the contemporary mosaics in La Martorana and the Palatine
Chapel may be attributed to the factor that the duomo was the jewel in the crown of Roger's building programme and he would have selected the best mosaicists from the heart of Byzantium specifically for this purpose.

Later in date is the cathedral of Monreale, located about 5km east of Palermo (Fig 9). This splendid building has justifiably been called one of the architectural wonders of the Middle Ages. The duomo was built by William II (c. 1156-1189) between c. 1174 and completed by 1183. This is clearly modelled on its predecessor in Cefalu, with its Romanesque façade and twin towers (although the north tower was not completed), in its plan as a monumental basilica with huge columns (in this case 16 granite columns from a Roman temple or temples). The mosaicists, again from Byzantium, used the Palatine Chapel as a model for the layout of this unsurpassed figurative programme, but the sheer scale of the gold mosaics of the interior of Monreale were hitherto unprecedented, and have not been surpassed, covering a staggering surface area of 6400 square metres with an astonishing 2200kg of gold - 2400 square metres more than the 12th and 13th century mosaics of the revered San Marco in Venice. Interestingly, the Venetian mosaics were also laid by Byzantine artisans (or by locals trained by them), and this gives a clear impression that the two competing powers in the region were expressing their status in relation to Byzantium, their main rival in the east.

The Monreale mosaics again follow the same principles of a hierarchical scheme of Old and New Testament themes. These include a colossal Pantocrator (apse); a Genesis cycle (nave); scenes from the Ministry of Christ (aisles); and scenes from the lives of Saints Peter and Paul (presbytery) - the pattern is familiar. As are its ideological concepts, since again there is a representation of the king being crowned by Christ in a panel above the royal throne (south aisle), adjacent to a panel depicting William II donating the duomo to the Virgin Mary. Like his predecessor Roger II, William wasted no time in using well-established Byzantine principles in art to legitimise his rule.

Stylistically, the mosaics also conform to the established norms of Middle Byzantine art, with its hallmarks of linearity, and two-dimensional abstractness - familiar traits in all of the Norman examples in the region. The Pantocrator provides the strongest hint that the mosaicists of the duomo were using the Palatine Chapel as a model, since the facial expression has very similar stern characteristics.

Perhaps the most iconic factor linking the mosaic art and architecture of the four Norman churches is that it was not Norman but Middle Byzantine. The Normans rose to power as fifth generation Vikings who had no established tradition of building churches of this magnitude and splendour. Like the Byzantines before them who inherited the Roman artistic mantle, they were left with little choice but to choose the art of the great power which preceded them, and with whom they intersected at the great maritime crossroads of the western Mediterranean. This not only met their aesthetic needs from a context specific perspective, but satisfied the ideological requirements for a new political order, which quickly needed to stamp its authority across western Europe.
Early Medieval Colchester

FROM ROMAN CAMULODUNUM TO NORMAN COLECESTRA: LOST COLCHESTER

Philip J. Wise

A new permanent gallery at Colchester Castle Museum covers the period from the end of Roman Britain in the early 5th century to the creation of Norman England in the years following 1066. Until recently these were the lost centuries in the history of Colchester and the surrounding area of Essex. Now, however, finds made by metal detectorists are providing new sources of evidence about this elusive period.

In AD 400 Camulodunum, modern Colchester, had been part of the Roman Empire for over 350 years. Its people had enjoyed the benefits of Roman rule: urban living, mass-produced goods, centralised government, and a place within a powerful empire. Now that empire was in decline, slowly losing control over Britain. Coastal areas in the east were also under attack by Anglo-Saxon raiders. Roman Britain was coming to an end.

With the Roman army and navy gone, the coast of Essex and the city of Colchester lay undefended. The Anglo-Saxons arrived here in search of land. They sailed up the river valleys and took over existing farms; in some places they defeated Britons, while in others they stayed to share the land with the Anglo-Saxons. Nowhere is there evidence of a violent take-over. The Anglo-Saxons must have arrived in the Colchester area early in the settlement process. The nearby coast would have been amongst the first places where landfall would have been made by anyone crossing the North Sea. A but- ton brooch found at Tillingham on the Dengie peninsula south of Colchester and dating to 425-475 is a rare piece of testimony for this early settlement.

In Colchester itself there is evidence for the Anglo-Saxons in life and death. We do not know when or how Colchester ceased to exist as a city. What is clear is that wooden huts were constructed amidst the ruins of the Roman buildings and their occupants made pottery and cloth for their own use. Several cemeteries were established outside the city walls, some in former Roman burial areas, but in at least one case on a new site. This was revealed by a chance discovery near the River Colne, to the north-east of the former town, of jewellery in two graves, one an adult woman buried with a bead necklace, to which had been attached a pierced siliqua of Valens (AD 367-78) (Fig 2). It seems likely that in the early Anglo-Saxon period Colchester was probably little more than a village with a few farmers living within the ruined Roman city walls.

The local aristocracy were living elsewhere, and a late Victorian discovery suggests that the centre of power may have lain to the west of Colchester near the village of Kelvedon. The records of an 1895 excavation are sketchy and tantalising, but it is possible it was a burial mound covering a warrior burial containing a spearhead and an elaborate belt buckle inlaid with enamel and garnet.

Not surprisingly, there is evidence from the Colchester area for contact with continental Europe throughout the centuries following the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons. The earliest find is a gold and garnet finger-ring made in France around 450. Other objects crossing the Channel include a copy of a gold tremissis of the Byzantine emperor Justin II (565-578), found near St Osyth to the east of Colchester, and a radiate brooch of gilded bronze of the mid-6th century. Of a later date is a gold sword pommel lost by a high-status soldier near Ardleigh, a few miles north of Colchester (Fig 3), which dates to the late 7th century and is of ‘cocked hat’ form, a type whose distribution is largely concentrated in eastern Scandinavia.

Another feature of this period in Colchester’s history is the evidence for significant industrial activity in its hinterland. At Rook Hall, Little Totham, near Maldon the remains of several iron-smelting furnaces and smithing hearths were found in the 1980s. Charcoal from one furnace provided a radiocarbon date of AD 607 ± 60. This is an exceptionally early post-Roman date for iron-working, and the site at Little Totham is of European significance. A rare 8th century leath er-worker’s stamp comprises a copper alloy die fixed to an iron handle. The die is decorated with a low relief pattern of two intertwined beasts.

It was the Vikings who were the first to appreciate Colchester’s defensive importance and they occupied the site for several years at the beginning of the 10th century. Their presence in Colchester posed a threat to the Anglo-Saxons and in 917 the Vikings were driven out of Colchester by the Anglo-

Philip J. Wise
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Early Medieval Colchester

Saxon king Edward the Elder (Fig 3) who was responsible for the rebirth of Colchester as a town.

In 879 the Vikings returned to England from Denmark in search of treasure. Initial contact consisted of small raiding parties, such as that which made camp in 991 on Northey Island in the River Blackwater east of Maldon. The island was connected to the mainland by a narrow causeway, only exposed at low tide. The mainland end of the causeway was occupied by an Anglo-Saxon army, led by a nobleman called Bryhtnoth. Bryhtnoth allowed the Vikings to cross the causeway and during the fierce fighting that followed was killed. The story of the Battle of Maldon is told in a poem written shortly afterwards. It was possibly composed at Ely Abbey in Cambridgeshire where Bryhtnoth’s body is believed to have been buried. This is a great Anglo-Saxon heroic poem, which celebrates how defeat was turned into a moral high point.

After the battle, Maldon was sacked, resulting in Colchester replacing Maldon as the principal town in Essex. Colchester also gained a mint for the first time at this period, as the weak English king Æthelred II (the Unready) was forced to buy off the Vikings by raising a special tax known as the Danegeld. Coin production was therefore increased and a London moneyer named Swetinc was sent to Colchester to establish a mint. Æthelred II’s policy was reversed by his son and successor Edmund Ironside, who fought tenaciously to drive the Danes from his kingdom. However, Edmund lost the critical final battle at Ashingdon in Essex and died shortly afterwards. England was now ruled by Canute, who was also king of Denmark.

Despite the historical evidence for Viking activity in the area, very few artefacts may be dated to the 10th and 11th centuries. In 1880 dredging operations in the River Colne led to the discovery of a sword. The sword was x-rayed by Colchester Museum’s conservation staff prior to going on display and was found to be pattern-welded. This is a technique in which different types of iron are used to create a surface pattern of light and dark bands. Further dredging of the Colne in 1916 yielded a broad-bladed axe, specifically designed by the Vikings for warfare. More recently, metal detectorists have turned up a copper alloy sword pommel of Anglo-Scandinavian type and a rare bronze scabbard mount decorated with an interlace design and dated to c. 1000. An absolutely parallel lies in Sweden. Not all the evidence is from weaponry, however: a small bronze mount decorated in the Urnes Style was found near Colchester Castle. This was probably made in southern England rather than in Scandinavia itself and reflects the influence of the Vikings on English art.

After the period of turbulence at the beginning of the 11th century, Colchester continued to develop and there is evidence to suggest that a royal estate was established within the re-founded town. Excavations conducted in the early 1930s in Castle Park uncovered the remains of a wooden chapel with elaborate wall paintings including a scene possibly showing the Flight into Egypt with the Virgin Mary holding the infant Jesus in her arms (Fig 6). The chapel was sited within the precinct of the ruined Temple of Claudius, once the focus of the state religion in Roman Britain. Such a location cannot be coincidental and it has been suggested that an Anglo-Saxon king was seeking to establish a link with the Roman past.

In 1066, around 2500 people lived in Colchester and their lives were about to undergo dramatic change. The Normans made a significant and permanent impact on the face of Colchester. They re-developed the town using recycled stone, brick, and tile from ruined Roman buildings. The largest single building project was Colchester Castle (Fig 1), which probably began in the 1080s on the orders of William the Conqueror. William had two aims: to control the surrounding area and to protect the coast against Viking attack, which remained a disturbing threat. Colchester Castle was built to a design first developed in Normandy and also used for another royal fortress, the White Tower, part of the Tower of London. Other Norman buildings in Colchester include several churches and stone-built houses, and the Moot Hall, the town hall.

Outside the town, St John’s Abbey and St Botolph’s Priory were founded on sites previously occupied by Anglo-Saxon churches.

Two religious objects represent different aspects of the impact of the Norman invaders on Anglo-Saxon Colchester. The first is the carved stone figure of a naked woman from St Mary’s Church, Easthorpe to the west of Colchester. Usually referred to as a ‘Shelia-na-gig’, a term originating in Ireland where such figures are common, this figure had been built into the nave wall above the Norman south doorway of the church. It is, however, much older than the Normans and shows their adoption of Anglo-Saxon culture. The second is a lion mount from the lid of a box-shaped reliquary (Fig 4). The lion is in the Romanesque style introduced by the Normans and represents the new direction that art was to take in post-Conquest England.

The new gallery at Colchester Cas-

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Fig 4. Lion expressing a Norman design which influenced a range of art forms from metalwork to architecture. Silver gilt, 12th century. L. 35mm.

Fig 5. Both faces of this sword pommel are decorated with an inverted Y which divides the space into three panels. The outer panels are filled by an animal-like shape and the central, lower panel is filled by a knot. Gold, late 7th century. L. 44mm.

