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Nothing left to discover?

Murray Eiland considers the opportunities open to modern archaeologists and their non-academic counterparts

It is a common refrain that there is 'nothing important left to discover'. The 19th and early 20th centuries were periods of intense exploration, and many archaeologists from this period wrote about their discoveries from exotic lands. In an age before narrow specialisation, these pioneers defined their interests so as to address big questions. The result is that modern museums have a range of monumental finds to display, and a host of larger-than-life archaeologists to lionise. This issue features articles on ancient Egypt, Greece/Crete and Anatolia. All of these spectacular discoveries were made some time ago. How can modern archaeologists compete with the Victorians?

Quite simply, the discipline has changed, but there is plenty left to discover. Modern excavation techniques require painstaking recording, so it is unlikely that an ancient city will emerge from the ground in the space of just a year or two. Publication by academics is also usually aimed at a narrow audience, and today one aspires to be an expert in a small slice of the field. But there is still plenty of scope even for 'non-professionals' to make a significant contribution. There is no better example than metal detecting, which is represented by one article in this issue, along with a treasure report that deals with finds made by detectorists and others. While some academic archaeologists frown upon the public's taking an interest in unearthing the past, it is clear that material that is turned up by the plough must be recovered soon if it is to be preserved.

Our media-intensive age offers great scope for reaching more people. Sir Mortimer Wheeler (1890–1976) was a consummate professional as well as a television personality who sought to bring archaeology to the public. Today, series such as Time Team may draw more people to appreciate the past than scientific publications, and Tony Robinson may claim to be one of the most influential archaeologists of the age.

Dr Murray Eiland

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Recent stories from the world of ancient art and archaeology

Genetic research confirms non-Africans are part Neanderthal

An international team of researchers at the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Montreal and CHU Sainte-Justine Research Center have made the groundbreaking discovery that some of the human X chromosome originates from Neanderthals. After comparing approximately 6000 human chromosome samples from around the world with the Neanderthal genome, head researcher Dr Damian Labuda and his team concluded that evidence of the Neanderthal DNA was present in all races except those of sub-Saharan African origin. His team estimates that the interbreeding occurred early in the history of human development, probably somewhere in the Middle East during the migration of modern humans out of Africa.

Dr Labuda first suspected that Neanderthals affected the human DNA nearly ten years ago, when he found a haplotype in the human X chromosome that appeared different to the rest of the genome. However it was not until 2010, when the entire Neanderthal genome was sequenced, that he was able to test his hypothesis. Dr Labuda affirms that his research before the Neanderthal genome sequence leaves little doubt over the validity of his results. ‘Because our methods were totally independent of Neanderthal material, we can conclude that previous results were not influenced by contaminating artifacts.’

Neanderthals left Africa around 400,000–800,000 years ago and settled in Europe and the Middle East, until their extinction 30,000 years ago. Modern humans, on the other hand, migrated from Africa only 80,000–50,000 years ago. Dr Labuda’s team is currently investigating the effect this time overlap had on human development. For years researchers have speculated whether Neanderthals, who carried the gene for language and were physically stronger, had an effect on the human DNA and consequently our success for survival.

In light of the new findings researchers are beginning to question the relationship between modern humans and Neanderthals, and just how closely the two species are related. ‘Variability is very important for long-term survival of a species,’ says Dr Labuda. ‘Every addition to the genome can be enriching.’

The entire results of Dr Labuda’s research were published in the July 2011 issue of Molecular Biology and Evolution.

Success in Scotland

The National Museum of Scotland welcomed its 100,000th visitor just six days after it reopened on 29 July after a major three-year redevelopment. Prior to opening, museum staff predicted they might achieve the 100,000 mark within two weeks of opening, but that target was smashed in less than half the time expected.

Gordon Rintoul, Director, National Museums Scotland, said: ‘The number of visitors we have had so far is absolutely fantastic. We were always confident that there would be a high level of interest in our transformed Museum, but to get over 100,000 people in less than a week really has surpassed all of our expectations.’

The £47.4 million redevelopment, jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (£17.8 million), and the Scottish Government (£16 million), with a further £13.6 million from private sources, incorporates over 8000 objects in the 16 new galleries, 80 percent of which are on display for the first time, a new entrance hall at street level, a spacious gallery for international touring exhibitions and a new three-storey learning centre. Highlights of the museum’s collection include the ivory Lewis chessmen, which date to the 12th century and are probably Scotland’s most significant archaeological find, as well as the mummy of Iufenamun, which dates to the early 22nd dynasty (mid to late 10th century BC).

The National Museum of Scotland is located on Chambers Street in Edinburgh Old Town, and is open from 10am to 5pm daily. For more information, please visit www.nms.ac.uk.

Minerva September/October 2011
We are now planning for experts to come and look at the ring in the next few months to help us reveal some of its secrets.’

Stephen Deuchar, director of the Art Fund, added: ‘This beautiful ring is steeped in local and national history. We are thrilled to have played a part in bringing it to Yorkshire Museum where its story can be unravelled and enjoyed by all.’

The ring, which measures around 2.5cm across, is made of gold, glass and a large sapphire. This is the second known use of a sapphire in jewellery found in the country, the first being a 5th-century Roman example. The use of a sapphire (a stone most commonly used in the medieval period and reserved for the jewellery of kings and bishops) as well as the gold beading would suggest that it is from the Viking period (10th–11th centuries). However, the combination of gold, red and blue glass is a typically Anglian style (7th–9th centuries). It could be the case that the rare sapphire was used instead of the blue glass during this period to make the ring even more significant and expensive. Should the ring prove to be Anglian, it will shed new light on a period which is relatively unrecorded in York’s history. It would suggest that even then, when most written records are nonexistent, there were powerful, rich and possibly royal people living and trading in the city.

The Yorkshire Museum raised £35,000 to buy the ring, with grants of £10,000 from the Art Fund, £10,000 from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, £10,000 from the Headley Trust and £1,000 from the York Philosophical Society.

For more information, please visit www.yorkshiremuseum.org.uk.

Located 30km (19 miles) to the south of Cairo, the Pyramid of Djoser, also commonly known as the Step Pyramid, is one of the most recognisable and important ancient structures in Egypt. Standing 62m (200 feet) in height, the pyramid was built by the architect Imhotep for the Old Kingdom pharaoh Djoser, most famous of the 3rd-dynasty rulers. It was to be the first pyramid in Egypt and would set in motion an architectural trend that would reach its apex about a century later when construction of the Great Pyramid at Giza was finally completed in about 2560 BC. However, in 1992, an earthquake struck the Saqqara region, causing damage to the burial chamber and weakening the entire pyramid to such an extent that the structure was facing collapse.

After 19 years of waiting, last December a £1.8 million contract was awarded to Cintec, a structural engineering company based in Newport, south-east Wales, which was charged with carrying out the daunting task of repairing the pyramid. Established by Peter James, a former Royal Navy lieutenant-commander who had also worked as a buildings inspector for Cardiff Council, over the years Cintec’s structural engineers have worked on many iconic buildings over the years, including restoration projects on the Royal residences of Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace in Britain, as well as on the White House in Washington DC.

Nevertheless, despite intending to begin the main structural work on the pyramid at the start of this year, everything had to be put on hold when Egypt was swept by revolution. While the break-in at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and the stealing or deliberate smashing of Pharaonic treasures made international headlines (see Minerva, March/April 2011, pp.4–5; May/June 2011, p.3), most of the computers and other high-tech equipment that the team were using at Saqquara were also stolen as ancient sites across the country were looted by criminals searching for artefacts to sell on the black market. The most famous of the 3rd-dynasty Old Kingdom pharaoh Djoser, it was completed in about 2560 BC.

The 62m Pyramid of Djoser was built by the architect Imhotep for the Old Kingdom pharaoh Djoser. It was completed in about 2560 BC.
large wooden shield – the hoplon – from which the infantrymen of this period derived their name. Once at close quarters, the hoplites were able to inflict a crushing defeat on the Persians, who were killed or fled to their ships.

According to the historian Herodotus, who was born only a few years after the battle, the Athenians lost 192 men, while the Plataeans suffered 11 casualties. By contrast, 6400 bodies were left by the routed Persians, with countless others drowned after fleeing into marshy ground to the north of the battlefield.

To mark the anniversary, reenactors from around the world are to gather in Greece on 9, 10 and 11 September. Greeks and Persians are expected to attend. The reenactment will feature Greek and Persian martial arts as well as dance, literature, crafts and cultural features from both Greece and Persia in the Archaic period.

The event is being organised by the author Christian Cameron, whose background in military history and classics, and fascination with the ancient world, inspired the fictional series Tyrant, which begins towards the end of Alexander’s life and continues through the Wars of the Diadochii. The second in his Long War series of historical novels, Marathon, is based around the epic battle.

For more information about the Marathon event, please visit marathon2011.hoplologia.org/. To find out more about Christian Cameron’s work, please visit hippéis.com.

Extending the Empire

A recent discovery of coins in Devon could rewrite the history of Roman Britain, proving that the Empire extended further than was previously believed. Two metal detectorists discovered nearly a hundred Roman coins in a series of fields several miles west of Exeter (Isca Dumnoniorum). It has always been thought that, although nominally Roman territory, the region to the west of Exeter had retained its Iron Age Celtic society and been barely touched by Romanisation.

‘This is a really exciting discovery, but we are just at the beginning,’ said Danielle Wootton, Finds Liaison Officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) and archaeologist at the University of Exeter.

‘There is so much to do and so much that we still don’t know about this site. I’m hoping that we can turn this into a community excavation for everyone to be involved in. Most exciting of all, we have stumbled across two burials along the side of the settlement’s main road. It is early days, but this could be the first signs of a Roman cemetery and the first glimpse of the people that lived in this community.’

A geophysical survey suggested a huge settlement including roundhouses, quarry pits and track ways. The site covers at least 13 fields and is the first of its kind for the county. Wootton received funding to carry out a trial excavation on the site in June, which uncovered evidence of trade with the continent, a road possibly linking to the major settlement at Exeter, and some intriguing structures, as well as many more coins.