Fig 6. Fragments of painted wall plaster from Colchester which may once have formed part of a scene showing the Flight into Egypt which has been reconstructed for the new gallery. They are part of a very small group of late Saxon examples, among which is essential evidence from Winchester Cathedral.
The art of the Vikings has long been seen as one of the great creative products of northern Europe. Vigorous, energetic, and dramatic, its interlace designs and twisting animals worked into precious metals, stone, wood, and textiles represent one of the quintessential expressions of the pagan cultures of Scandinavia in the period c. AD 750-1050 (Fig 2).

Traditionally, these artistic schemes have been ordered into chronological sequences of motif and design, now more usually known by the names derived from their most prominent find spots in Scandinavia. From the late 8th century AD onwards the development of motifs is characterised by the use of sinuous creatures, ring-chain designs, and plant-like tendrils in complex patterns. Alongside changing attitudes to symmetry, the animals also transform over time with different body shapes, anatomical details, and internal decoration being introduced. It is also known that several different styles were in use at the same time, although a general, well-dated progression of composition and imagery can be detected.

There is nothing to indicate that this art-historical viewpoint is wrong, and every reason to believe that these sequences genuinely reflect the development of Viking art, at least as seen from our distant perspective upon it. However, is it ‘just’ art - decoration for its own sake? Very little in fact now suggests so. Instead an array of new research is demonstrating how these motifs are filled with meaning and intention, deliberate references to a wider world of mythological and politically-motivated stories. How were these objects used, and how were they meant to be understood? Did their imagery contain messages to be ‘read’, and if so by whom and under what circumstances? New finds and re-interpretations of earlier discoveries provide some clues to how these illustrating Vikings saw themselves and how others perceived them.

One avenue of enquiry leads us away from the dazzling highlights of Viking art and into the more mundane realm of everyday subsistence. If literary sources are first examined, notably the medieval Icelandic sagas, and the corpus of Old Norse poetry of different kinds, there are some suggestive links. A number of ordinary domestic activities practised by women had other dimensions, with overtones of supernatural power sufficient even to alter the future itself. Weaving, spinning, and other aspects of textile production are an obvious example - the three Norns who sit by the roots of the World Tree, spinning the fates of men; the Valkyries who weave the outcome of a battle on a loom made from human body parts, and so on. Similar powers are also attributed to the grinding of corn into flour in the story of a quernstone that can shape events according to its user's desires; in the kneading of dough to make bread, with a similar tale attached; perhaps also in the brewing of ale. In all these instances, something is being transformed from what at first appear to be mundane items (dirty wool, grain, and seed) into something new and vital: clothes, food, and drink.

When these are compared with excavated objects used for these activities, the artistic motifs - previously thought to be purely decorative - take on a new dimension. Often identical imagery and design schemes appear in different contexts through a wide variety of media, an element of one echoing part of another, the whole forming a coherent pattern of meaning and reference.

One especially clear example is a type of iron and bronze staff found in the burials of high-status women (Fig 3), often placed in a prominent position on or near the body or held in the dead woman's hands. They are clearly modelled on metal distaffs used for spinning wool, but are always made of wood for practical reasons. These also bear close affinities with spits for roast-
ing meat over a fire, which have the same basket-like design at one end. This 'basket' motif is replicated in bronze space disks, as the links of a chain used for suspending a great cooking pot over a hearth, an object large enough to sustain a feast; and also as the handle of keys (Fig 4), again worn by women and symbolising their role as mistresses of the household.

What meaning connects these objects with this distinctive motif found only in these contexts? The answer matches the picture from the historical texts: the production of textiles, the preparation of food, the Viking-age female duties of the home and feasting hall. Crucially, there is one circumstance in which the 'basket' motif is found in a purely symbolic rather than functional context: iron staffs which cannot be used practically because they are too heavy. These are described with uncanny accuracy in the sagas, where they appear as the prime attribute of sorceresses (one of their names, víðir, even means 'staff-bearers'). Other features in these 'staff graves' support the idea that they are the burials of such people, evident in the presence of mind-altering drugs such as henbane and cannabis, pouches full of animal charms, and unusual clothing details (Fig 8). If the hundreds of written references to sorcery and its practitioners are surveyed, a clear emphasis emerges on its role in battle as a kind of magical battery for the physical prosecution of warfare.

There are also supernatural overtones of this kind in relation to high-status metalworking, another example of the powerful transformation of dull minerals into beautiful objects, again through the dramatic medium of fire. Particularly striking examples of this can be found in the decorated helmets of the 6th and 7th centuries AD, excavated from the famous ship burial cemeteries of Valgaarde and Vendel in the central Swedish province of Uppland (Fig 5). In addition to these almost intact examples, it is known from fragmentary, often burnt, remains that similar helmets were present in many other high-status burials, for example from Gamlar Pupala and Rinkeby in Sweden. Made up of an iron frame overlaid with leather, the surface of these helmets is covered with dozens of small bronze pictorial plaques, originally plated with silver and sometimes gold. With face guards leaving only the eyes visible, these helmets would have appeared as glittering masks, with their armoured heads catching the sun as they moved and the light reflected off the many rows of little pictures.

The images on these helmet plaques have long been identified as carrying mythological themes. This interpretation was confirmed by recent work at the Archaeological Research Laboratory in Stockholm, which has shed light on the intriguing processes that lay behind the production of such objects. It is known that the plaques were cast from a small group of dies found at Torslunda on the Baltic island of Öland (Fig 1). Although the find is now many decades old, these objects have always been studied in terms of their iconography and its interpretation - a man between two bears or wolves, armoured warriors in profile, and so on. One of the key scenes, repeated in its essence on several helmets, shows a male figure apparently dancing naked except for a horned helmet and a sword baltic, holding two spears and flanked by an armed, anthropomorphic figure dressed in the skin of a wolf. This so-called 'weapon dancer' appears to have only one eye, naturally leading scholars to suggest an identification with Odin, the spear-wielding war god who famously gave an eye in exchange for a draught of the mead of poetry. This theory was dramatically tested by the Stockholm technicians who used a laser scanner to survey the figure in microscopic detail for the first time. Not only was it confirmed that he had a single eye, but it was revealed that the missing one was originally there but had been punched out as part of the casting process. Though this gives us the briefest glimpse into the process of making a piece of aristocratic war equipment, there is a strong suggestion that layers of rituals and significance were incorporated into the process which went far beyond the simple technological requirements of manufacture.

The same repertoire of images, especially dancing warriors with spears, occur widely in Germanic elite society, from their regional homeland to Sutton Hoo, England. Indeed, at this site one of the plaques on the helmet recovered may have been cast in the same mould as an example from a royal funeral pyre at Gamla Uppsala, Sweden. References are also found to these motifs in other
Viking Art

archaeologists such as Lotte Hedegaer of Oslo University have suggested, we see in the world of the Vikings a society ideologically primed for war, governed by an elite with clear ideas about the legitimation of its power expressed through reference to a claimed royal descent from the gods themselves. By encouraging the depiction of the delities of battle in all manner of material culture, especially the high status displays of personal adornment commanded by the elites, this mythological propaganda was perverted and controlled. As the children of Odin and the sons of the gods, the early Viking kings secured their right to a form of rulership that took its chief expression in military prowess, maintained by the army and the royal bodyguards within the framework of culture.

The effectiveness of this strategy is shown not least by its extension to the material culture of all classes of society and to both sexes. As we have seen, the sorceresses who provided magical support on the battlefield were only one facet of a general supernatural empowerment of women, again expressed through the design and decoration of ordinary objects. If even female domestic activities such as food preparation and textile production also echoed these themes, then we are very close to an ideological system that joined all aspects of society in a readiness for war and confirmed the standing of the leaders who could pursue such a course.

We know from countless British and Continental sources, not to mention observations from the Muslim countries and the Byzantine Empire, that the rest of the world had never seen anything like the Vikings, whose expansion and subsequent colonial diaspora swept over them in the 9th and 10th centuries. What should this tell us? The Viking Age can be said to have ended with the unification of the modern Nordic states, ready to take their place on the stage of literate, Christian Europe following the Scandinavians' conversion to the new faith. Its beginnings, however, are more problematic, and it may be that in these new studies of the Viking mind we see deeper than before into the complexities of the pagan world-view of the North, and its implications for why the early medieval Scandinavians left their homelands and so transformed the European world.


Dr Neil Price is Reader in Archaeology at the University of Stockholm, Sweden.
CONTROVERSY ON THE CLYDE: 
THE EXCAVATION OF DUMBUCK CRANNOG

Alex Hale and Katja Linssen describe a 19th-century forgery scandal in Scotland.

At least 20 years before the great Piltdown hoax was even suspected, Scotland had its very own archaeological controversy as a result of a handful of faked small finds excavated from a crannog in the Firth of Clyde. Few archaeological excavations have created as much controversy as the excavation of Dumbuck.

Dumbuck is a crannog, or man-made dwelling, built on the mudflats of the Firth of Clyde near Dumbarton, just to the west of Glasgow. It was excavated at the very end of the 19th century and the controversy that ensued was fought publicly and bitterly. Researchers from the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) and the School of Archaeology, University College Dublin, have unearthed the controversy based on archival research and a re-excauation of the crannog. This story is now told as a new book about the people, the place, and the fake finds.

Central to the excavation and the controversy was a man called William Donnelly (Fig 1). He was an artist with a keen interest in archaeology and used his skills to earn a living as, among other things, the Scottish correspondent for the Illustrated London News. He was a fine painter and sketcher and he illustrated and recorded the discoveries from at least three other excavations. Donnelly came to archaeology relatively late in life and, as a member of the Helensburgh Naturalistic and Antiquarian Society (Helensburgh Society), he took part in and recorded four excavations.

Today Dumbuck crannog is one of four known examples in the Firth of Clyde. It sits on the mudflats of the estuary foreshore and is exposed only on a falling tide. The visible remains comprise a circular wooden platform within a ring of 27 upright posts, all enclosed by a stone and timber breakwater (Fig 2). This circular structure dates back to between the 2nd century BC and the 2nd century AD and was used as a platform to gain access to and from the river. Donnelly discovered Dumbuck on Sunday 31 July, 1889. Believing that after previous finds at a nearby site there should be more to discover, he took regular strolls along the banks of the river in the belief that 'other evidence of his [prehistoric man’s] presence might, or rather should, be found nearer the great river itself'. During one of these walks he spotted timbers protruding from the foreshore silts - the remains of the Dumbuck crannog.

After several site inspections accompanied by members of the Helensburgh Society, and with expert advice from Dr Robert Munro, the authority on crannogs at the time and Honorary Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, the decision was made to excavate the site (Fig 3). Both his illustrations and accompanying comments were detailed and gave not only an account of what was found, but what condition it was in. He also speculated about the crannog's function. Even though the group that embarked on the excavation was relatively experienced, the challenge they
Scottish Crannog Controversy


Fig 5. 'Large Shale Image from Dumbuck Crannog'. This object is perhaps mischievously carved to represent Donnelly. Photo: Crown copyright: RCAHMS SC079724.

set themselves should not be underestimated. The dig itself was undertaken without the techniques and procedures that exist today and the team faced estuarine mud and silt, combined with tidal flooding, making it difficult to carry out investigations.

Donnelly reported on the development of the excavation on a regular basis in the local press and Illustrated London News, aiming to promote and advertise the excavation to as broad an audience as possible (Figs 2-5). For this purpose he made, almost daily, sketches and notes of the events on the Clyde. Through the articles Donnelly published in the local press the crannog excavation became something of a destination for family outings, and was regarded as a place where the general public could come along for a bit of recreational digging on a Sunday afternoon.

The excavation focused on the so-called 'refuse bed', the area surrounding the ring of 27 oak piles. As Donnelly wrote, 'I have verified the refuse mound to extend 12 ft. outside for a great part of the circuit, rich in finds of various kinds: so that I feel strongly that every spadeful of the area I name should be sifted'. The excavators used a technique reminiscent of 'wall-chasing', following the line of a wall, which was used in many earlier 19th century excavations.

Other areas excavated included the central pit within the circular wooden platform and a boat dock attached to the crannog. Throughout the excavation, small finds and wooden objects were recovered, including a possible ladder and a logboat from the adjacent dock (Fig 3). In order to excavate the 12.3 m-long logboat and transport it to the Kelvingrove Museum in Glasgow where it resides today, a large workforce were required and the Clyde Trust, who were responsible for the dredging and canalisation of the estuary, was asked for its co-operation in the lifting and transportation operation. The Trust continued to help with the efforts of the excavation and brought authority and knowledge to the venture, including an accurately surveyed plan of the site, undertaken using a plane table, alidade, and probably chains.

The number of small finds from the excavation was limited. However, the material found was remarkable in one respect: the discovery of a series of at least 30 unusual objects made of stone and shell. Lines and circles are carved into the surfaces of these objects forming representations of human faces, figures, and abstract designs (Figs 4-5). Donnelly describes one of them in the following way: 'the mouth open wide, and the cavity being a perforation right through, gives it a decidedly comical and somewhat lifelike expression in some lights' (Fig 5). It was these objects, rather than the structure or function of the crannog itself, that caused most press speculation.

The ensuing controversy began through comments made about the authenticity of the small finds by Dr Robert Munro. This led to a difference in opinion between Dr Munro and the excavators, which continued both in private letters and articles published in the local newspapers. One such article published by Dr Munro in the Glasgow Herald in January 1899 acted as the catalyst to many years of public debate. In this he pointed out that similar figurines had been found during another excavation by the Helensburgh Society and that, in his opinion, they were forgeries intentionally deposited during the excavation. Donnelly and his co-excavators replied by defending the authenticity of their finds and inviting expert opinion to verify this. Over the following months, the editors of the local newspapers, the Evening Times and the Glasgow Herald, received a flood of letters from supporters of both sides.

In 1903 a letter written by the Reverend Robert Munro, a regular contributor in the original debate and a fierce supporter of Dr Munro's position, breathed new life into the debate. He strongly questioned whether the structure found at Dumbuck was a crannog at all and attacked the excavators for calling it so. This sparked a flurry of correspondence throughout 1903-1904, and finally came to a head in 1905 with the publication of Dr Munro's book Archaeology and False Antiquities, in which he clarified his view that the crannog was genuine but that the objects were not. Donnelly died shortly after the publication of Dr Munro's book. In a 1932 article Donnelly's son accused the antagonists of the controversy as contributing factors to his father's early death at the age of 53.

In 1998, 100 years after the initial excavation, work began anew. During this excavation another object surfaced and its discoverers can confidently say, thanks to extended knowledge and current technology, that it is a forgery. But who produced and placed the fake objects at the crannog in the first place? From the location of the new site it seems likely that the site was covered with fakes. Donnelly, and co-excavators Bruce and Millar, all seem to have suffered from the controversy rather than profited, so it would appear that they were not the perpetrators. There is no clear evidence that the paid excavators were involved either. So who was it then? Maybe someone who held a grudge against the excavators, the Helensburgh Society, the architectural establishment at the time, or it was just a practical joke that got out of hand. We may never know.

Controversy on the Clyde. Archaeologists, Fakes and Forgers: The Excavation of Dumbuck Crannog by Alex Hale and Rob Sands is published by RCAHMS (2005; 64pp, 49 colour and b/w illus. Paperback, £7.50 excl. p & p). Available at: www.rcahms.gov.uk/publication/dumbuck.html or through Tel. +44 (0)131 662 1456; email: info@rcahms.gov.uk.

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For further information on the RCAHMS archive of Scotland's built heritage, see: www.rcahms.gov.uk.

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Sasanian Wine

ROMAN & SASANIAN WINE IN INDIA

Robert Tomber

Since the late 1700s thousands of Roman gold and silver coins have been recorded in India, many occurring as hoards. Highly visible, these coins of precious metals reinforce the vivid writing of classical authors such as Strabo, Pliny the Elder, and Ptolemy who reported on India. Coinage, however, is not the only type of Roman artefact found in India. Since the first discovery of Roman pottery in 1944 by Sir Mortimer Wheeler in the Madras Government Museum, an ever increasing number of amphora sherds have been reported from archaeological excavations in peninsular India, with a concentration in modern Gujarat and Maharashtra (Fig 2).

Roman amphorae, the transport containers of the ancient world, carried foodstuffs intimately linked with the Roman way of life, such as wine, olive oil, and fish products, which were traded throughout the empire and beyond. Roman amphorae, however, incorporated a multitude of types relating to their source, date, and contents, but to extract this information it is necessary to catalogue them more precisely by class. While the importance of this has been widely recognised in India, apart from a few notable exceptions they are normally grouped under this umbrella term.

In 1998 I undertook a preliminary field trip to India to examine the main groups of published Roman amphorae. While in the Department of Archaeology at Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda I came across the rim and base of an unusual vessel from the site of Vallabhipur (ancient Vallabhi) in Gujarat. The vessel was a real enigma, not obviously belonging to any known type. It was somewhat by chance that several years later I discovered similar vessels while examining pottery from Iran, particularly from the fringes of the Gulf, collected by the late Andrew Williamson between 1968 and 1971. Here I found numerous examples of my unknown vessel - which my colleague Dr Derek Kennet from Durham University identified as a well-known type produced in Mesopotamia from the late Parthian and Sasanian periods (second through mid-7th century) into the early Abbasid era (9th century).

Known as the 'torpedo', the vessel has a characteristically long cylindrical shape and a spiky hollow base with a small diameter and a rounded rim (Fig 1). The universal lack of handles distinguishes them from their Roman counterparts. Although no kiln sites have yet been located, they are thought to have been made in southern Iraq, probably in workshops throughout the region. Most vessels have a thick black internal coating presumed to be bitumen, a feature frequently associated with Roman wine amphorae. Wine was also an important part of Persian life and it has been suggested that 'torpedoes' were used for this purpose.

Armed with this new knowledge, I returned to India in 2003 to systematically examine as many published and unpublished amphorae as possible. What gradually emerged was that many of the amphorae previously thought to be Roman are actually torpedoes. At present I have identified them from 19 sites in India and Sri Lanka (Fig 2). Dating these vessels is difficult, but it appears that many arrived in India during the Sasanian period (AD 224-651), although continuing into the Early Islamic period (7th-9th centuries). Their distribution on Gulf sites indicates that they came via this route. Interestingly, their arrival in India appears to be separate from genuine Roman amphorae of the same period also found in Gujarat. The concentration of 'torpedoes' in Gujarat and Maharashtra reflects the cosmopolitan nature of the region, subject to wave-upon-wave of foreign visitors and invaders, while examples from the south of India probably relate to the thriving trade with Sri Lanka during the 5th and 6th centuries AD.

If Sasanian and Roman vessels travelled separately to India, this may reflect more than the practicalities of different trade routes, respectively from the Gulf and the Red Sea. Another factor may be the frequently cited enmity between the two peoples. This is illustrated by Roman attempts to break the Sasanian monopoly on silk using Ethiopians as intermediaries. Writing in the 6th century, Procopius observed in Book 1 of his History of the Wars that 'the Persian merchants always locate themselves at the very harbours where the Indian ships first put in... and are accustomed to buy the whole cargoes'. Regardless of whether these vessels travelled together or separately, it is clear that imported amphora sherds found in India have much richer stories to tell than previously thought.

The author wishes to thank colleagues throughout India and Germany, who were unfortunately too numerous to mention individually, and generously allowed her access to the collections reported on here.

Fig 1. Torpedo jar, complete apart from the abraded base, showing the cylindrical body shape. Photo © The British Museum.

Fig 2. Map of the known distribution of torpedo jars in India and Sri Lanka (by Antony Simpson).

Dr Roberta Tomber is a Visiting Fellow in the Department of Conservation, Documentation, and Science at the British Museum. The fieldwork described was funded by the AHRC as part of a major grant held with Professor David Peacock of Southampton University.

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12-15 February, GERHARD HIRSCH NACHF. Coins, medals, and antiquities, Munich. Tel: (49) 89 292 150; e-mail: coins@hirschcmppurse.com.

17 March. JEAN ELSEN. General sale, including ancient coins, Brussels. Tel: (32) 2734 6356; e-mail: numismatique@elsen.be; www.elsen.be.

EXHIBITIONS
UNITED KINGDOM ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL AND MONEY IN THE BYZANTINE WORLD. A joint exhibition between the Barber Institute of Fine Arts and the British Museum. The main theme of the exhibition is the pervasive influence of the Byzantine Empire (from the 4th-15th centuries AD) on regions that lay outside its frontiers, as manifest in the style of coinage, jewellery, flasks, ivory, and other objects. THE BARBER INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS (44) 121 414 7333 (www.barber.org.uk). Until November.

ROMAN PROVINCIAL COINAGE ONLINE
A new, fully searchable database built around Roman provincial coinage of the Antonine Period (AD 138-192). 11,730 different coin types from 386 cities, based on 46,725 individual specimens. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (http://rpc.ashm.ac.uk/).

GERMANY
Frankfurt am Main

Berlin
AQUISITIONS IN THE COIN CABINET SINCE 1990. Featured are many fine coins and medallions acquired over the past 16 years, including an exceptionally splendid and rare coin of the Roman emperor Caracalla, found in Macedonia. BODE MUSEUM (www.smb.spk-berlin.de). Until 30 June.

ISRAEL
Tel Aviv
KADMAN NUMISMATIC PAVILION. Founded in 1962 by Leo Kadmam on his coin collection and that of Dr Walter Moses. One of the largest and most important in Israel, emphasising the history of Israel as reflected by its coinage. ERETZ ISRAEL MUSEUM (www.eretzmuseum.org.il). Permanent.

ROME
CAPITOLINE COIN AND MEDAL COLLECTION. Established in 1872 through Ludovico Stanziati's bequest of his collection of ancient coins and precious gems. Major further holdings include donations given by Augusto Castellani, 456 Roman and Byzantine gold coins by Giampietro Campana, and Giulio Bignami's collection of Roman Republican coins and the 'Treasure of Via Alessandria'. CAPITOLINE MUSEUMS (+39) 06 3996 7800; www.museicapitolini.org.

SWITZERLAND
Geneva
A THOUSAND AND ONE DENARI OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC. A large collection of Roman silver coins and rare gold coins dating from 280-43 BC displayed with carved gems in the Roman Rooms. MUSEE D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE VILLE DE GENEVE (+41) 22 418 26 00 (www.mah.ville.ch). Permanent.

LECTURES
UNITED KINGDOM
16 January. THE LEGEND OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT ON GREEK AND ROMAN COINS. Karsten Dahmen, Royal Numismatic Society, the Warburg Institute, London. 6pm.

20 March. GALERIUS OR CONSTANTINE I: WHO BUILT THE AMPHITHEATRE OF SERDICA? THE COIN EVIDENCE. Evgeni Paunov, Royal Numismatic Society, the Warburg Institute, London. 6pm.

13-15 April. THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF NUMISMATIC SOCIETIES ANNUAL CONGRESS 2007. A series of lectures hosted by the South Wales and Monmouthshire Numismatic Society. Contact: tel: (44) 292 056 1564; e-mail: noel.coxx@btinternet.com; website: www.nums.co.uk.