Egypt’s oldest pyramid

market. The unstable security situation in Egypt meant the team had to wait for four months until they could recommence work on the pyramid.

On their return to the site, what most worried the conservators was that looters might have attacked the fabric of the pyramid, and Peter James has noted that, despite the loss of much of their equipment, everyone was relieved to find that: ‘The pyramid itself wasn’t touched, which is just as well considering how unstable it was when we got in there. The earthquake in 1992 had shifted everything sideways and it was a massive task trying to hold everything up without dislodging anything further. Until we got the scaffolding in place, we had no idea what was holding up the remaining 60m of stone. It was a lethal and massive game of Ker-Plunk – trying to hold everything up, without dislodging anything further.’

The technology the team had developed to support the pyramid had been developed by Cintec for use in military situations, aiding in the safe disposal of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Afghanistan. When used by the British Army, bags filled with water, which are strong enough to withstand the force of a blast, are placed around an explosive with precise control to ensure that, rather than just resting on and around an explosive device, the pressure in the bags can be precisely controlled so that it barely kisses the surface of an IED, so greatly reducing the risk of inadvertently triggering an explosion. The water-filled bag then cushions the blast when a controlled explosion is carried out. While the theory remains the same for the bags that have been inserted into the pyramid at Saqqara, Peter James explains that the Cintec engineers were forced to make one major change, substituting compressed air to fill the bags in place of water.

‘We’d originally planned to use our “Water Wall” system, but as soon as we got a good look at the chamber, it was clear that inflating the bags with water wasn’t going to work. The rocks in the ceiling were too jagged, and posed an unacceptable risk of deluging the 4500-year-old pyramid, which has been bone-dry since it was built. We also hadn’t realised that there were secret tunnels running under the chamber’s floor, so I didn’t think it would be able to take the weight of water-filled supports.’

Now that the roof of the chamber has been stabilised using inflatable airbags, the team can thread thermo-dynamic steel rods diagonally through the steps of the pyramid to reinforce the roof and which will knit together all six ‘steps’ of the pyramid. Once the work has been completed, visitors to Saqqara will see no external change to the pyramid.
Racing against the clock to excavate 2600-year-old Afghan Buddhist monastery

French and Afghan archaeologists are currently scrambling to complete excavations at an expansive 9800 acre Buddhist monastery in Mes Aynak, Afghanistan, before it is destroyed by copper mining. Meaning 'Little Copper Well', Mes Aynak was awarded in a 2007 contract to Chinese mining firm China Metallurgical Group, which plans to create an open mine pit in the nearby mountains, which will destroy the heritage site. With as little as 14 months to complete their work, archaeologists and labourers are racing to excavate as many valuable relics as possible from the ancient citadel.

Afghanistan potentially holds one of the largest untapped mining resources in the world, with US geologists estimating approximately $1 trillion in wealth. Mes Aynak in particular is considered to hold the second largest copper deposit in the world. After years of warfare, foreign occupation, and religious extremism have destabilized the country, mining might provide Afghanistan with the economic recovery it needs. However, although archaeologists from the region want Afghanistan's economy to grow, they worry about the preservation of the country's heritage, which has faced a series of destructive setbacks over the years, is too great a cost.

‘As an archaeologist, of course I’m worried about this,’ says Khair Muhammad Khairzada, a researcher at the Afghan Institute of Archaeology, which is overseeing the dig. ‘I want all of the sites to be saved. But at the same time, Afghanistan’s economy is also important. It needs to grow.’

Rescue excavations on the site began in 2009 at the mountain pass Gol Hamid, where archaeologists uncovered monastic compounds including a vaulted chapel, monks’ quarters, storerooms, and more significantly, a statue of a sleeping Buddha along with a collection of terracotta statues. In 2010 archaeologists moved excavations in the mountains in Tepe Kafriat, where in the 80m walled complex they discovered the remains of eight stone-clad stupas surrounding the main stupa. Remains also include a 7.5m long reclining Buddha, an ancient wooden Buddha, wall paintings, and the feet of a 3m statue, which is all that remains after looters or the Taliban destroyed the statue.

The monastery, located approximately 25km south-east of Kabul in the eastern province of Logar, was once an important religious site on the Silk Road trade route. From the 3rd century AD, Mes Aynak played a vital role in the dissemination of Buddhism in Afghanistan, with the monastery still maintaining an influence in the area during the 4–7th centuries AD, when trade along the Silk Road had diminished.

With the site lying on the crossroads of the Buddhist and Graeco-Roman cultures, the monastery’s combination of these different artistic traditions spread throughout the region, leaving an indelible mark on the artistic culture of Afghanistan and the Buddhist artwork of Asia. Artefacts currently being uncovered at the site, such as statues and reliquaries, provide a testament to this cultural milieu and its influence in the region.

Since its abandonment Mes Aynak has remained in relative obscurity to the outside world, the only presence being looters who have stolen most of the site’s finest artefacts to sell on the black market. In 1999 the monastery was used by Osama bin Laden as a training camp for the attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001, and the rule of the Taliban regime in the area has seen many of the site’s Buddhist statues defaced or completely destroyed in their campaign against anything un-Islamic. The destruction of Mes Aynak is the latest in a series of tribulations Afghan archaeologists and historians have had to face over the preservation of their country’s heritage, with the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues by the Taliban in 2001 and the looting of the Kabul National Museum still fresh on their minds. With this latest blight on the archaeological legacy of Afghanistan, the future remains unclear for the rest of the country’s heritage.

‘Preserving our heritage is so important,’ says Abdul Khalid Khoshid, an Afghan archaeologist working on the Mes Aynak dig. ‘The relics we find don’t just belong to the Afghans — they belong to the world.’

Elders’ wisdom integral to survival

Studies of prehistoric teeth together with research into the Hadza tribe in Tanzania have led scholars to conclude that grandparents played a central role in the evolution of Homo sapiens. Until as recently as 30,000 years ago, Homo sapiens rarely lived past 30, after which a correlation between life expectancy and an explosion in tool production emerged.

Prof Kristen Hawkes of the University of Utah first began to highlight the importance of grandparents in human evolution after analysing the social interactions of the Hadza tribe in Tanzania. Despite the fact that many women during the prehistoric period died at child-bearing age, Hawkes argues that the occasional females who survived consequently taught their descendants to forage for food and other skills. As this relationship developed, she argues it caused a dramatic impact on the longevity of Homo sapiens’ life expectancy.

Anthropologist Rachel Caspari took this hypothesis one step further and began to analyse the importance of grandfathers. Together with Sang Hee-Lee from the University of California, Caspari studied fossils and teeth from across all time periods of human evolution, including australopithecines, Neanderthals, and Homo sapiens. Analysis of teeth indicated only Homo sapiens regularly lived past 30 years.

‘For every 10 young Neanderthals who died between the ages of 10 and 30, there were only four adults who survived past the age of 30,’ Caspari states. But for every 10 young adult members of Homo sapiens who died, there were 20 who had reached 30 or older, a significant increase. ‘The conclusion was inescapable: adult survival soared very late in human evolution,’ Caspari states.

Although it is impossible to ascertain the exact reason, many researchers argue that grandparents improved the longevity of their offspring’s lifespan by passing on knowledge of poisonous foods, teaching them how to craft tools, and helping them locate sources of water and areas rich in game.

Rachel Caspari’s research was published in the August issue of Scientific American.
In May at the British Museum, the Culture Minister, Ed Vaizey (see his interview in Minerva, January/February 2011, pp. 48–50), launched the Portable Antiquities & Treasure Report 2008. This coincided with the announcement by the British Museum that there had been a massive increase in archaeological finds made by the public. In 2010 there were 90,146 archaeological objects recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), which, along with Treasure, is now administered by the British Museum. This represented a 36 percent increase on 2009, which itself had seen a 10 percent increase in Treasure finds, up to 859 cases from 806, on 2008. The increase in finds is mostly due to the rebuilding early in 2010 of the PAS database, which was generously funded by the Headley Trust and the Institute for Archaeologists, making recording much easier for all concerned.

During the launch, the Minister said that he was pleased to announce that Prof Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn had been appointed as successor to Prof Norman Palmer as Chairman of the Treasure Valuation Committee. Ed Vaizey warmly endorsed the Portable Antiquities Scheme. ‘It has a tremendous ability to engage all sorts of people with an interest in archaeology, including those who find objects and those who want to learn about them,’ he said. Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum, added, ‘The finds reported through the Portable Antiquities Scheme and Treasure are changing our understanding of the past, helping archaeologists learn where people lived and died, and how these finds were used…’ they are
Seekers

transforming the archaeological map of Britain.’ The report is a substantial publication of 401 pages, including 125 pages of plates featuring hundreds of finds in colour. Sadly, because of the costs involved in producing such a substantial work, this is to be the last combined PAS and Treasure Report published in this format. Nevertheless, the Treasure Act 1996 requires a report to be published on the operation of the Act, guaranteeing future publications concerning finds of Treasure, and it is hoped that a short report on the PAS work will also continue to be published. However, all PAS and Treasure finds are reported on the PAS database at www.finds.org.uk.

The report lists 635 cases and has integrated the Treasure and PAS object cases together in their chronological sequence. This is followed by the section on coins, also chronologically arranged. Whilst the great majority of Treasure finds (93.28 percent) are made and reported by metal detectorists who follow the Code of Conduct published by the National Council for Metal Detecting (see Minerva, this issue, pp. 40–43), a number of other non-treasure finds are also recorded under the PAS (in 2008, these numbered 53,346; see Figs 1, 4, 5, 6) and these add considerably to our knowledge of the past. Treasure cases are recorded under the Treasure Act 1996 in England and Wales (Scotland has a different law) and the Treasure Valuation Committee also advise on cases from Northern Ireland (Fig 3) and the Isle of Man.

Of the 806 new Treasure finds reported, 265 have been, or are being, acquired by museums (Figs 2, 3, 10, 11); 366 have been disclaimed;
139 were deemed not to be Treasure (Fig 9); and 34 are still to be determined (Figs 7, 8, 12). It is gratifying to record that since the Department of Culture, Media and Sport launched an initiative to encourage finders and landowners to consider waiving their rights to rewards in order that museums are more able to acquire Treasure finds, in 2008 there were 51 cases (6.35 percent) where one or both parties (82 individuals in all) waived their rewards. In recognition of their generosity each received a certificate signed by the Minister.