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ABBASID SAMARRA: A MEDIEVAL CITY IN A MODERN WAR ZONE
Mark Merrony

With images of war-torn Iraq appearing on the television and in newspapers around the world on a daily basis, it is easy to overlook the fact that this is a region crammed full of some of the most important and well-preserved archaeological sites in the world and host to the extant remnants of some of the greatest ancient sites such as Akkadian, Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Islamic. Samarra, an important centre of the Abbasid caliphate, is no exception. Located 150km north of Baghdad on the Tigris, it is one of the largest and best-preserved sites that ever graced the pre-modern age.

Samarra seems to have first been occupied in the 7th millennium BC, followed by apparent peace and tranquillity until the end of the 3rd millennium BC. This era yielded the remains of four small sites, including a temple complex of Old Akkadian date, possibly founded in the reigns of Sargon (2334-2279 BC) or his son Rimush (2278-2270 BC). Traces of occupation were also found on a 2nd millennium BC tell, and two substantial 1st millennium BC sites, comprising a tell and fortified enclosure dating to the Old Assyrian (1906-1380 BC) and Neo-Assyrian (1000-600 BC) periods respectively. Thereafter, the principal remains preceding the Abbasid period are Sasanian (AD 226-637), including several small towns and a large feeder canal of the Nahrawan complex on the east bank of the Tigris.

The massive Abbasid site was founded in AD 835 by the caliph al-Mut'asim (r. AD 833-841) as a royal capital and military base for his field army on the east bank of the Tigris, serving land and irrigation for cultivation and hunting, borne out by the impressive remains of irrigation canals and a large Sasanian hunting park. The extent of the well-preserved Abbasid remains is staggering, stretching over more than 60km along the Tigris like a giant ribbon, in places over 5km wide, and characterised by precisely defined orthogonal streets studied with monumental architecture.

This is one of the truly great archaeological sites in the world.

The sheer volume of these remains has presented an equally monumental task of recording them, and for this reason the Abbasid site has remained relatively obscure, ironically dwarfed by the famous but smaller sites of the great civilisations which preceded it in the region. A partial illuminating factor is the copious historical information available about Samarra and its environs penned by al-Ya'qubī, Ibn Al-Ra'qih Al-Hamadani, and many other early writers.

Samarra began to re-emerge out of the temporal morass in 1978 with the translation of al-Ya'qubī's Kitāb Al-Buldān (Book of Lands) by M.J. de Goeje in Leiden, a unique manuscript describing an eyewitness account of Samarra in the 13th century AD. The first archaeological fieldwork was conducted by the French architect Henri Vernet in 1907 and 1909, which focused on the monumental architecture of Samarra. More generalised fieldwork continued under the auspices of several institutions thereafter, most notably the German-Samarra Expedition in 1911 and 1913, and a further programme of fieldwork commencing in 1936 by the Director-General of Antiquities in Iraq.

The definitive study of the site, however, the Archaeological Survey of Samarra, was begun by Professor Alastair Northedge in 1983 under the auspices of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, with the daunting objective ‘aimed to record all the archaeological remains at Samarra’, comprising a staggering 6908 individual sites. Methodologically, the survey was comprehensive in its scope, combining different yet complementary techniques: aerial photography and satellite imagery; ground surveys; all synthesised with the vast amount of information available from historical texts and the results of previous archaeological fieldwork. The sheer variety of sites recorded range from houses of varying sophistication - civil and military - located within an agglomeration of street grids (termed ‘cantonnement’ or ‘sub-cantonnement’) to public spaces and buildings such as mosques, palaces, and even racing tracks.

Some of the monuments surveyed are particularly enigmatic, such as three racecourses in the shape of a parachute, a bottle, and a cloverleaf. Undoubtedly the most famous monument at Samarra, however, is the extraordinarily well-preserved 9th-century mosque complex of Abu Dulaf (Fig 1). Measuring 214 x 135m, it is set within a roughly square outer enclosure of 358 x 347m. The mosque’s defining characteristic is a spiral minaret, tapering to a height of 34m, resembling an upturned ice-cream cone.

Perhaps the most bizarre aspect of Samarra was its rapid abandonment: a combination of historical and archaeological evidence indicates that it reached its zenith in AD 861, only 24 years after its foundation, and went into rapid decline afterwards when the seat of the Abbasid caliphate moved to Baghdad under al-Mut'adid (r. AD 892-902). It is hoped that present political circumstances in the region will soon be resolved so that its rapid medieval nadir is not mirrored by its disappearance from the Middle Eastern landscape forever, and that it may again be experienced by everyone with an interest in our shared global heritage.

This review article is based on an exciting and ambitious new publication programme: The Historical Topography of Samarra by Alastair Northedge (The British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 2006; 375pp, 207 illus. Hardback, £50). Professor Northedge’s volume is the first of three, with the others focussing on a full catalogue of Samarra’s archaeological remains and the site’s ceramic record.
The cult of Artemis of Ephesus was arguably the most famous in Roman Asia. When the booming business in selling her cult images was temporarily disrupted by the Christian preaching of Paul, the silver-smiths almost caused a riot (Acts 19). The unusual degree to which Artemis designs predominate on the coinage of Ephesus reflects the extraordinary importance of the goddess to the city (Fig 3). The cult statue of Artemis Ephesia is found not just on the coinage of Ephesus itself, but on that of many other cities too. In many cases this is likely to reflect actual local cults of the goddess. This is part of a much broader pattern of the replication of cult-places, which has significant analogues in Islam and Christianity. So how could one set about investigating a topic like this? The answer is through a new website.

Roman Provincial Coinage Online has just become available free of charge. It potentially comprises one of the largest collections of images and related inscriptions from the ancient world, and is searchable by iconography, place, and time. The guided searches, integrated images, interactive maps, and linked tutorials put the site a generation ahead of most other web-based numismatic publications. It is an exciting development for those interested in ancient coins, classical archaeology, and Roman history.

The website is built around a substantial database of Roman Provincial Coinage in the Antonine Period (AD 138-192), which was put together as a result of a research project undertaken at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. It contains information on 13,730 different coin types from 386 cities, and is based on 46,725 individual specimens. Roman Provincial Coinage Online has been designed as a model for putting the rest of provincial coinage online in the future, from its beginning in 44 BC to its end in AD 296/7.

The coinage of the Roman Empire for the three and a half centuries following the death of Julius Caesar in 44 BC is conventionally classified as either 'Roman provincial' or as 'Roman provincial'. The imperial coinage was produced under imperial authority, mostly at Rome in the Antonine period, and circulated widely. The provincial coinage is defined pragmatically as including all those coins which are not 'imperial'. Roman provincial coinage is made up of four groups: city coinages, coinages of provincial leagues, provincial issues (that is issues by or for provinces as a whole), and the coinage of client kings. Coins struck in the name of cities make up by far the majority. Cities mostly produced bronze coins, which circulated locally and provided the small change in the eastern half of the Roman Empire. Initially civic bronze coins had also been struck in the West, in Spain, Gaul, Italy, Sardinia, Sicily, Africa Proconsularis, and Mauretania. These western city coinages gradually petered out in the first half of the 1st century AD as the West sought to become more truly Roman by adopting Roman coinage proper.

The publication of Volume 1 of Roman Provincial Coinage (44 BC - AD 69) in 1992 marked the start of an international initiative to provide a standard typology of this rich class of material. Roman Provincial Coinage is under the general editorship of Andrew Burnett of the British Museum and Michel Amandry of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. The Antonine period (AD 138-192), which is the initial subject of Roman Provincial Coinage Online, will in due course form Volume 4 of the Roman Provincial Coinage series. This complements the now complete series of Roman Imperial Coinage, and will result in the provision of a standard treatment of all Roman coinage.

Roman Provincial Coinage Online presents the first systematic treatment of the civic coinage at the height of the Roman Empire, and will have great importance for the study of cultural, religious, political, economic, and administrative history at both a local and an imperial level. The relatively even survival of coins from all places and periods in which they were produced contrasts markedly with the patchy nature of the literary, inscriptional, sculptural,
and other archaeological evidence, and offers a unique opportunity for comparative work. The illustrations on these pages are designed to give a taste of the treats in store (Figs 1-9).

The iconography and inscriptions of the provincial coins are full of wider interest. This is the period when for the first time the coinage displayed a marked interest by the Greeks in their past, real or imagined. An emphasis on the glorious Greek past was one of the ways in which Greeks came to terms with the reality of Roman power in the present. It was a forceful feature of the literature of the period too. The extent to which coinage was used to define and display communal identities is of course. The facility to which it was not just a question of recalling or inventing a past. The languages used, the monuments depicted, the religious cults illustrated, and the presence or absence of references to Rome all spoke volumes. The inscriptions on the coinage include imperial names and titles, the names of imperial officials and members of the local elites, and the magistrates they held. The coins are a vital source for relationships between cities, both of rivalry and of influence. The facility to which iconography is immensely rich for topics ranging from mythology and religion to the presentation of the emperor. The provincial coinage is also a vital source for the study of monetisation in the Roman world. (For those interested in reading more about the coinage, a volume with chapters by 16 leading international scholars was published by Oxford University Press in 2005 under the title Coinage and Identity in the Roman Provinces.)

It was decided to publish online in order to make this extensive body of information and images available to the Roman world available in the most flexible and user-friendly way possible. Consequently, it is hoped that the result will be an increase in the use of the material within a wide variety of classical and archaeological contexts. The facility to which material online by a variety of criteria is intended to encourage more extensive use than would conventional publication alone. A further objective was to encourage feedback from new material from museums, collectors, and dealers, and thus to make the conventional publication more complete, and to allow further updating of the website.

The website contains introductory sections on the nature of Roman provincial coinage, designed to help the unfamiliar with the material, and a guide to the imperial family. The heart of the website is the database of 46,725 coins with integrated digital images. There are four modes for searching the database, designed to meet different needs. The simplest is a Quick Search of the type familiar to fans of Google. The Identification Search locates a coin or finds a standard reference for it. The Iconographic Search is for those who want to examine the coins either for all mints or by region. Finally, an Advanced Search has been designed with maximum flexibility for the experienced user. Users may hold on to coins they have selected for the duration of their session in a virtual 'Purse'. Forms allow users to send details of any coin type not yet included in the database, or additions and corrections to material already there. The interactive maps should be great fun for everybody. Cities may be located on a zoomable map and clicking on the map shows the coin of the city. It is also possible to move around the maps looking at the coins of adjacent cities.

Then there is the material itself. Coins are mass-produced objects, so that from the historical point of view it does not make sense to continue consideration to the collection in any one museum. RPC Online includes the holdings of ten major international collections located in Oxford, London, Cambridge, Glasgow, New York, Paris, Copenhagen, Munich, Berlin, and Vienna. In addition, all published regional studies and monographs on individual mints have been incorporated into the database. All this is available with a click of your mouse. Why not take a look?

Roman Provincial Coinage Online has been developed by the Academic Computing Development Team (ACDT) of the University of Oxford. Funding for the underlying research project was provided jointly by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and by the University of Oxford.

The core collections on which Roman Provincial Coinage Online is based are: Berlin (Staatliche Museen), Cambridge (Fitzwilliam Museum), Copenhagen (Nationalmuseet), Glasgow (Hunterian Museum), London (British Museum), Munich (Staatliche Münzsammlung), New York (American Numismatic Society), Oxford (Ashmolean Museum), Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale de France), and Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum).