The PAS finds data is especially valuable for research projects and has been used as the basis for 32 doctoral dissertations, 46 masters theses, and 20 undergraduate research projects. Publication of much of this research has appeared in numerous learned journals. The public involvement via PAS is enormous; in 2008 there were 1637 outreach events, attended by at least 50,032 people, including 7,667 children. Articles about the PAS were also published, broadcast or appeared on television. During 2008 the 40 Finds Liaison Officers were in regular contact with 170 metal detecting clubs, while they also attended 727 club meetings (and these usually in the evening) and were present at some 922 other meetings to promote the Scheme and its aims. The statistics relating to the use and recognition of the Scheme during 2008 are overwhelming: 185,000 visitors to the website making 306,000 visits and 3,771,000 page requests. The online database allows public access to 675,535 objects held within 425,045 records. It is no wonder that the Portable Antiquities Scheme, coupled with Treasure reporting and evaluation, is the envy of the European archaeological nations.

Peter A. Clayton is a member of the Treasure Valuation Committee, The British Museum.

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**Fig 10.** A tiny gold locket in the form of a padlock with floral decoration and an inscription that reads ‘sauns (i.e. sans) repentir’, ‘without regret, or repentence’. It is very similar to the slightly larger example (with a different inscription) from the Fishpool Hoard, Nottinghamshire 1966, probably deposited in May 1464 during the Wars of the Roses. From Rolleston, Nottinghamshire. c. 1450–1500. Acquired by The British Museum, valued at £4000.

**Fig 11.** This hoard of six 17th-century silver objects: four slip-top spoons, a goblet and a bell salt all have the same owner’s mark, a G and an A surmounted by a C, and all have the leopard’s head London assay office hallmark. Found at Nether Stowey, they may be associated with the Royalist garrison at Stowey Court, only 800m away from the find spot, and were possibly buried for safety, or looted by a soldier, during the English Civil War. Acquired by the Museum of Somerset, valued at £38,000.

**Fig 12.** A most unusual find recorded by the PAS was this group of 80 gold double eagle $20 pieces dated from 1854 to 1913. They were wrapped in groups of ten in a glass jar. They were found buried in the garden of a care home in Stamford Hill, Stoke Newington, north London on 12 July 2007 by two residents whilst digging a pond, and the find was reported to the London FLO. The Report suggested a date of deposition in the 1960s. However, subsequent to the Report the Treasure Secretariat made investigation and found that a house on the site had been bombed in the war and five of the family killed. Two jars of gold coins had been buried, but the returning survivors failed to find them in the rubble. One of the jars was found in 1952 and returned to the original owner, who died in 1981. The Treasure Secretariat traced the son of the original owner and at a Coroner’s Inquest on 18 April 2011 he was held to be the rightful owner and the coins passed to him, against the claims of the two finders.
Life and death in the Pyramid Age

Peter Lacovara examines how a rare Old Kingdom mummy, held by Emory University, continues to intrigue scholars and the public.

While ancient Egyptian mummies have fascinated museum visitors for more than a century, very little is known about the early evolution of the mummification process. This gap in our knowledge is a result of the rarity of early examples of mummification; only a handful of mummies from Egypt's earliest dynasties are known to exist. One of these has gone unnoticed for nearly a century, residing in a dusty crate in storage at The Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University – the only (nearly) intact Old Kingdom mummy in North America.

In 1919 Professor James Henry Breasted, founder of the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute, was planning a trip to the Middle East to assess the political conditions and the potential for future excavation and research as well as to acquire objects for Chicago’s Haskell Museum – later to move and become the Oriental Institute Museum. The expedition was dubbed ‘The American Scientific Mission’ (see Minerva July/August 2010, pp. 18–20) and Breasted invited a number of colleagues to join him, as well as a favourite student, William Arthur Shelton (Fig 2). Shelton was by then a Professor of Semitic Languages and Literature at Emory University’s Candler School of Theology. Although he was thrilled at the prospect of accompanying the expedition, he despaired of the costs involved. Fortunately, a generous Atlanta businessman, John A. Manget, heard of his plight and donated not only enough money for his passage, but also additional funds to acquire artefacts that he felt might later prove useful for teaching purposes.

Shelton was thrilled, in particular with the opportunity to visit Egypt; as he noted in his entertaining account of the trip, Dust and Ashes of Empire, ‘[it was] a civilization which challenges our highest admiration and which teaches a lesson that a later one might do well to read: In trying to create a picture of ancient Egypt for Atlanta, Shelton planned to accumulate objects that would tell the full story, and he therefore hoped to acquire a series of coffins and mummies that would illustrate the development of ancient Egyptian funerary practices from earliest times through to the end of antiquity.

While in Egypt Shelton purchased a coffin of the early Middle Kingdom (2055–1650 BC), a mummy and coffin of the Late Period (664–323 BC), and a Ptolemaic Period (305–30 BC) mummy, some bought directly from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. To complete the set, he wanted an early mummy and had his chance when the group visited Abydos. He recorded, ‘Thirty nine miles north of Luxor is the Ballano... West of the city and on the edge of the desert is the oldest known city in the world. Abydos, whose main attraction is not the two fine temples, one of Seti I and one of Ramesses II, but its necropolis... The whole desert around this ancient city is filled with the graves of people who lived and died and were forgotten before the times when the first [pharaonic] Egyptians came to this most ancient city. Here in these graves are the bodies of these prehistoric peoples, preserved by the climate and the dry sands. Here they lie surrounded by jars... and other provisions for the long journey, and also flint weapons and instruments of that period long ago. One is impressed by the enormous amount of human bones, grinning skulls sticking out of the debris, and the great mounds of broken pottery. As we walked over the sands of this ancient place, we were conscious of a feeling of awe in the presence of a civilization so much older than recorded history’.

Although Shelton had intended to obtain a naturally desiccated Predynastic mummy, what he actually came away with was something much more important, a mummy from the late Old Kingdom (2686–2181 BC). Only a few of these mummies are known to have survived the ravages of time and tomb robbers, and perhaps less than half a dozen intact specimens have ever been found.

Abydos had been extensively excavated by Auguste Mariette (1821–1881) in the 1860s, long before Shelton’s visit. One of his most important discoveries was in the Middle Cemetery situated on a bluff overlooking the Great Wadi, which formed the processional way to Um el Gish, the cemetery of the kings of the 1st dynasty and mythic tomb of Osiris. Here he found the tomb of Weni the Elder, governor of the area during the 6th dynasty, who, on a limestone slab set into the chapel of his large, mud brick mastaba, recorded his expeditions to Nubia and the Sinai and his duties under three kings. Mariette sent Weni’s autobiography back to the Egyptian Museum along with other decorated and inscribed blocks from the tomb chapel.

When Shelton arrived at Abydos in 1920, part of the Middle Cemetery was being quarried away for mud bricks by the neighbouring modern village, exposing new tombs and yielding artefacts for the local antiquities market.
Shelton’s mummy and its plain wooden coffin were packed up and later shipped back to Atlanta along with all of the other objects accumulated on the rest of the dangerous trek through Iran, Iraq and Syria-Palestine. Over the years and the many moves of the collection, the coffin was mostly lost, apart from its base, and the mummy, already in a precarious state before its long voyage to Georgia, deteriorated further.

What remained of mummy and coffin was eventually sealed in a crate and relegated to an offsite storage facility. Recently, in discussing Shelton’s participation in the American Scientific Mission and the Oriental Institute’s wonderful exhibition about that trip, ‘Pioneers to the Past’, Catherine Howett Smith, Associate Director at the Michael C. Carlos Museum, suggested that the mummy Shelton had brought back from the expedition would make an interesting exhibit on its own.

The mummy was, however, in a frightful state. The head was detached – probably dislodged long ago by tomb robbers looking for necklaces – and the hands and feet had disintegrated into piles of loose bones, dust and stray linen bandages. Nevertheless, the Carlos’ conservator, Renee Stein, decided to take up the Herculean challenge of trying to stabilise the remains and restore the deteriorated parts.

The task of resurrecting the mummy for display was undertaken with the help of William Torres, Professor of Radiology at Emory Hospital. Prof Torres and his staff X-rayed and CT-scanned the uncomplaining patient to provide a view of the internal condition of the mummy in order to assess its condition and reveal details about the individual. Dr Bob Brier also consulted on the examination to share his knowledge of ancient embalming techniques and paleopathology.

Emory’s Professor of Anthropology, George Armelagos, lent his expertise in ancient Nilotic populations to interpret the data from the examination. We discovered that our mummy was a young man, in his late 20s when he died, and that he had lived a rather privileged life, though the cause of death remains a mystery. With the exception of a few stray tendons, all the soft tissue had deteriorated and all that remained were the loosely wrapped bones.

Before the restoration of the mummy could continue, many questions about the deteriorated wrappings and treatment of the body remained as an obstacle to our reconstruction. Fortunately, the author had already worked in the Abydos Middle Cemetery with University of Michigan archaeologist Dr Janet Richards. In recent years an expedition of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology of the University of Michigan, under the direction of Dr Richards, has re-excavated the site and rediscovered Wen’s tomb among a number of other burials dating to the end of the Old Kingdom. Although they had found only scattered mummy wrappings and a few disarticulated bones rather than discovering any intact mummies, their discoveries nevertheless proved invaluable in determining what the mummy purchased by Shelton would have looked like.

This past winter I returned to study the mummified remains discovered at the site. Undisturbed by the revolution going on around us, we catalogued and examined the fragments of linen with the help of the expert eye of Dr Salima Ikram of the American University in Cairo. Sifting through hundreds of scraps of tattered textiles, we were able to piece together what Emory’s mummy must have looked like when he had been buried at the site almost 4000 years ago.

Armed with this knowledge and the help of Margaret LeVeque, who specialises in the conservation and care of shrouded cadavers, we were able to tackle the restoration of the mummy. Stein and LeVeque, along with the help of dedicated volunteers and Emory students, were able to re-attach hands and feet and restore the wrappings to bring the pile of rags and bones back to a close approximation of its original appearance (Fig 5).

The restored mummy will be the centerpiece of a new exhibition entitled ‘Life and Death in the Pyramid Age: The Emory Old Kingdom Mummy’ that will showcase the findings from the recent examination and conservation of the mummy. The exhibit will also place the mummy in its cultural context and explain the techniques of mumification and its role in Egyptian Funerary ritual (Figs 3, 4). A number of important objects relating to the mummy and its time have been lent to the exhibition from numerous institutions and collectors across the United States and Europe. Particularly thrilling will be a magnificent statuette of Pepi I (r. 2323–2283 BC) generously lent by the Brooklyn Museum (Fig 1), and a large number of Old Kingdom artefacts discovered during George Steindorff’s excavations at Giza and held by the Egyptian Museum of Leipzig University (Fig 6). Thanks to Shelton’s foresight and John Manget’s generosity we are still learning from their acquisitions that, although made nearly a century ago, are still fulfilling their original purpose of providing invaluable aids to teaching and research (Figs 7, 8).

‘Life and Death in the Pyramid Age: The Emory Old Kingdom Mummy’ runs at the Michael C. Carlos Museum from 8 September to 11 December. For more information, see www.carlos.emory.edu
A new exhibition reveals the crucial role played by early Italian archaeologists and explorers in the inception of Egyptology. Dalu Jones reports

The exhibition ‘A Fascination for Egypt’, currently on view in Orvieto, does not lure visitors with Pharaonic gold, but instead offers a fascinating overview of the Italian contribution to the earliest phases of the discipline of Egyptology. A total of 250 artefacts are on display, ranging in date from c. 1900 BC to 700 BC. All were originally assembled in the 19th and early 20th centuries by pioneering Italian antiquarians.

The Archaeological Museum in Florence and the Museo Egizio in Turin holds two of the finest collections of ancient Egyptian material anywhere in the world. However, across the rest of Italy, there are 100 other institutions that contain Pharaonic artefacts, many of which are ignored even by specialists, and the material is often not on view for the general public. Further-

more, much of the ancient Egyptian material remains unpublished, or was written about long ago in specialist journals that are now rarely obtainable. However, a first step to publicise this wealth of material was taken in 2009 with ‘Egypt As It Has Never Been Seen Before’ an exhibition in Trento (see Minerva, September/October 2009, pp. 8–9) displaying works of art from the collection of Taddeo Tonelli (1778/79–1858), an Italian officer in the Habsburg army, and from the storerooms of the Museo Egizio in Turin. The latter collection is still in need of comprehensive cataloguing, but now Project OSIRIS (started in 2010 by the Director of Italian antiquities Stefano De Caro) aims to remedy this state of affairs. The exhibition in Orvieto is intended to help in the systematic recording of all the archaeological material from Egypt that exists in Italian collections.

To date, 13 collections have been examined, with 350 entries completed, all of which are written in Italian, English and Arabic so that they can be used by Egyptian and international institutions for comparison with similar material. The results are already encouraging. For example, the black basalt base from a statue of a high priest of Osiris, Padihor, of the 26th/27th dynasty (c. 664–359 BC), which was first acquired by Giuseppe Acerbi (1773–1846) while Consul in Egypt and is now in Mantua at Palazzo Te, has been reconnected to its headless bust in the British Museum. The lower fragment of a basalt statue of the New Kingdom Pharaoh Seti I (19th dynasty, c. 1291–1278 BC), in the Museum Correale di Terranova in Sorrento, can now be clearly linked to a group of statues in the Metropolitan Museum. The basalt fragment was excavated in Sorrento, on the southern shores of the Bay of Naples, in the 18th century. The statue had originally been brought to Italy in antiquity, probably during the Egyptomania that spread through the Roman Empire in the 1st century AD.

Egyptian artefacts have also been unearthed from Etruscan burial...
By the 18th century, Cardinal Stefano Borgia (1731–1804) had assembled the Egyptian works of art that were to make up the royal collections in Naples. The Museo Gregoriano Egizio was created in the Vatican in 1839 to house the papal collections of ancient Egyptian art as well as to undertake a scholarly study of the Egyptian obelisks standing in Rome.

‘A Fascination for Egypt’ is the result of a collaboration between the Egyptian Museum in Turin and the Claudio Faina Museum in Orvieto. The exhibition is split between two venues in Orvieto: the Palazzo Faina and the Palazzo Coelli, located in the very centre of Orvieto. The ‘Claudio Faina’ Museum is a rare Italian example of a private foundation, located in the former Faina Palace, which also houses the outstanding collection of Etruscan art assembled in the 19th century by the Faina family. This has been added to over subsequent years by local excavations in a region particularly rich in important Etruscan sites.

Many of the 19th-century Italians who played prominent roles in the rediscovery of ancient Egypt were political exiles forced to seek their fortune away from their homeland. Some became trusted officials of the Khedive government while others acted as consuls for foreign powers in Egypt and found themselves well placed to join the race for antiquities that began following Napoleon’s Expedition d’Egypte (1798–1801).

For example, Bernardino Drovetti (1776–1852) a former Minister of War in Piedmont and Chief of Staff to the Piedmontese Division of the French Army, was appointed by Napoleon as French Consul in Egypt (Fig 1). Drovetti took advantage of his diplomatic status to assemble an enormous number of ancient objects. Unfortunately, his archaeological methods were deplorable and much evidence was sacrificed to his greed. Drovetti’s collection was acquired in 1824 by King Charles Felix of Piedmont-Sardinia (1765–1831) and formed the core of the Museo Egizio in Turin. The costly transaction was achieved with the help of the Piedmontese count Carlo Vida (1785–1830), a vociferous opponent of France’s imperial pretensions who had visited Egypt in 1819–20, together with Giuseppe Acerbi (1773–1846), consul for Austria and trusted advisor of the ruler of Egypt, Mohammed Ali (r. 1825–1834). Acerbi was a polymath and a great traveller, and the first Italian to reach Cape North in Lapland. He had attended the lectures of Jean François Champollion (1790–1832), the decipherer of hieroglyphs, and had gone on to travel through Egypt with him (Fig 3), making gifts of the artefacts he found during journeys to the Fayyum and Upper Egypt to institutions in Mantua, Pavia and Milan.

Of the early Italian pioneering archaeologists, the most successful and famous was the colourful Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778–1823) (Fig 2). Born in Padua, Belzoni was a citizen of the Republic of Venice, which was conquered in 1797 by Bonaparte’s French army. A huge man measuring 2m (6 feet 7 inches) in height, Belzoni was known as the ‘Patagonian Samson’ when he performed in London theatres as an acrobat and strongman. He first arrived in Egypt in 1815 with the intention of putting his skills as an hydraulic engineer to use working for Muhammad Ali, Khedive of Egypt. Belzoni became acquainted with Drovetti, as well as with Drovetti’s great rival Henry Salt (1780–1827), the British Consul General in Cairo. Belzoni also quickly made the acquaintance of the Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt (1784–1817), the first European to find the Nabataean city of Petra and the temple of Ramses II at Abu Simbel. Belzoni also befriended Giovanni Battista Caviglia (1770–1845), a Genoese who was excavating at Giza around the Sphinx. In 1816 Salt and Burckhardt entrusted Belzoni with moving the colossal 7m high, 7 ton statue of the so-called ‘Young Memnon’ (actually Ramses II, r. 1279–1212 BC), who ferried the granite statue all the way down the Nile from the Ramesseum in Luxor, and ultimately transporting it to London (Fig 4). In the following years, Belzoni continued exploring Upper...
Egypt, making important discoveries including the opening of eight tombs in the Valley of the Kings, the most spectacular of which was the brightly painted tomb of Seti I (r. c. 1291–1278), one of the most beautiful in ancient Egypt. Belzoni also achieved a series of spectacular engineering feats, moving extremely large and heavy statues and monuments including the 7m high obelisk of Philae, which now stands at Kingston Lacy in Dorset. Belzoni’s Narratives of Operations and Recent Discoveries Within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs and Excavations, in Egypt and Nubia and of a Journey to the Coast of the Red Sea, in search of the ancient Berenice; and another to the Oasis of Jupiter Ammon (published 1820) best describes the fabulous enchantment of these early discoveries in a land that was as yet unmapped and filled with magnificent abandoned monuments in a landscape of pristine beauty.

Many of the objects on view in the exhibition at Orvieto were acquired by Massimiliano Strozzi Sacrati (1797–1859), a wealthy aristocrat who built up a large collection of artefacts from Egypt and other exotic lands. In 1846 Sacrati journeyed all over Egypt, acquiring a great many antiquities that are now in Florence (Figs 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). On his death Sacrati was buried in Ferrara under a pyramid and inside a double sarcophagus in the Egyptian style. Luigi Vassalli Bey (1812–1887) was one of the most prominent Egyptologists among the next generation of intellectuals and patriots who participated in the wars for the liberation and unification of Italy. A Milanese painter and follower of Garibaldi, Vassalli was forced out of Italy and had to seek refuge in Switzerland, England and France before finally arriving in Egypt. Here he became a close collaborator of the French director of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, Auguste Mariette (1821–1881). In 1873 Vassalli published a well researched guide Musei Egizi d’Italia (‘The Egyptian Museums in Italy’). Between 1863 and 1883 he was in the employment of the Egyptian Antiquities Service, working at Saqqara, Deir al Medina, Deir al Bahari, Abydos and Tanis. He succeeded Mariette as director of the Egyptian museum in Cairo until Gaston Maspero (1846–1916), a Frenchman of Italian origins, took over the reins of Egyptian archaeology.