For further information, see: http://rpc.ashmolean.ox.ac.uk/.

Minerva, January/February 2007
EDITORS' CHOICE

Goodbye to the Vikings?
Re-reading Early Medieval Archaeology
Richard Hodges

When a book comes out by Richard Hodges, you know that it is going to be worth the read. This modestly priced paperback is no exception, usefully bringing together a wide range of essays and papers produced between 1998 and 2004 in diverse publications. All the essays, which have been partially rewritten or modified for this book, have content relating to themes initially examined by the author in his doctoral and post-doctoral research in the 1970s and in recent collaborative projects that in many ways form a logical extension of these interests. These principally comprise the long-term excavations at Butrint on the Adriatic coast of Albania (under the aegis of the Albanian Institute of Archaeology and the Butrint Foundation; see Minerva July/August 2001, pp. 46-51), at San Vincenzo al Volturno, but also at the hilltop site of Montecentri in Tuscany.

Hodges adeptly demonstrates how archaeology can challenge the traditional historical picture of the early Middle Ages, presenting 'impressionable sketches about general historical themes'. Reappraisals of accepted stories behind migratory tribes in early medieval Europe, King Arthur (in the context of archaeological discoveries at Tintagel, Cadbury-Camelot, Bantham Sands, and Mediterranean-based economic developments), and Charles-magne are advocated. The excavations conducted at Butrint provide a case study in re-examining the end of Roman towns, while the interpretation of the monastery at San Vincenzo al Volturno is compared with the famous plan of the monastery at St Gall made at the scriptorium of Reichenau (southern Germany) c. 820. The role of nationalism in Albania is discussed, and Professor Hodges revisits his influential, if provocative, 1982 publication Dark Age Economics in the light of the changing research in this field (with emphasis on the important excavations at Dorestad in the Netherlands, as the paper was originally published in a series of studies presented to W.A. van Es). Some chapters take a close-up view of particular sites - such as the fascinating evidence for 9th-century craft workshops at San Vincenzo. The title for the book is taken from his short essay challenging the traditional histories of the Vikings in the light of new archaeological evidence through excavation, and the increasing quantity of numismatic evidence. They are recast as Europeans who, like many others, sought to adapt contemporary developments to their advantage. Chronology, demography, economy, settlement, the processes of continuity and discontinuity, are all examined.

Hodges observes that in this new age of research, medieval archaeology is no longer destined solely to illustrate history. Early medieval archaeological sites need to be read like books, forming chronicles of material evidence that hold the potential to unlock the secrets of the transformation of the Roman world and the beginnings of the Middle Ages. Having said that, he notes that archaeology was unable to draw simple conclusions, 'equating peoples with objects, but to seek to construct measured models of relations in an age when new social conditions were taking shape'. Some of the generalisations may need unwrapping and testing in the long term - the various discussions of early medieval economy, with reference to Henri Pirenne and Michael McCormick on the breakdown of the Roman trading system in the Mediterranean, are understandably centred on the Mediterranean and Carolingian worlds, but references to a 'failing' Northern and Atlantic communities with 'apparent material poverty' depend on one's perspective and comparative sources.

Syntheses like this, which provoke questions, relate the latest discoveries, and reveal new insights, help the formulation of research agendas to fresh avenues of inquiry. These re-readings are stimulating and recommended for further digestion and contemplation.

Dr Mark Redknap,
Curator of Medieval & Later Archaeology,
National Museums & Galleries of Wales

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Greek Sculpture. Function, Materials, and Techniques in the Archaic and Classical Periods
Edited by Olga Palagia.

Picture books on Greek sculpture display the material in the best possible light, downplaying any unsightly elements and emphasising its aesthetic aspects. The book under review is not concerned with stylistic analysis but with directing our attention to these details of carving and casting, assembling and finishing that enable us to better understand the practice of Greek sculpture. The contributors have been given a free hand to carry out their brief, but in general the three components of the sub-heading are covered in each chapter.

Much attention had been given recently to the material from which Greek statues were carved. Scientific analysis has enabled researchers to understand more clearly the distinctions between the different marbles (Naxian, Parian, Pentelic, Proconnesian), and Norman Herz's chapter deals with the science in detail. However, visual study still has a part to play in distinguishing the fine grain and white colour of Pentelic, the larger grain and transulence of Parian, and so on. We are encouraged to consider the quarries from which the stones were worked, the carving carried out on the spot by the families of quarians, and the way in which the splitting of the marble affected the finished shape of any statue.

Inevitably, bronze, although of increasing importance in the history of Greek sculpture, plays a smaller part in the presentation of the evidence, and soft stones, and wood stay peripheral,
Book Reviews

The main sections deal with each region of Syria in turn with a brief geographical and historical introduction and an account of the important sites. In some cases the narrative is brought to life by the eye-witness accounts of T.E. Lawrence, who described the great Crusader fortress of Krak des Chevaliers as 'perhaps the best preserved and most wholly admirable castle in the world'. Warwick Ball's own style is equally enlivening, and the physical experience of buildings and places are excellently conveyed to the reader. This castle is no exception: 'on entering, one immediately turns a sharp angle to climb up a long, steep narrow tunnel, built within the thickness of the walls, that would force any attacker into a single vulnerable file to be picked off with ease'.

As such, this book is more of a descriptive guide to the multi-period architecture of Syria than a technical handbook, which makes it all the more endearing. Unfortunately, this is also borne out by a distinct lack of high-quality plans and no elevations. The plans of Resafa and Palmyra are two such examples: the monuments are presented on a very small scale and not especially clear, lending them an insipid appearance.

This is the only deficiency in a very good book and this criticism pales into insignificance given the amount of painstaking research that has clearly gone into its compilation. The treatment of large and complicated sites like Palmyra is especially commendable, where the author deals with numerous monuments and public spaces with seamless continuity and appropriate detail, from the Temple of Bel via the Main Colonnaded Street and its monuments, the West Decumanus, and on to the enigmatic Valley of the Tombs. This work is an archaeological and historical tour de force of one of the most interesting countries in the world.

Dr Mark Maron

Byzantine to Modern Pottery in the Aegan. An Introduction and Field Guide
Joanita Vroom

For field guides of artefact typologies to work, they need to adhere to a strict formula. The writer needs to be authoritive, concise and disciplined in what information is supplied, and the end-product must be capable of simple use either in the field or at home. Dr Vroom's study of what are largely poorly known pottery types circulating in the Aegean from the 5th to 20th century ticks all these boxes.

This field guide is remarkably user-friendly. Some 68 individual types are presented, with a description of clay fabric, decoration, shape, origin, distribution, and date range on the right-hand page and a full series of drawings and colour images on the left. The use of colour and reproduction of the most typical vessel parts preserved in the archaeological record (predominantly handles, bases, and rims) means that this book is not only a groundbreaking publication but will be heavily thumbed over the coming years.

As the author humbly admits, there is a forest of problems with pottery studies in the Aegean, which lags far behind Classical and Late Antique studies in the West and Near East: chronologies are insecure and terminology is not always appropriate. Though the subject remains in its infancy, Dr Vroom's expertise on dozens of ancient sites from Albania and Greece to Turkey and Cyprus means that the area has been catapulted into modernity.

Alongside familiar sets of early Byzantine amphoras and the region's ubiquitous early Medieval Green and Brown Painted wares and sgraffito bowls are some intriguing new shapes and styles. Painted jugs from Crete are notably reminiscent of the decoration and form of some Coptic wares, while highly crude Slavic wares of the late 6th to 10th centuries speak volumes about the deterioration of the Mediterranean economy at this time. Other formerly obscure styles include 9th-12th century Unglazed Incised Ware, possibly from Central Greece, and a good treatment of Proto-Maolica wares of the 13th to mid-14th centuries from Campania and Apulia, which even penetrated Near Eastern markets. This book is thus not just a new field guide, it also deciphers a new alphabet for archaeologists. Long overdue, this publication fills a black hole in Mediterranean archaeology.

Sean Kingsley

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UNITED STATES
ATLANTA, Georgia
CARLOS MUSEUM OPENS NEW GREEK AND ROMAN GALLERIES. Nearly 100 recently acquired Classical Greek and Roman works have been integrated with about 250 previous holdings, the results of 20 years of careful buying. MICHAEL C. CARLOS MUSEUM (1) 404 727-4282 (www.carlos.emory.edu). (See Minerva, Jan/Feb 2005, pp. 13-17.)


THE ART OF THE ANCIENT AMERICAS. A splendid and varied selection of works from the museum’s collection of Mesoamerican, Central American, and Andean art. MICHAEL C. CARLOS MUSEUM (1) 404 727-4282 (www.carlos.emory.edu). Ongoing exhibition.

BALTIMORE, Maryland
ART OF THE AMERICAS. An exhibition featuring objects loaned to the museum by the museums of the Austro-American Foundation. More than 120 objects represent the highlights of this foundation’s collection. All of the major civilizations of Mesoamerica are featured, including Olmec, Maya, and the site of Teotihuacan. The earliest objects are diminutive ceramic figures from the Valdivia culture (2300 BC); the latest, 16th-century Aztec and Inca sculpture. THE WALTHERS ART MUSEUM (1) 410 695-1000 (www.walters.org). Until 31 September 2012.

BOSTON, Massachusetts
ANTIOCH MOSAIC CONSERVATION.
Visitors can view the cleaning and reconstruction of an important large mosaic recently acquired, featuring an Eros on a dolphin surrounded by marine creatures, that once paced the courtyard of a 3rd century Roman villa in Antioch, Syria. MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS (1) 617 267-9300 (www.mfa.org). Ongoing exhibition. (See Minerva, Nov/Dec 2005, pp. 33-36.)

BROOKLYN, New York
ANCIENT EGYPTIAN MAGIC: MANIPULATION OF WORDS AND BEAUTY. It was believed that the manipulation of written words, speech, and ritual could influence the world through a divinely created force known as Haqqa, as shown in this small exhibition of just 20 objects. THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM (1) 718 638-5000 (www.brooklynmuseum.org). Until 12 August.

EGYPT REBORN: ART FOR ETERNITY. The Second Intermediate Period is one of North America’s finest collections of ancient Egyptian works. Newly designed galleries have allowed the museum to double the number of holdings on public view. Some pieces had previously been in storage for more than a century. Over 600 works now document Egyptian art from the Predynastic period to the reign of Amenhotep III. THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM (1) 718 638-5000 (www.brooklynmuseum.org). (See Minerva, May/June 2003, pp. 11-14.)

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts
THE ART OF ANCIENT ROME. Stone sculpture, bronze, terracotta, and glass from the museum’s collection. ARTHUR M. SACKLER MUSEUM, HARVARD UNIVERSITY (1) 617 495-9400 (www.museums.harvard.edu). Ongoing exhibition.

ANCIENT CYPRUS: THE CESNOLA COLLECTION AT THE SEMITIC MUSEUM. Select masterworks from Cesnola’s collection of pottery and glass vessels, lamps, figurines, and bronzes from Cyprus, dating from c. 2000 BC to AD 300. THE SEMITIC MUSEUM, HARVARD UNIVERSITY (1) 617 495-4631 (www.tsx.harvard.edu/~semitic). Ongoing exhibition.

THE HOUSES OF ANCIENT ISRAEL: DOMESTIC, RURAL, CEMETERIES. An exhibition devoted to daily life in Iron Age Israel (c. 1200-600 BC), featuring a full-scale replica of a fully furnished, two-story village house. Other sections focus on the palace and Temple of ancient Israel. THE SEMITIC MUSEUM, HARVARD UNIVERSITY (1) 617 495-4631 (www.tsx.harvard.edu/~semitic). Ongoing exhibition.

NUZI AND THE HURRIANS: FRAGMENTS FROM A FORGotten PASS. The daily lives of the Hurrians c. 1400 BC in the small town of Nuzi (northeastern Iraq). Approximately 100 objects from the 3rd millennium BC are on exhibit. Ancient Near Eastern artefacts are displayed, including intricate cuneiform tablets, seals and impressions, glass work, pottery, and beaded jewellery. THE SEMITIC MUSEUM, HARVARD UNIVERSITY (1) 617 495-4631 (www.tsx.harvard.edu/~semitic). Ongoing exhibition.

CHICAGO, Illinois
MESOPOTAMIAN GALLERY REOPENS. The largest collection of Mesopotamian art in the American art world, the gallery will reopen within a new climatised wing. The 2500 pieces (not all of which are on display) include a monumental Hammurabi stele bull from Khorsabad, the mate of that in the Baghdad Museum, and a number of fine early sculptures of the 3rd millennium BC. ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM (1) 773 702-9520 (www.oi.uchicago.edu). THE SILK ROAD AND BEYOND: TRAVEL, TRADE, AND TRANSFORMATION. An exploration of the cultural and religious connections resulting from the ancient network of trade routes that extended across Asia, linking such civilisations as Rome and China, with works selected from the collections of THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO (1) 312 575-8000 (www.artic.edu). Until 1 April.

DURHAM, North Carolina
ROME: LIVES AND AFTERLIVES. The object of this inaugural exhibition is to tease out the idea of Rome in both its ancient and baptismal dimensions. A journey to the afterlives of the ancient city, showing how the idea of Rome mattered to philosophers, rulers, visitors, and astronomers, and how they adapted that idea to their own purposes. NASHER MUSEUM OF ART, DUKES UNIVERSITY (1) 919 684-5103 (www.nasherduke.edu). Until 16 July 2007.

FARMVILLE, Virginia

HANOVER, New Hampshire
FROM DISCOVERY TO DARTMOUTH: THE ASSYRIAN RELIEFS AT THE HOOD MUSEUM OF ART, 1836-2006. Six large-scale reliefs from the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II depicting a ritual performance undertaken by the king, with human and supernatural beings in attendance. A special installation includes other Near Eastern works from the collection and special interactive 3D computer reconstruction of the reliefs in their original context. HOOD MUSEUM OF ART, DARTMOUTH COLLEGE (1) 603 646-2800 (www.hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu). Until 11 March.

HONOLULU, Hawaii
LOST MARITIME CIVILIZATIONS OF ANCIENT CHINA - 8000 YEARS. The archaeological discoveries made in southeast China over the past 50 years illustrating the shared history between the peoples of prehistoric China and the Pacific. HONOLULU ACADEMY OF ARTS (1) 808 797-1886 (www.honoacad.org). 24 February - 6 May.

JACKSONVILLE, Florida
TEMPLES AND TREASURES: EGYPTIAN ART FROM THE BRITISH MUSEUM. The second venue for 85 works of art from the Early Dynastic period through the Roman period, including sculptures, reliefs, funerary objects, jewellery, and papyr. CUMMER MUSEUM OF ART (1) 904 356-6857 (www.cummer.org). Until 18 March (then to Raleigh, Albuquerque, and Fresno).

KANSAS CITY, Missouri

LANCASTER, California
NEW DISPLAY OF EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES. A host of new objects from the Egyptian collection, masks & bronze & wood statuettes are among the antiquities. CITY OF LANCASTER ART GALLERY (1) 661 723-6250.

LOS ANGELES, California
CLASSICAL CONNECTIONS: THE ENDURING INFLUENCE OF GREEK AND ROMAN ART. The relationship of ancient art with later European art is examined in terms of its motifs, and techniques borrowed by later artists and the approach to the human figure known today as the classical ideal. GETTY CENTER (1) 310 444 7300 (www.getty.edu). A new permanent exhibition.
LOS ANGELES, California

LOYAL IMAGE, HAUNTED GROUND: ICONS FROM ISRAEL. The sole venue for three traveling exhibitions of 43 icons and six manuscripts from St Catherine’s on Mount Sinai, the world’s oldest continuously operating Coptic monastery, are housed still in a structure built between AD 527 and 565. GETTY CENTER (1) 310 440-7300 (www.getty.edu). Until 4 March.

MALIBU, California

STORIES IN STONE: CONSERVING MONUMENTAL MASTERPIECES FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF TUNISIA. The first major exhibition in the United States devoted solely to ancient artifacts, a selection of 36 items, includes some of the finest examples from the famed collection of the Bardo Museum, Tunis, and those of the Archaeological Museums at Sousse (ancient Hadrumetum) and El Djem (ancient Thysdrus). It emphasizes the work of the Getty Conservation Institute training programme on the conservation of mosaics and its collaboration with the museum in Tunis. J. PAUL GETTY VILLA (1) 310 440-7300. Until 30 April. (Admission free for first reservations; required; parking $7.) (See Minerva this issue, pp. 17-21.)

NEW YORK, New York

DISCOVERING TUTANKHAMUN: THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF HARRY BURTON. Burton, a staff member of the museum, recorded the discovery and exploration of the famous tomb of the young 18th Dynasty king in 1922. These vintage glass photos document every stage in the process of the excavation. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART (1) 212 879-5500 (www.metmuseum.org). Until 29 April.

EARLY GOTHIC HALL REOPENED. After a five-year renovation, the Early Gothic Hall at the Cloisters (the Metropolitan’s branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art) has reopened. The 13th-century limestone windows have been restored and two dozen panels of stained glass, primarily from the 13th and 14th centuries, have been conserved and reinstated. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART (1) 212 879-5500 (www.metmuseum.org).

EGYPTIAN TOMBS AND GALLERIES REOPENED. The Old Kingdom tombs of Perneb and Raemak have been architecturally reconfigured to closely resemble their original settings. Five galleries have also been completely renovated, including Presentation and Early Dynastic art and Roman Egypt. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART (1) 212 879-5500 (www.metmuseum.org). Permanent exhibition.

SET IN STONE: THE FACE OF MEDIEVAL SCULPTURE. An exhibition of medieval heads from the museum’s collection and other American and European sources, treating a variety of artistic and thematic issues, such as iconoclasm and the legacy of Rome. The exhibition includes an in-depth examination of the changing notions of the ‘portrait’ sculpture without context and the search for provenance; head reliquaries as power objects; and the making of art in Italy and the METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART (1) 212 879-5500 (www.metmuseum.org). Until 19 February. Catalogue.

GLIMPSES OF THE SILK ROAD: CENTRAL ASIA IN THE FIRST MILLENNIUM AD. A new installation featuring 37 sculptures, paintings, woven textiles, and stucco, primarily from the museum’s collections, produced by the Persians, Kushans, Sogdians, Chinese, and other cultures along the famous Silk Road. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART (1) 212 879-5500 (www.metmuseum.org). Catalogue.

NEW GALLERIES FOR ISLAMIC ART. The reinstallation of the museum’s renowned collection of Islamic Art has accommodated its collection of over 12,000 objects from the Islamic world to the METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART (1) 212 879-5500 (www.metmuseum.org).

REINSTALLATION OF THE EARLY EGYPTIAN AND ROMAN EGYPTIAN ART GALLERIES. A larger space is now devoted to the museum’s extensive collections of Predynastic and Early Dynastic art of the period 4000-3000 BC. (See Minerva this issue, pp. 17-21.)

NEW YORK, New York

TOLEDINO, Ohio

ANCIENT SEASIDE VILLAGES OF THE ROMAN ELITE. 74 works of art and artifacts from five Roman villas at Stabiae, Italy, including 23 frescoes, mosaics, marble sculptures, and a complete installation of a three-coach dining room. TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART (1) 419 255-8000 (www.toledomuseum.org). Until 28 January (then to other US venues - see www.toledomuseum.org). Catalogue.


THE LURE OF POMPEII. Explores why since its discovery and excavation in the famous buried Roman city in the 1750s it has become an important destination for travellers for some 250 years. An exhibition complementing the Ancient Seaside Villas exhibition. TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART (1) 419 255-8000 (www.toledomuseum.org). Until 14 January. WASHINGTON DC

ARTS OF THE SOUTH SUBCONTINENT AND THE HIMALAYAS. An extraordinary range of objects now presented in a smaller space and with an expanded scope of works. FRED GALLERIES (1) 202 357-4880 (www.si.edu/asia). Ongoing exhibition.

WASHINGTON DC

BLACK AND WHITE CHINESE CERAMICS FROM THE 10TH-14TH CENTURIES. Glossy, black-glazed wares, brilliant white porcelains, and, new this year, 18 vases from the Song (AD 960-1279) and Yuan (AD 1279-1368) dynasties. FRED GALLERIES (1) 202 357-4880 (www.si.edu/asia). Ongoing exhibition.

Sculpture of South and Southeast Asia. An outstanding group of 10th to 13th century Cambodian and Burmese sculpture.
LUCS-SUR-BOULOGNE, Loire
THE SEA FOR MEMORY. 20 years of research resulted in this exposition of 550 objects, which bring light on the approaches from the estuaries of the Geonie in the maritime Seine. HISTORIAL DE LA VENDEE (33) 2 926 61 (www. vendees.fr). Until 15 April (then to Saint- Malo and Rennes).

MILLAU
LIGHT AND LIGHTING IN ANTIQUITY. 230 lamps, lanterns, and candles from Ceramic and Roman times. MUSEE DE MILLAU (33) 565 59 01 68. Until 24 March.

NANTES
ANCIENT EGYPT. Egyptian antiquities from the Middle Kingdom to the Roman period from the museum's collection. MUSEE THOMAS-DODJEE (33) 240 71 03 30 (www.mgd.fr). Until 11 July 2008.

NEMOURS, Seine et Marne
OPERA OF THE COLLECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KABUL. A rare opportunity to see the many masterworks from four major sites: Ai-Khanoum (Late 4th century BC), Takht-i-Bahi (late 1st millennium BC), Bulaq (2200-1800 BC), Tillia-Tepe (1st century BC), and Begram (1st-3rd century AD) with its fabulous treasures. MUSEE GILMOT (31) 1 56 52 53 99 (www.museegilmot.fr). Until 30 April.

EGYPT'S SUNKEN TREASURES. The astonishing discoveries made by Frank Goddio and his team of underwater divers and archaeologists. These comprise more than 400 objects from Naukratis, Herakleion, and Alexandria. Including three colossal (5m-high) pink granite statues, and a layer of the GRAND PALAIS (which reopened in September 2005) (33) 1 44 13 17 30. Until 14 March. Catalogue. (See Minerva, July/August 2006, pp. 9-12.)

TENDE, Alpes-Maritimes
MARDI GRAS: MARDI GRAS. A re-creation of the region around Mount Begu, one of the most important sites for this type of prehistoric art in Europe. MUSEE DEPARTEMENTAL DES MISTERES (33) 493 04 79 10 (www.museedemisteres.com). Until 30 March 2007.

VENICE AND THE ORIENT. From the 9th century AD, and for several hundred years, this city-state exercised an economic and commercial supremacy in the Mediterranean with strong links to Cairo, Damascus, and Constantinople. An exhibition organised with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, INSTITUT DU MONDE ARABE (33) 1 40 51 38 38 (www.imarabe.org). Until 18 February. Catalogue.