The Egyptian Museum in Florence was created in 1854 to house the Pharaonic objects from the Medici collections, together with more than 3600 artefacts acquired during the important Franco-Tuscan expedition of 1828–29 led by Champollion together with Ippolito Rossellini (1800–1843), a proficient linguist and author of the valuable survey, Monumenti dell’Egitto e della Nubia (‘Monuments of Egypt and Nubia’). (Fig 11). Ernesto Schiaparelli (1856–1928), a pupil of Gaston Maspero in Paris in 1877–78, was 24 when he was given the task of assembling the Etruscan and Egyptian material in Florence that was to go into the city’s new archaeological museum. Inaugurated in 1883 by the king and queen of Italy, the museum included sarcophagi of noblemen found at Deir al Bahari of the 21st and 22nd dynasties (c.1069–712 BC), which were presented to
the new museum by the Egyptian government. A gifted scholar, Schiaparelli also wrote a valuable guide, *I Musei Egizi d’Italia* (*Egyptian Museums in Italy*) in 1873. In 1894 he became the director of the Museo delle Antichità Egizie in Turin and then a professor of archaeology at the university in the city.

Schiaparelli was also director of the Missione Archeologica Italiana (MAI) in Egypt from 1903 to 1920. This appointment enabled him to carry out a series of successful archaeological campaigns, discovering the intact tomb of Kha, the architect of pharaoh Amenhotep III (r. c. 1386–49 BC), which survived at Deir al Medina, as well as that of Nefer-tari, the wife of Ramses II. A pioneer of advanced archaeological methods, Schiaparelli supported the use of photography for recording purposes and had a photographic laboratory built at every site to develop the plates and record artefacts and excavation sequences. Conditions in Egypt could, at times, make it extremely difficult to producing photographic images on site, and in 1905 at Qau el Keibir, the tents and the photographic laboratory were installed inside a cave to protect the equipment from the intense heat and sandstorms. Schiaparelli was assisted by two excellent archaeologists and photographers, Ballerini (1877–1910) and Virginio Rosa (1886–1910) The vast accumulation of photographic records, together with drawings and written reports, sent regularly to Turin during the expedition, has only recently begun to be analysed in detail. This material is even more valuable because Schiaparelli’s MAI was unique among other foreign missions in Egypt in that, in addition to its archaeological excavations, it also carried out anthropological and ethnographic research covering the whole of Egyptian history (*Figs 12, 13, 14*).

Charting the activities of these courageous men who were responsible for making some of the outstanding discoveries in Egypt, and for providing museums across Europe with a series of great works of art, is a fitting tribute to the current celebrations of the unification of Italy 150 years ago.

Murray Eiland reviews the background to the wonderful restorations of Bronze Age art and artefacts on display in the exhibition ‘Historic Images of the Greek Bronze Age’ currently running at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Reproducing the Greek Bronze Age

The Victorian passion for archaeology was to a great extent tied in with a fascination with the men who laboured to bring the past to life. Archaeologists such as Heinrich Schliemann (1822–1890), who revealed the wonders of the lost city of Troy in the early 1870s and then Mycenae in 1876, and Sir Arthur Evans (1851–1941), whose exploration of Knossos began at the turn of the century, can be seen as visionaries as well as explorers. However, both men were limited by the perceptions of their age, which led them to make assumptions based on potted histories. The so-called ‘Mask of Agamemnon’ (Fig 2) is an example of this. Excavated by Schlieman from the royal shaft graves at Mycenae, it was immediately linked to the mythical king of the city. However, the gold mask was later dated to c. 1550–1500 BC, at least three centuries before the events of the Trojan War are thought to have taken place.

A similar modern myth has it that the Minoans were a peaceful island-dwelling civilisation, engaged in maritime trade, fishing and activities such as bull-jumping (Fig 3).

Today, however, it would appear more likely that the Minoan influence was based to some extent on naval power. The term ‘Minoan’ was coined by Evans, who named the culture after the legendary Greek king Minos. Clearly a populariser, Evans also had a serious scientific aim and he established the chronology of the culture that is still broadly accepted today. This is divided into three main periods. The Early Minoan (2600–2000 BC) had closer links with Asia Minor than the Greek mainland, but was a period in which a distinctive culture was developing on Crete. The Middle Minoan (2000–1600 BC) witnessed the first palaces constructed at Phaistos and Knossos. While the social structure of the island is still debated, the palaces housed administrators and craftworkers in addition to the local elites. The art created in the palaces was therefore for a specific purpose, and no doubt carried considerable prestige at a time well before the use of coinage. The Middle Minoan ended with the eruption of a volcano on Thera in 1600 BC, although some archaeologists contend that this date is a century too early. Whatever the date of the cataclysm, the island of Santorini, ancient Thera, was blown apart, and the settlement of Akrotiri preserved in pumice. Crete was also affected. Modern surveys suggest little ash fell on the island, but it is likely that a tsunami severely damaged coastal sites on Crete and across the wider eastern Mediterranean (see Minerva, January/February 2010 pp. 20–22).

According to some theories it would have also damaged or destroyed the Minoan fleet, and it is likely that earthquakes before or after the eruption levelled most if not all of the palaces. The Minoans rebuilt their civilisation, but shortly afterwards were conquered or overrun by the Mycenaens in the Late Minoan (1600–1100 BC). During this phase, mainland cities began to emerge as important centres, although the reconstructed palaces at Knossos, Phaistos, Malia and Zakros still produced objects for trade with other empires, and elaborate frescoes dating from this time suggest an idyllic existence. However, by 1450 BC, only Knossos remained (Fig 1). Ceramic forms from the mainland dominate, and clay tablets featuring Linear B writing as well as Mycenaean type weapons are also found.

Over time the focus of this Bronze Age civilisation shifted to the mainland. Described in some myths as the birthplace of Heracles, the hill fort site of Tyrins on the Peloponnes
the central tenet of modern restoration, to be. The problem is that, contrary to what he imagined the palace site, seeking to replicate as closely as possible what he imagined the palace was, Evans was a destructive influ-

was first excavated by Schliemann in 1884–1885. In style the frescoes recovered from this site are very different from their Minoan counterparts (Fig 7). Knossos was abandoned and it was never rebuilt as a palace, although there are indications that it was still a sacred site. This was very fortunate for succeeding generations, as sites with a very long and active settlement history tend not to preserve earlier layers. When the spades of archaeologists hit Knossos, in many ways it became a sacred site again, but this time it was the art and not the gods that attracted wonder.

Swiss-born Emile Gilliéron (1850–1924) and his son Emile (1885–1939) were among the foremost art restorers of their time and both assisted Evans at Knossos. Judged by modern standards, Evans was a destructive influence on the original architecture of the site, seeking to replicate as closely as possible what he imagined the palace to be. The problem is that, contrary to the central tenet of modern restoration, the reconstruction cannot be discerned from the original structure. However, applying modern conceptions to earlier ages is in itself an unscientific approach. Evans hired the Gilliérons to conserve and restore the frescoes that were recovered from the site. Their methods were much more sympathetic, and in most cases fragments of original painting are clearly delineated from restored areas. While the accuracy of some of the reconstructed images has been questioned, and it is clear some were particularly imaginative, they have become iconic images of the period. But the father and son team did not simply conserve paintings; they made one-to-one scale copies on paper, created new frescoes based on the ancient examples they assembled, and replicated other arts, even such mundane objects as ceramic jars (Fig 6).

As early as 1894, the elder Gilliéron was making copies of Mycenaean gold, showing how an object would have appeared had it not been distorted by burial. Many of these copies are taken from moulds of the originals, and some were released (with the permission of the excavator) before they were fully published. By 1906 his catalogue listed 90 German-made electrotypes. Major museums, including the Metropolitan and what was to become the V&A, also acquired reproductions and displayed them alongside original objects (Figs 4, 5). There is no disputing the skill of the father and son team, and they endeavoured to create objects that were true to life, even replicating what they believed to be the methods and materials of construction. However, the first half of the 20th century was known for convincing forgeries of ancient artefacts, including the so-called Ring of Minos and the Ring of Nestor, and it has been suggested that the famous Phaistos disk could be a forgery from the Gilliéron studio (see Minerva, September/October 2008, pp. 15–16).

The younger Gilliéron continued to sell reproductions until his death in 1939. By this time, however, museum practices had changed. Replicas were no longer acquired, while existing exhibits were also being removed from display. The replicas on display at the Metropolitan have therefore not been seen by the current generation.

Considering the importance of this body of work created by the Gilliérons, it is unfortunate that there is no catalogue to accompany the exhibition, and also that, while no student of ancient Greece can fail to know the names of great excavators such as Schliemann and Evans, the same is not true of those who restore, record or create. This exhibition goes some way towards restoring the balance.

Historic Images of the Greek Bronze Age: The Reproductions of E. Gilliéron & Son runs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art until 17 June 2012.
In 1931 the new Aegean and Hittite Gallery was opened to the public at the Public Museum in Liverpool. This was to be the first gallery of its kind in Britain examining the 2nd millennium BC Hittite culture of Turkey alongside the contemporary Minoans and Mycenaeans of Greece. When it opened, the walls of the gallery featured a remarkable series of plaster casts taken from Hittite relief sculptures found in Turkey by John Garstang (1876–1956), a Liverpool archaeologist who had been instrumental in the discovery of the Hittite world. The new gallery therefore showcased to the people of Liverpool the important work of one of the city’s greatest archaeologists.

Prior to the opening of the gallery in Liverpool, the Hittite civilisation had been thought to be a minor power in the ancient Near East, because it warranted only a few scant mentions in the Old Testament of the Bible. By the turn of the 20th century, however, philologists had begun to question this assumption and were speculating that the Hittites may once have been a more important power than the Biblical references suggested, and that Hittite kings may have commanded an extensive territory. However, it was not until Garstang travelled across Turkey and North Syria, systematically recording the Hittite monuments he found along the way, that the true extent of Hittite power was finally recognised.

Garstang and his team journeyed on horseback from Ankara to Aleppo in 1907, documenting their trip in photographs (Fig 1). He presented the results of his research in his book The Land of the Hittites (1910), which was illustrated with 99 plates. This monumental work not only re-established the Hittites as one of the major powers of the ancient Near East, it also established Garstang as an important name in the archaeology of that region.