GERMANY
BERLIN
CONSERVE OR RESTORE. A history of the over-organisation of archaeological objects, especially classical vases, and a presentation on the constant dilemma of whether it is appropriate to restore or just conserve. SAMMLUNG, ALTEN MUSEUM, (49) 30 2090 5201 (www.smb.spk-berlin.de/smb/sammmlun gen). Until 25 February.


BONN, Nordrhein-Westfalen
ANKOR: SACRED HERITAGE OF CAMBODIA. Some 200 stone, bronze, and wood sculptures, architectural elements, and textiles from the 6th to 10th century. ANKOR, from the 9th-century Khmer kingdom to the 19th-century Chao Anou and Funan to the 9th-century Khmer kingdom. From the National Museum of Phnom Penh and other Cambodian collections. KUNST UND AUSSTELLUNGSHAUS DER BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND (49) 222 45 0 (www.bundeskunsthalle.de). Until 9 April.

DEATH AND POWER: PRESENTATIONS OF THE HERE AND NOW IN ANCIENT AMERICA AND EGYPT. An interesting presentation of the similarities and differences between pyramids, sun kings, mummies, and texts, thus inviting some speculation. AEGYPTISCHES MUSEUM DER UNIVERSITAT BONN (49) 228 739 710. Until 18 February.

FROM THE GODS TO GOD: EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN THE RHINELAND. Early Christian finds from Xanten to Mainz, also illustrating the connections with Italy and other regions, with loans from many museums. RHEINISCHES LANDESMUSEUM, BONN, (49) 228 20700 (www.rlm.bv.de). Until 15 August.

BREMEN
MARKETS OF GRECian VASE ART FROM THE ZIMMERMAN COLLECTION. An ongoing exhibition of Attic black-figure and red-figure vases, c. 650-350 BC, from an outstanding collection of Dr Monfred Zimmermann. ANKTEMUSEUM IM SCHNORR (49) 421 639 3540 (www.anktemuseum.de).

DARMSTADT, Hessen
THE CELTIC PRINCE FROM GLAUBGUR. A richly equipped grave containing a perfectly preserved statue of a 5th-century BC Celtic prince in a permanent exhibition. HESSISCHES LANDESMUSEUM (49) 6151 665 700 (www.himde.de).

HAMBURG
CLEOPATRA AND THE CAESARS. Ancient sculptures complemented by 16th to 19th century paintings of the famous queen in this special exhibition. Bucerius Kunst Forum (49) 4036 09 960, (www.buceriuskunstforum.de) Until 4 February.

HEIDELBERG
THE GREAT SEVEN OF EGYPT - PICTURES FROM PHARAOHIC TIMES TO THE PRESENT. SAMMLUNG DES SEMINARS FUER AEGYPTOLOGIE (49) 622 154 2533 (www.aegyptologie.uni-koeln.de/Veranst lanungen). Until 9 February.

KARSRUHE, Baden-Württemberg
ROMANS IN THE UPPER RHINE. A newly opened section devoted to the conquest of the Celts by the Romans in the founding of the province Germany Superior c. AD 83. BADISCHES LANDES-MUSEUM KARLSRUHE SCHLOSS (49) 721 926 6514 (www.landesmuseum.de) Ongoing exhibition.

BEAUTY IN ANCIENT EGYPT. WAYS TO REPRESENT. Over 300 objects from the Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum illustrate the beauty of subject with its many meanings. BADISCHES LANDESMUSEUM (49) 721 926 6514 (www.landesmuseum.de). Until 27 January.

KÖLN (Cologne)
GILDED SPLENDOUR: TREASURES OF CHINA'S LIAO EMPIRE (907-1125). An important exhibition of over 200 recently excavated objects from Inner Mongolia, revealing the complex cultural and religious legacy of the Khitan and their reign over China during the Liao Dynasty. Catalogue, MUSEUM FUER OSTASIATISCHEN KUNST (49) 221 94 05 180 (www.museoenkel.de/museum-fuer- ostasiatische-kunst) 27 January - 22 April (then to Zurich). Catalogue.

KONSTANZ, Baden-Württemberg
PICTURES FROM STONE: THE SINGER ORPHEOUS. The exhibition focuses on the development of Roman mosaic art and features the famous mosaic of Orpheus playing his lyre and singing to the animals, discovered in Mainz in 1995. ARCHÄOLOGISCHES LANDES-MUSEUM - AUSSENSTELLE KONSTANZ (49) 7531 98040 (www.konstanz-alm-bwd.de). Until 4 February.

LEIPZIG, Saxen
THE RENAISSANCE OF THE ETGRASUCI FROM MYTH TO SCIENCE. The development of our knowledge of the Etruscans from the 16th century to the present day featuring features of objects and documents from various museums and the National Archaeological Institute, ANKTEMUSEUM DER UNIVERSITAT LEIPZIG (49) 341 960 3935 (www.uni-leipzig.de/arkti). Until 28 January.

MAINZ, Rheinland-Pfalz
EARLY MIDDLE AGES. A permanent exhibition with over 2200 objects; a major refurbishment with many pieces acquired from excavations over the past 30 years. REIMSCH-GERMANISCHEN ZENTRAL-MUSEUM (49) 613 1323-231.

DATA FROM MUMMY MASKS: THE RECOVERY OF ANCIENT PAPYRUS. In Egypt, wrapped in bandages of used papyrus leaves were made into the cartonnage for mummy masks and coffins. Their dissection has led to some surprising finds. STAATLICHES MUSEUM AEGYPTISCHER KUNST (49) 89 298 546 (www.aegyptisches-museum- muenchen.de). Until 25 February.

NEUBURG AN DER DONAU, Schleswig-Holstein

EXHIBITION FOCUS
ANKOR - SACRED HERITAGE OF CAMBODIA
Kunst Und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn. Until 9 April


The exhibition features many splendid artefacts from Angkor, the heartland of the ancient Khmer empire, which flourished between the 9th and 13th century. Some of the finest objects on view are the stone and bronze Brahman and Buddhist cult statues from the temples in the region. These are stylistically diverse, including imposing representations, and elegant simplicity, vitality, and spirituality. The main focus of the exhibition are the massive bas-reliefs from the monumental temple of Angkor Wat, built by the Hindu king Suryavarman II in the early 12th century. They are reproduced in their original size as photo-frizes and plaster casts, and accurately portray the stories and myths represented in the stirol originals. Mahasaya Buddhist king Jayavarman VII, presided over the last great phase of the Khmer empire in the late 12th/early 13th century, a period of prolific temple building, which expressed the Buddhist ideals of compassion and wisdom on their faces, towers, and on the outstanding stone sculptures and bronze figures of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas on view in the exhibition. Unique among these is an3 point head temple portraying Jayavarman VII himself, an extremely rare object, representative of the high calibre of the exhibition.

For Further Information:
Tel: (+031) 247 4088
www.kaeh-bonn.de

Minerva, January/February 2007
GREECE
CYPRUS - 1000 FRAGMENTS OF HISTORY: THE THANOS N. ZINTILIS COLLECTION. MUSEUM OF CYCLADIC ART. On long-term loan (25 years) to the Museum of Cycladic Art, this major private collection will be the largest displayed in any Greek museum. It contains more than 1500 Cypriot antiquities ranging from the Chalcolithic to Byzantine periods.

HONG KONG
METAL, WOOD, WATER, FIRE AND EARTH. AN EXHIBITION OF ANTIQUITIES COLLECTIONS IN HONG KONG. The Chinese Antiquities Gallery features over 800 exhibits. Some 400 of these are on loan from private collections representing the superb achievements of the ancient Chinese. HONG KONG MUSEUM OF ART (852) 2731 0116 (www.lcd.gov.hk). Permanent exhibition. Catalogue. (See Minerva, March/April 2006, pp. 19-22.)

IRELAND
DUBLIN
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND: ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS. The collections are now displayed in individual galleries, featuring the Treasury, containing Celtic and medieval art, Prehistoric Ireland, and Viking Age Ireland. NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND (533) 1 677-7444 (www.muse um.ie).

ISRAEL
HAIFA

JERUSALEM
BIBLICAL TREASURES. Permanent display of artefacts related to the cultures of peoples mentioned in the Bible, including Egypt, the Fertile Crescent to Afghanistan, and from Nubia north to the Caucasian mountains. BIBLE LANDS MUSEUM (972) 2561-1066 (www.bilmj.org).


ITALY
BRINDISI
FROM THE SEA TO A MUSEUM. Open permanent display after careful restoration, two rare Roman bronze statues of the late Republic period (c. 1992 off the Antonia through the Archaeological Museum in Florence and from current excavations near Castelvetrano.

FLORENCE
EGYPTIAN MOTIFS IN THE CEMETARY "DELLE INGLESI": THE HOPE TO LIFE BEYOND DEATH. MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO (with the MUSEO EGIZIO) (39) 05 523 575. Until 27 May.

MILAN
INDOAMERICA. Archaeological and ethnographic objects from the Andes, Mesopotamia, and the Moesmoerica, from museums and other collections in Milan, where the first "curiosities" were acquired in the 16th century. PALAZZO CASALI (39) 02 801 410 (www.comune.milano.it/webci ty/eventi.nsf). Until 29 January.

MONTAGNANA, Padova
MUSEO CIVICO E ARCHEOLOGICO. The museum, created in 1980 following the discovery of the Roman necropolis of the gens Vattidia nearby, has now been reorganised. Objects on view range from the Bronze Age to the Middle Ages (39) 42 80 4128.

NAPLES
ETYPOMANIA: ISSI AND MYSTERY. An exhibition on the widespread diffusion of the Egyptian cult in Campli Fiorese on the outskirts of Naples and the objects found, mainly from funerary contexts; with documentation on the Temple of Isis at Pompeii. MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO NAZIONALE (39) 081 440 166 (www.marketplace.it/museo.nazionale). Until 26 February.

PERUGIA
MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO NAZIONALE. New exhibition spaces have been added. The museum is now on view is the Giuseppe Bellucci collection of amulets cal items, and the Etruscan tomb of the Cai' Cu' family and its funerary goods (39) 75 575-9682.

Roma
ROMAN SHIPS. The archaeological site where Roman ships where discovered almost intact in 1989 and the Cantiere delle Navi Antiche di Pisa, where these are being restored, can now be visited by appointment on Fridays, Saturday mornings, and Mondays. CENTRO DEL RESTAURO DEL LEGNO BAGNATO (39) 055 321 5446 (www.navipisa.it).

ROME
ARA PACIS. A specially designed new museum by the American architect Richard Meier to house this important 1st century AD monument is now open to the public. MUSEO D'ARCA PACIS (39) 06 82 059 127. (See Minerva, August 2006, pp. 16-18.) Permanent.

THE ILIAD AT THE COLOSSEUM. An impressive selection of artefacts relating to Homer and his epic work, including busts, red-figure amphorae, frescoes, and other material from the 5th century BC through to the Roman period. THE COLOSSEUM (39) 39937770. (See Minerva, this issue, pp. 15-16.) Until 28 February.

VERONA
ANCIENT BRONZE VASES FROM THE 5TH TO 1ST CENTURY BC. MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO N. TEATRO ROMANO (39) 045 800 0360 (www.comune.verona.it/castev cchio). Until 30 September.

CHINA
BIRTH OF AN EMPIRE. Over 400 objects from the Chou and Western Han dynasties of China, Chinese museums, including some of the famous terracotta warriors, horses, and combat chariots; bronzes, ceremonial jars, vases, and bowls. QINRINALE STABLES, Scuderie Papali (39) 06 3996 7500. Until 28 February 2007.