In 1908 the Ottoman authorities granted Garstang permission to begin excavations at the site of Sakçagözü, near present day Gaziantep (Fig 4). Here he unearthed a neo-Hittite palace with a façade decorated with carved stone relief panels depicting animals and human figures (Fig 5). In the centre of the entrance to the palace was a...
single column base in the shape of two sphinxes, the top of which was intricately carved with over a hundred human fingers (Fig 6). All these reliefs were removed by the Turkish authorities, and now form the centrepiece of the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations in Ankara.

Garstang was allowed to take a series of casts of the sculpted relief panels he had found at Sakçağözü, including the sphinx column base. These casts were shipped back to Liverpool and placed on public display, eventually forming part of the Aegean and Hittite Gallery when it opened to the public in 1931 (Fig 7).

Unfortunately, this new gallery had been open for only ten years when it fell victim to a Luftwaffe bombing raid on Liverpool in May 1941. Liverpool was the most heavily bombed British city outside of London, and the gallery received a direct hit. In the ensuing fire the gallery was destroyed, with only a few artefacts surviving the blaze. The casts that had been such a prominent part of the Hittite collection, and a lasting reminder of Garstang’s work in Turkey, were badly damaged and eventually disappeared altogether as they were now exposed to the elements in the remains of the burnt-out museum.

Garstang’s cast collection may have been destroyed, but another legacy of his travels and excavations in Turkey did survive the War. This was his photographic collection, held in the Institute of Archaeology he had established at University of Liverpool. These had remained largely untouched since the publication of The Land of the Hittites, because changing photographic technology made it hard to view and print from the old glass plate negatives he had used. However, with funding provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and following the latest advice on the handling and digitisation of old photographic materials, a new project has now preserved hundreds of Garstang’s glass plate photographic negatives. Their delicate nature meant that repeated handling and viewing of the plates by researchers would eventually have led to their deterioration, so it was decided to catalogue each slide, digitise the image on it, and combine them into a single digital archive that could be searched safely without the need to touch the plates themselves. Once digitised, the images could be safely viewed by researchers and members of the public. During the digitisation process, new images were brought to light every day, many of which had not been seen for nearly a century. They included not only images of excavations and artefacts, but also landscapes, portraits of local people, and Garstang and his team at work. These last were the inspiration for a new museum exhibition that has just opened in the Victoria Gallery and Museum in Liverpool. Taking inspiration from the photographs, the new exhibition has set out to reproduce for visitors the atmosphere of an excavation in the Near East in the early 20th Century.

The main display uses 12 historic casts taken by Leonard Woolley and T.E. Lawrence (the archaeologist who would later rise to fame for his prominent role in the Arab revolt during World War I), made during their own excavations of a neo-Hittite palace at Carchemish in 1920. Casts such as these, which are on loan from the British Museum, were an effective way of making full-size copies of sculptures for research and display in an age before 3D laser scanning, and they are still of great archaeological and historical significance.

In order to recreate the experience of being on one of Garstang’s excavations, the exhibition also features an archaeologists’ base camp (Fig 3). This is a black goat-hair tent of the type commonly used across the Near East at the time Garstang was working there. Outside the tent are arranged a drawing board and a table of replica finds that children can handle and identify (Fig 2). Inside, visitors can sit on the archaeologists’ packing cases and folding chairs and view a selection of Garstang’s photographs.

The overall aim of this exhibition project was to recreate Liverpool’s ‘lost’ Hittite Gallery and re-imagine it for the 21st century. The secondary intention behind the exhibition was to create an engaging and educational display about a part of the city’s heritage that was lost during the terrible bombing of Liverpool in World War II. It also serves to bring to public attention the much-neglected culture of the Hittites and the British archaeologist who did so much to bring them to academic and public awareness over a century ago.

The exhibition ‘The Lost Gallery: John Garstang and the Discovery of the Hittite World’ is on at the Victoria Gallery and Museum, Liverpool, and is open until 2013. Entry is free. For further information, see www.liv.ac.uk/sace/garstang-museum.
Symbols of an ancient sea trade

Suresh Sethuraman takes a look at the large number of Roman coins that have been discovered across India

The most tangible evidence of the ancient maritime commerce linking the Mediterranean world with South Asia is the thousands of Roman coins discovered in India. The Roman traders, together with their African and Arabian representatives, exchanged these coins for Indian gemstones, textiles and spices. The coins are of gold, silver and copper and were imported into India from the 3rd century BC, during the Roman Republican period, down to 5th century AD, when the Byzantine Empire controlled the eastern Mediterranean. While some of the coins are still in mint-fresh condition, others are extremely worn, indicating that they were in circulation for considerable lengths of time. Over time, many of the Roman coins that came to India were lost or buried and throughout the Middle Ages, farmers and treasure-diggers repeatedly unearthed these ancient coins from sites all over the country. While most of these finds were never recorded or documented, and the coins discovered were melted down or lost, there are a handful of vague reports of Roman coins found in Sri Lanka as early as 1574, and in the Gujarat region of western India in the 17th century.

Since the late 18th century, however, many finds of Roman coins recovered from different parts of India have been recorded, although in many instances the descriptions of the finds do not include details of the numbers of coins or their state of preservation. The first well recorded find is from Nellore, in Andhra Pradesh state, not far from Chennai (formerly Madras) in southern India. This discovery, made in 1786 by a local farmer while digging on his land, became famous because it was communicated to the Society of Antiquaries in London and published in the journal *Asiatick Researches* in 1790. The following decades saw a series of discoveries in two major clusters of sites – the stretch of land between Vellalur-Coimbatore-Pollachi and in and around the city of Karur. Both these major find spots lie in Tamil Nadu state in southern India and straddle the ancient trade routes that linked the Kerala or Malabar Coast on the Arabian Sea in the west with the Coromandel coast on the Bay of Bengal in the east.

The 19th century saw the discovery of some of the largest and most important Roman coin finds in India, leading to serious academic interest in the study of these coins in the early decades of the century. The presence of Roman coins in the remote rural sites of India appeared strange and unusual to the Europeans, although the attention of the early scholars was primarily confined to simple reporting of the finds, with little attempt to analyse the historical significance of the coins and most of the early published accounts are lively descriptions of the finds. These reports, often brief and sketchy, scattered across various obscure journals and museum reports, constitute the sole evidence for many of the early finds.

In the 20th century, besides the accidental discoveries made while laying railway tracks or building roads and airports, Roman coins have also been recovered in stratified contexts during the course of archaeological excavations in sites such as Peddabankur (1968–69) and Totlakonda (1988–92), both in Andhra Pradesh, and in Karur (1980s) and Alagankulam (1989–91) in Tamil Nadu. Historians have been making increasing use of these coins for the study of the ancient Indian economy and trade links. These Roman coins, however, hardly receive attention in any general study on Roman history and economy, mainly because most of these finds and their significance are not widely known to the academic community in Europe or North America.
The Roman coins found in India exhibit certain peculiar features. The earliest coins are silver issues while those of later date are generally of gold or copper. The majority of the coins belong to the Julio-Claudian period (27 BC–AD 68), with the issues of Augustus (r. 27 BC–AD 14) and Tiberius (r. AD 14–37) predominating.

Some of the coins bear one or two slash marks, generally 1–2mm long, effected by a knife, chisel or file (Fig 2). The marks mostly occur on the royal bust on the obverse of the coins. Occasionally the marks are so deep that they almost cut through the coin. While the precise purpose of these marks is not clear, they were possibly intended to obliterate the denominational value of these coins before validating them as local currency in India.

Occasionally some of the Roman coins feature minute countermarks that include Hindu and Buddhist art motifs. In the case of certain coins, it has been difficult to ascertain whether some of these tiny lines, curves and dots are actually countermarks or mere accidental scratches (Fig 3). They are unlikely to be the result of attempts to test the quality of the metal, because some of the marks are intricate floral or geometric designs, and cannot be mint marks because the same motif is rarely seen on more than a few coins. Some of these countermarks may be ‘bankers marks’ effected in India prior to the circulation of foreign coins. It is also a possibility that these marks may have served as ownership or identification motifs. The necessity of stamping one’s ownership mark would arise only on specific occasions when the coins of different individuals were handed over for safe custody to a single money-lender or banking institution; early Indian literature and stone inscriptions allude to the practice of people investing their coins in corporate organisations. The coins with only one mark may have remained in the possession of a single individual, while coins with many marks may have come into the ownership of different individuals during their time in circulation; each would have stamped his or her own mark on the coins before entrusting them to a bank or a guild (Fig 5).

Some of the Roman coins, including those that had been slashed and countermarked, were also pierced, and appear to have been strung together to form necklaces, probably because Roman coins were bigger, artistically superior and more exotic than local Indian issues. Roman coins have also occasionally been found beneath the foundations of Hindu and Buddhist shrines where they had been placed as ritualistic offerings by devotees.

The Madras Museum collection
The Government Museum in Egmore, Chennai, popularly known as the Madras Museum (Fig 1), was established by the British East India Company in 1851 with Dr Edward Green Balfour, a renowned surgeon.
and scholar, appointed to organise the museum. It is one of the largest and also one of the oldest museums in South Asia, and has separate departments for archaeology, anthropology, numismatics, botany and zoology. Almost from its inception, the Madras Museum has contained a collection of historic coins. Balfour’s successor, Jesse Mitchell, expanded the numismatics section and today the museum contains a wonderful collection of coins belonging to almost all the dynasties that have ruled the different parts of India during the ancient and medieval periods. The collection also includes foreign coins such as those from the Roman Empire, Venice and China found across the country.

Today the Madras Museum’s is the largest collection of Roman coins found in India, and one of the biggest collections of Roman coins held outside Europe. The museum’s rich Roman collections can be traced to a host of interesting historical events. During the early years of the museum, the British territories in India were divided into large administrative units or provinces, of which the Madras Presidency was one of the most important. The Madras Presidency comprised most parts of the present-day states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, as well as some parts of other states such as Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. For many decades, the Madras Museum was the only museum in the Presidency and, as such, any archaeological or numismatic discovery made in the region was deposited there. As this region yielded the largest number of Roman coins during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the museum’s Roman collections enjoyed a phenomenal growth. Thus, this museum has the unique distinction of housing Roman coins found almost every part of South India, and almost as early as 1874 had produced a catalogue of some of the Roman coins in its collection, the first museum in Asia to attempt this.

The Budinatham Hoard

Earlier this year, the Madras Museum, in collaboration with the Italian Embassy Cultural Centre in New Delhi, hosted a major exhibition of Roman coins and other antiquities found in India, one of the first such exhibitions ever staged in India. Based on extensive library and field research in India, Britain and France, the exhibition included many archaeological finds, most of which were coins never before displayed or published. A catalogue of these exhibits was also published. The highlight of the exhibition was one of the largest hoards of Roman coins ever found in India, now in the collection of Madras Museum. The hoard was discovered in the village of Budinatham, 9km from the small town of Udumalpet in Tamil Nadu.

To supplement the limited information gleaned from the museum records, extensive field explorations were undertaken in and around Budinatham. The research, which included interviewing residents of the area, also revealed that the hoard was found on 11 February 1946. A few elderly inhabitants of the village remember the circumstances of the discovery and one resident, named Marudan, now a robust octogenarian, had, as a teenager, witnessed the discovery. According to Marudan, the hoard was found early in the morning near the Madurai Virar temple, during digging for mud to make bricks for a house being built in the neighbourhood. The coins were found in a mud pot that was accidentally broken at the site. The coins were taken away by the police and later acquired by the museum.

The find-spot of the hoard is of immense historical significance. Budinatham is located right on the ancient highway that linked the port of Muziris on the Malabar Coast with the port of Kaveripattinam on the Coromandel Coast (Fig 4). Roman coins have been found at various sites along the route, with many of these now in the collection of the Madras Museum. Although it is now a tiny village, Budinatham appears to have been a prosperous urban settlement in antiquity, and its importance is reflected in the settlement’s earlier name of Vibhuti Managaram (‘Big city of the sacred ash’), alluding the site’s large size and religious sanctity.

The Budinatham Hoard is one of the few in India where all the coins that were recovered remain available in a single collection for physical examination and study. The hoard consists of 1,407 silver coins, some of them in a fragmented condition. Among them, 368 were minted during the reign of Augustus, while 1039 date to the rule of his successor Tiberius. There are wide variations in the state of wear of the coins, and many in the hoard bear slash-marks and countermarks similar to those on coins found in other sites across South India.

Many museums across India hold small collections of Roman coins found in the surrounding area, but many have never been documented or published, mainly because of lack of local expertise in Roman numismatics. Most of these coins, especially the silver and copper specimens, are extremely fragile. There is therefore an urgent need to catalogue and publish these coins for the benefit of serious scholars and the general public.

Since 2003, the Tamil Nadu Chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has been working to increase awareness about the interesting Rome-India contacts mainly amongst the school and college students. In particular, INTACH organises educational tours to some of the sites yielding Roman coins and the museums housing the coins. Workshops on different aspects of Roman art and numismatics are also conducted. In these workshops, the children are taught to read the Latin legends on Roman coins. Recently, the Italian government has also come forward to help create greater awareness, through exhibitions and publications, about these sites and coins amongst the lay public in India.
A harbour for heritage

Kirsten Amor takes a tour round the treasures in the extraordinary Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar’s capital of Doha

Rising out of the clear blue waters of Doha Harbour, where traditional wooden dhows still ride lazily at anchor, the angular architecture of the Museum of Islamic Art cuts a strikingly modern silhouette (Fig 1). Positioned on its own purpose-built island, the museum is removed from the rest of Doha’s futuristic skyline, a fitting location for a building that, despite its ultra-modern exterior, contains treasures of the Islamic past. The museum represents the union of tradition and heritage with the increasingly fast-paced modern world.

Nowhere is this fusion of old and new more apparent than in the architecture of the Museum of Islamic Art. Designed by the Chinese-American architect I.M. Pei, (who famously designed the controversial glass pyramid at the Louvre), the Museum of Islamic Art blends the stylistic conventions of traditional Islamic architecture with cubist motifs. The museum has achieved iconic status in the Gulf and has become as recognisable as Dubai’s luxury hotel, the Burj al Arab (‘Tower of the Arabs’). The museum also houses a vast collection of Islamic art drawn from across the Muslim world.

The collection is the result of more than two decades of diligent acquisition and painstaking research carried out by the Al Thani royal family, the Qatar Museum Authority, and the museum’s Chief Curator, Sabiha Al Khemir. Containing art and artefacts dating from the beginnings of Islam in the early 7th century, the collection represents every aspect of Islamic art, and reflects the diffuse cultures that created the beautiful and finely crafted objects on display. For many years Qatar has been overshadowed by its Gulf neighbour, the United Arab Emirates, whose grand building projects have captured international attention. However, since it opened to the public in December 2008, the Museum of Islamic Art has typified Qatar’s rapidly growing reputation as a cultural centre and a champion of the history and heritage of the Gulf region.

The museum is arranged over three floors. The ground floor, which houses temporary exhibitions, overlooks the waterfront through floor-to-ceiling windows, and features fountains, geometric ceiling details and atmospheric lighting, which all contribute to the distinctive Arabian style of the museum. The second floor of the museum consists of nine galleries, all of which are based on the theme of ‘The Language of Islamic Art’. The first gallery contains a small collection of artworks gathered from across the Islamic world, which provides an overview of the high levels of craftsmanship attained by Muslim artists over the centuries. Artefacts on display also emphasise the geographical extent of the Islamic world, which encompassed lands as distant as India, western China and Spain. Across this vast swathe of territory, art was adopted by the native cultures that, in turn, added elements of their own distinctive artistic traditions (Fig 2).

Galleries two and three are dedicated to the celebration of calligraphy. Like the craftsmanship found in medieval manuscripts of the Bible, calligraphy inspired by religion was regarded in Islam as a work of art, with many calligraphers dedicating their lives to the pious act of reproducing verses from the Qur’an. The two galleries highlight this dedication...
to the written word, displaying the prolific use of calligraphy on coins, manuscripts, architecture and pottery. From the very beginnings of Islam, calligraphy was adopted not only to proclaim religious devotion, but also as a means of exerting authority and control, with calligraphic inscriptions often on prominent display. The importance of calligraphy was carried with the spread of Islam across Africa, Europe and South Asia. An illuminated Qur’an from Morocco dating to AD 1653–1654 highlights this adoption of Islamic calligraphy across the Muslim world. With its cursive motif, golden illumination and the symmetrical design of the page, the calligraphy both beautifies the religious text for the reader and also emphasises the importance of the Qur’anic message (Fig 3).

The art of calligraphy evolved over time as it was filtered through the different societies that made up the Islamic world. In its earliest Kufic form, calligraphy was angular in style, but in the late 10th century onwards it adopted a more decorative function. From as early as the 6th century, however, style began to overtake substance and calligraphy used in art sacrificed legibility in favour of breathtakingly detailed decoration. Such embellishment came to adorn a wide variety of objects, from home furnishings to jewellery, as well as manuscripts.

A Syrian mosque lamp, dating to AD 1277, showcases this highly stylised, abstract calligraphy, which forms a larger pattern within the geometric motifs featured around the rest of the base. The intricate detailing of the pattern on the lamp is emphasised by the elegant golden detailing of the calligraphy, reinforcing the beauty of not only the message, but also the calligraphic form itself (Fig 4).

Contrary to popular belief, Islam does allow depictions of animals and humans in its art, providing they remain outside of religious contexts. Galleries four and five in the museum emphasise this with a display of household items and jewellery depicting animals and humans in a series of mythological and everyday scenes. Items such as a fountain head in the form of a female deer from Spain (Fig 7), an ivory hunting horn from Italy decorated with zoomorphic motifs (Fig 5), and a silk velvet tapestry from Iran featuring people professing drinks (Fig 6), all testify to the prominent depiction of animals and people in Islamic art outside of religious connotations.

Alongside the popularity of calligraphic designs, complex...
geometric patterns also became popular in Islamic art. Galleries six and seven trace the beginnings of Islamic pattern artwork, often featuring a vegetal pattern of interwoven vines and leaves. This distinctive arabesque geometric pattern evolved over time as artistic designs from far-flung cultures, such as those in India and China, were gradually adopted by Islamic artists.

As Islam spread across Europe, Asia and Africa, the Caliphates and Sultanates which gained control of vast swathes of territory also inherited a vast body of scientific knowledge derived from the ancient Greeks and Persians, as well as the Chinese and Indians. This scientific legacy provided a foundation upon which the scholars of the Islamic world were able to draw, inspiring a series of remarkable advances in the fields of astronomy, medicine, geography, and mathematics. This Islamic scientific tradition is illustrated by the Museum of Islamic Art’s large collection of astrolabes. Originally developed in the Hellenistic period, with the Greek philosopher Hipparchus (c. 190–120 BC) often credited with their invention, astrolabes not only allowed the user to determine the position of various celestial bodies, but also calculate direction and local time – critical factors for Muslims required to pray towards Mecca at set times each day. The intricate artwork and craftsmanship of Islamic astrolabes make them a work of art in their own right, and highlight the importance of the instrument. One such example is the planispheric astrolabe from Iran or Iraq dating to about AD 985, which features highly decorative elements such as a stallion’s head on the base of the needle, and stylised calligraphy around its edge (Fig 8). Many astrolabes in the Museum’s collection originate from countries on the geographical periphery of the Muslim world, such as Spain, indicating the wide reach of Islamic scientific learning. Manuscripts on display also reinforce this view of the advanced nature of Islamic science in comparison to other medieval civilisations. Some of the manuscripts also highlight the experimental nature of Islamic science, with detailed illustrations and long explanations of advanced scientific theories reinforced with practical knowledge and experimental observation. For instance, in the mid 13th century Islamic scientists recognised that a system of veins and arteries carried blood throughout the body, and they attempted to chart pulmonary circulation. The collection also contains navigational treatises, globes and a variety of other instruments required by medieval seafarers, all of which provide evidence of the importance of maritime trade to the Islamic world, whose ships and sailors navigated the sea-lanes of the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean, carrying commodities and their religious ideals to such far-flung lands as the Indonesian spice islands.