MUSEO NAZIONALE ETRUSCO DI VILLA GIULIA. The reorganisation of the museum is completed and all rooms are open (39 06 322-657).

JAPAN
KYOTO
STORIES FROM AN EROPTION: POPPEL, HERCULEUM, OPLONTIS. A travelling exhibition of about 400 items, including frescoes, jewellery, and moulds of victims excavated from Pompeii when Mt Vesuvius erupted in AD 79, KYOTO NATIONAL MUSEUM (39) 75 541 1151 (www.kyohaku.go.jp/english). Until 31 January (then to Beijing).

TOKYO

KOREA
OPENING OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA. The new state-of-the-art complex has now opened, celebrating the 60th anniversary of the museum's foundation. (82) 2 2077 9000 (www.nm.or.kr).

THE NETHERLANDS
AMSTERDAM

LEIDEN
BRILLIANT GLASS. Over 450 examples of ancient glassware in the museum's collection, most c. 1400 BC through to the Roman Empire, from Italy, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. RIJKSMUSEUM VAN OUDHEDEN (31) 71 516 3165 (www.rmo.nl). Until 4 March.

THE CELTS. More than 2000 years ago the Celts disappeared from the Netherlands and Belgium. During the Romans conquered Western Europe.

This exhibition examines their symbols, jewellery, and wiccars. RIJKSMUSEUM VAN OUDHEDEN (31) 71 516 3165 (www.rmo.nl). Until 14 May.

PERSIAN KARACHI
TALE OF THE TILE: THE CERAMIC TRADITIONS OF PERSIA. The ceramic traditions of Persia from Mehrangarh to Bahawalpur, c. 3500 BC, and the Indus Valley, c. 2500 BC, to the present day in this recently opened museum. PEARL PALACE MUSEUM (92) 21 5837 669 (www.mohattaplace.muse um.com). Until 30 September.

RUSSIA
MOSCOW
ARCHAEOLOGY OF WAR. An unusual exhibition of 552 antiquities seized by Russian troops as spoils of war from the ruins of a bunker near Berlin's Tiergarten, including Classical marbles, Greek and Etruscan bronzes, Attic vases, and Roman wall paintings. Several treasures include an Attic red-figure vase, c. 470 BC, depicting the burning of Argos by Cretans and Electra, and a 4th century BC Greek bronze statuette of Zeus Dodona. STATE PUSHKIN MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS (81) 933 6974 (www.museumpushkin.ru). Ongoing exhibition.

SPAIN (GRAN CANARIA)
CAVE ART MUSEUM REOPENS. A 6th century cave on the island of Gran Canaria features red and white geometric patterns created by the aboriginal canarian culture. PARQUE ARQUEOLÓGICO CUEVA PINTADA (928) 895 746 (www.cuevapintada.org).

SWEDEN
UPPSALA
THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE NILE VALLEY. A new permanent exhibition featuring a selection of fire objects from the Victoria Museum of Egyptian Antiquities to the University of Uppsala MUSEUM (18) 471 75 71 (www.gusta vianum.uu.se).

SWITZERLAND
BASIL
IN PHARAOH'S GRAVE: THE HIDDEN HOURS OF THE SUN. Featuring the nearly life-size travel of the sun, a full-scale replica of the tomb chamber of Tutmosis III in the Valley of the Kings, and supplemented with about 50 Egyptian antiquities from the Antikenmuseum and the Kestner Museum in Hanover. ANTIKENMUSEUM BASIL UND SAMMLUNG LUDWIG (41) 61 201 12 12 (www.antikenmuseumbasel.ch). Until 28 July.

THE NEBRA SKY DISK: RELIGION AND ASTRONOMY 3600 YEARS AGO. The continuously displayed bronze disk found in Sachsen-Anhalt, Germany, in 1999, inlaid in gold with representations of the sun, moon, and constellations, said to date from the Bronze Age, c. 1600 BC. HISTORISCHES MUSEUM BASEL, BARFUESSERRICHT (41) 61 205 85 00. Until 29 January 2007.

GENEVA
A BYZANTINE TREASURE FOR GENEVA. A major exhibition on the Orthodox Coptic art, and Byzantine coins and seals, donated by Janet Zacos in 2004.
widow of the Turkish dealer and scholar George Zacos (d. 1983). These include an important group of Byzantine silver vessels, a collection of 7th-12th-13th century ceramics, and about 500 Byzantine seals, which were donated to the museum.

Cmatica, Pera Museum, and the Cogit Museum have hosted several exhibitions on this subject. MUSÉUM D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE (41) 22 418 2600 (www.civic-ge.ch/musinfo). Ongoing exhibiton.

CYPUS, FROM APRODITE TO MELISANDRE: FROM THE ANCIENT KINGDOMS TO THE LUSIGNANS. 2600 years of antiquities from museums in Cyprus, the Louvre, Switzerland, and private collections in Geneva. MUSEE D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE (41) 22 418 2600 (www.civic-ge.ch/musinfo). Until 25 March.

MEETINGS, CONFERENCES & SYMPOSIA

UNITED STATES
4-7 January. ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA, ANNUAL MEETING. San Diego Marriott and Marina, San Diego, California. www.archaeological.org.

27 January. THE ORIGINS AND USES OF WRITING IN THE NEAR EAST. A day school at the Learning Centre, University of Birmingham. Contact: Sandra Illott. Tel: (44) 121 414 5612; e-mail: s.e.illott@bham.ac.uk.

13 February. JAMES ATHENIANA: SRPT, 1713-1788: THE REDISCOVERY OF ANTIQUITY. Symposium. BARQUAD CENTER (1) 212 501-1011. E-mail: programs@bcg. bard.edu (www.bcg.bard.edu). (See exhibition on page 59.)

22-24 February. POLITICAL ECONOMIES OF THE AEGEAN BRONZE AGE. Florida State University, Tallahassee. Contact: Daniel Pulee. Tel: (1) 850 644-4259; e-mail: dpulee@fsu.edu.

GERMANY
8-11 February. IN POSEIDON'S KINGDOM XII. Conference focusing on archaeological research on shipwrecks from the 13th century BC to the 16th century AD. German Society for the Promotion of Underwater Archaeology. Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Köln. Contact: Daniel Zwick (49) 41217943835; e-mail: zwick@degusa.org.

GREENLAND
13-15 February. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON REPARATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE. Greenland National Museum & Archive, Nuuk, Greenland. Contact: Mille Gabriel (45) 33 47 34 48; e-mail: mille.gabrie@natmus.gl.com; website: www.natmus.gl/con2007.

SPAIN (LANZAROTE)
20-24 February. SIXTH WORLD CONGRESS ON MUMMY STUDIES. Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain. Contact: e-mail: lanzarote6@munimycongress.com; website: www.6munimycongress.com.

Amsterdam Avenue at 76th Street. Non-members $15. Tel: (1) 646 505-4444. 6.30pm.

8 March. PORTRAIT OF A PRINCESS: IMAGES OF WOMEN AND RITUAL IN ANCIENT GREECE. Roman Romanov. Archaeological Institute of America, New York, NY. Public Benefit Foundation, at the Onassis Cultural Center, 645 5th Avenue. 6.30pm.

APPOINTMENTS

Jessica Davis Powers has been appointed Associate Curator of Western Antiquities at the San Antonio Museum of Art. Dr Powers received her Ph.D. in Classical Art and Archaeology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Peter Schertz has been named Curator of Ancient Art at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Dr Schertz earned his doctorate in classical art and archaeology from the University of Southern California and was previously the Kress Curatorial Fellow in the Department of Art of the Ancient World at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. This first endowed ancient art chair was funded in part by a challenge grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

IN MEMORIAM

Professor Yizhar Hirschfeld, The most productive Classical archaeologist of his generation in Israel, Yizhar Hirschfeld, passed away prematurely from cancer on 15 November aged 56. A lecturer at the Institute of Archaeology, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, from 1989 to 1994, a position he retained until the very end. Hirschfeld's interests were diverse, but he will be remembered as an outstanding specialist of the Byzantine period of Palestine through his excavation and publication of the monastery of Khrbét ed-Deir in the Judean Desert and his broad work of synthesis, The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period (Yale University Press, 1992).

Yet Hirschfeld was also very much fascinated by social archaeology. Thus, his survey of traditional Arab houses in Hebron from 1997-8 was used as a comparative source in his controversial The Palestinian Dwelling in the Roman-Byzantine Period (Franciscan Printin Press, 1995). All of his final excavation reports included detailed treatments of pottery and small finds, typified by the briefer study of a ruined house at Ramat Hanadiv on the Carmel, owned by a member of the ruling class of Herodian Judea, and its adjoining Byzantine villa.

Hirschfeld's interpretation of this site led him to revisit the status of Qumran along the western Dead Sea, traditionally seen as an isolated communal settlement of the highly pious Psene Jews. His surveys revealed this area to be a hub of agriculture and industry in Roman times, which led him to argue that Qumran was actually an aristocrats' rural estate. While Qumran in Context - Reassessing the Archaeological Evidence (Hendrickson Publications, 2004) led to vehement reactions, nobody can deny the reality that Hirschfeld made a crucial contribution by contextualising this site within the wider Dead Sea catchment zone. In his last book on Ein Gedi he reposits the Essenes in stone huts he excavated high above this Jewish town.

The 'golden boy' of Israeli archaeology, Hirschfeld's energy and dedication will be sorely missed. Minerva is honoured that perhaps his last article, on a hoard of Hasmonaean coins found in the harbour of Khrbet Ma'in, was written for this magazine (September/October 2006, pp. 47-8).

MINERVA CALENDAR GUIDELINES

Calendar listings are free. Details should be sent at least six weeks in advance of publication.

Please send us, Canadian, French, and German listings to:
Dr Jerome M. Eisenberg, Minerva, Suite 2D, 153 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022. Fax: (1) 212 688-0812. E-mail: ancienart@aol.com.

For UK and other European exhibitions, conferences, lectures, and auctions, send details to:
Minerva, 14 Old Bond St, London, W1S 4PP, UK. Fax: (44) 20 7491-1595. E-mail: calendar@minervamagazine.com.

Exhibition dates are subject to change. Before planning a visit, we recommend confirming dates and opening times.
Egyptian Old Kingdom Limestone Relief of Carpenters

Three workers seated, facing another male, who approaches holding an object; billets of wood in the field above their heads.

In the register below, workers carrying baskets of papyrus.

Later 5th Dynasty, ca. 2450-2345 BC. H. 16 3/4 in. (42.5 cm.), L. 24 3/4 in. (62.9 cm.)

Cf. The scenes of carpenters in the mastaba tomb of Ti at Saqqara.

Ex French collection, acquired in Paris in 1974 from Galerie Mythologie.


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Roman Bronze Group: the Epiphany of Dionysos

Depicting the god flanked by two satyrs, a Pan emerging from behind his head. He has his left foot raised and resting on a krater, a bunch of grapes in his right hand, and a torch in his left. 2nd-3rd Century AD. H. 7 7/8 in. (20 cm.). Dionysos has often been seen as the 'god of epiphany', who appears suddenly and dramatically, as here.

This remarkable sculpture probably adorned a lectica, a kind of portable bed, which became an increasingly popular mode of transportation for the well-to-do in the late Republic, becoming more elaborate during the Empire.

Ex Austrian private collection acquired in Vienna in the 1970s.
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