The third floor of the museum is devoted to Islamic art. From the 7th century onwards, the new religion was spread over a vast geographical area. By the middle of the 8th century, when the Umayyad Caliphate (661–750) was supplanted by the Abbasids (750–1513), Islam had become the dominant religion across the Middle East, North Africa, much of Western Asia and the Iberian peninsula. The museum therefore features artwork from across this vast region, beginning with galleries 10 and 11, which focus on Egypt and Syria, two of the earliest conquests made by Islamic armies expanding out of the Arabian peninsula following the death of Muhammad in AD 632. These remained crucially important cultural and artistic centres over following centuries. Even with the replacement of the Ayyubid dynasty with Mamluk rule in the middle of the 13th century, artistic development and innovation continued in the lands under their control. Under Mamluk rule crafts such as glassmaking and metalwork were taken to new heights. Artefacts in the museum collection, such as the ‘Cavour Vase’ which was created in Syria during the late 13th century, perfectly highlights the fusion of artistic styles and cultural influences (Fig 10). With cobalt blue enamel, and complex geometric patterns running alongside decorative golden-gilded calligraphy, this rare vase combines the Islamic tradition of geometric patterns and beautifully ornate calligraphy with the regional expertise of glassmaking – a combination of attributes that was highly prized in Syria and Egypt during Mamluk rule. An earthenware bowl from Egypt dating to the 12th century retains the geometric patterns typical of Islamic art, but its lustre finish is reflective of the enamel layer that the Mamluks promoted in crafts production during their rule over Egypt (Fig 11).

The incursions of nomadic tribes...
from Central Asia, most notably the Seljuq Turks, into western Asia and the Middle East from the 11th century served to introduce Oriental design to traditional Islamic art. Gallery 12 of the museum highlights the influence of Chinese design, featuring ceramics imitating the Chinese porcelain tradition with depictions of lotus flowers and dragon motifs. However the Seljuqs also brought with them a new mastery of metalwork and under their rule and artistic patronage highly complex rectangular and polygonal geometric patterns, together with a minimalist use of precious metals, began to feature prominently in Islamic art (Fig 14).

The Timurid dynasty, established by the feared warrior Timur the Lame (1336–1405), which held power over a vast swath of Central Asia and the Middle East, also introduced new and distinctive styles of art and architecture into the Islamic world. In addition to their reputation as fearsome warriors whose campaigns were often associated with slaughter on a vast scale, ruling from their capital city of Samarkand, the Timurids were renowned patrons of the arts, and the artistic signature their craftsmen shows international influences. Gallery 15 of the museum houses an impressive display of tiles, war masks, and helmets that represent the influence of the Timurid dynasty in shaping Islamic art. One of the prized exhibits in the museum is the Timurid Chessboard Garden Carpet, its geometric patterns reminiscent of earlier Islamic traditions, while the use of lotus flowers together with the rich reds and complimentary tones that colour the rug also display qualities found in the folk art designs of Samarqand as well as in Chinese motifs (Fig 12).

The last of the great Islamic empires, that of the Ottomans (1299–1923), also exerted a powerful influence on traditional Islamic art (Fig 13). During the 16th and 17th centuries, Iznik (ancient Nicaea) on the Sea of Marmara became famed across the Islamic world for the quality of its ceramics. Calligraphy too developed under the Ottoman Empire, with the distinctive monogram 'Tughra' becoming the trademark form of the Ottomans.
In the Book of Settlements, one of the Icelandic Sagas, it is written that, ‘Ingolfur was the most renowned of all the settlers, for he came here to an uninhabited land and was the first to settle the country; other settlers would follow his example.’ The tale relates how the Norwegian Viking Ingolfur Arnarson, together with his cousin and blood-brother, Hjorleifur, argued at a feast with the sons of the local chieftain, Earl Atli. In the fight that followed, two of the three sons were struck down and killed, and the blood-brothers determined to seek their fortune overseas on an island far to the west that had been reported by earlier Viking adventurers. After a voyage to confirm that the land did indeed exist, Ingolfur and Hjorleifur returned to Norway and, after making the necessary preparations for their voyage across the cold and dangerous waters of the North Atlantic, they put back to sea relying on the position of the sun and stars, and the movement of migratory birds and the patterns of ocean swells to guide them to the mysterious island lying far to the west. In about the year 870 the ships made landfall on the uninhabited coast of Iceland, initiating 1130 years of proud history.

According to the Sagas, Hjorleifur came ashore near a prominent headland on the south coast, subsequently named Hjorleifshofoi (Hjorleifur’s Headland), and here he had two large halls constructed. However, his killing of Earl Atli’s two sons and refusal to sacrifice to the gods on his departure from Norway had angered the divine powers, and in the spring Hjorleifur was murdered by his Irish slaves, who fled to a group of islands off the southern coast of Iceland before they were tracked down by Ingolfer and killed.

Ingolfur fared considerably better than his unfortunate blood-brother. On first sighting land, he threw his wooden high-seat pillars overboard, vowing to settle wherever they washed ashore. Landing at Ingolshofofi (Ingolfur’s Headland) on the south-east coast of Iceland, Ingolfer then sent two slaves to scour the coast in an effort to find where the pillars had come ashore. After three years of searching, they finally located them in the south-west of the island, at a place from which plumes of steam sent up from the hot springs of Laugaradalur could be seen. As a result of this natural feature, the site where Ingolfur made his permanent settlement on Iceland was named Reykjavik – ‘Bay of Smoke’ (Fig 1).

The settlement of Iceland

Fig 1. Ingolf tager Island i besiddelse, by Johan Peter Raadsig (1806–1882), painted in 1850. The scene depicts Ingolf Arnarson with his wife, Hallveig, and young family, arriving in Reykjavik, overseeing the erecting of his high seat pillars which had determined the place of settlement.

Fig 2. Bronze statue of Ingolfur Arnarson on Arnarholl (Eagle Hill), central Reykjavik. The statue was the work of Icelandic sculptor Einar Jonsson (1874–1954), and was completed in 1907, though had to wait until 1924 before being unveiled. Photo: Michael Nyika.
Snaeland (Snowland). Svararsson is said to have sailed around the island and over-wintered at Húsavík on the north coast before returning to Scandinavia. However, according to one version of the Book of Settlements, as Svararsson sailed for home, one of his slaves named Náttfari slipped away in a boat to make a new life on Iceland, becoming the island’s first settler, creating a home in Náttfaravík. However, the first serious attempt to settle Iceland came with Hrafnna-Flóki Vilgerðarson, who gained his epithet from releasing ravens (hrafnas) as a means of guiding him to land as yet unseen from the deck of his ship. Flóki’s hopes of establishing a permanent settlement on the island were dashed when all his livestock died during the first brutal winter during which ice floes choked the fjords. Giving up his plans of colonisation, Flóki returned to Norway in disgust, renaming the country Island (Iceland).

However, the Vikings were possibly not the first explorers to reach Iceland. According to the Book of Icelanders, men referred to as ‘papar’—almost certainly Christian hermit monks from Ireland or western Scotland—were already inhabiting the land when Ingolfur arrived about 870. No material evidence of these mysterious monks has ever come to light on Iceland, and the lightly constructed, skin covered currach boats used in Ireland and the Western Isles of Scotland at this time are unsuited to long voyages across the fickle waters of the North Atlantic. Nevertheless, possible confirmation that monks were living on the island before the arrival of the first Viking settlers comes from Dicuil, an Irish scholar writing in the Rhineland about 825, who in the geographical work De Mensura Orbis Terrae claimed to have spoken with clerics who had voyaged to an island in the far north where, during the summertime, the light had remained sufficiently bright for them to be able to pick the lice from their garments. If the papar referred to in the Sagas were Christian monks, then they left Iceland as soon as the Vikings began to arrive, understandably possessing no wish to share the land with the maritime raiders whose kinsmen had been wreaking destruction on monasteries and churches across northern Europe ever since the first great raid on Lindisfarne in 793.

All the tales that relate to the initial discovery and settlement of Iceland are contained in two Sagas: the Book of Icelanders (Islandings), written about 1130 by Ari Porgilsspn, and the Book of Settlements (Landnámabók), of which the oldest version (known as Sturlubók, Sturla’s Book) dates to about 1275–80, with a slightly later version (Hauksbók, Haukur’s Book) probably written in the first decade of the 14th century. Given the 250–400 years that elapsed between the time at which the Sagas claim Iceland was settled, and the first written versions of events, there is always going to be some doubt surrounding the factual accuracy of the events recorded. Nevertheless, archaeological evidence provides some support for the basic framework of events set down in the Sagas. Dating of the settlement period of Iceland has also been greatly aided by a layer of tephra that was thrown out of a massive volcanic eruption in the Torfajökull area, about 400km to the east of Reykjavik. This deposit covers most of the island and can be accurately dated to AD 871 (with a possible range of error of two years either side of this date), the point in history when the Sagas indicate the colonisation of Iceland was just beginning. At Reykjavik, and many of the other early settlement sites across Iceland, the tephra layer lies directly beneath the first levels of fertile soil that began to accumulate as deforestation caused wind-blown soil to build up on sites, and the first farmers began to fertilise their fields to make them more productive. Indeed, virtually all signs of human habitation on Iceland appear after the tephra layer of 871. However, part of a building excavated in Kryúsug in southwest Iceland lay below the tephra layer, while an archaeological dig in central Reykjavik in 2001 also uncovered fragments of a turf wall covered by the volcanic debris, clearly marking the beginnings of human activity at the site before 871.

Also found close to the turf wall during the excavations in Reykjavik between 2001–04 were the well preserved...
remains of a large hall measuring 85m in length, with a hearth 1.8m long in the centre around which the inhabitants would have slept (Fig 5). Built after the tephra layer, the hall was probably occupied from 930–1000. Unusually for Iceland, where most Viking Age halls are of simple turf construction, that at Reykjavík also incorporated stones into the base of the walls. When the remains of the hall began to come to light they quickly captured the public imagination. As the Icelandic writer Práinn Bertelsson noted of the excava\tion hall: ‘No country in the world is so rich in ancient remains that one can actually see the home of the first settlers. The remnants of the farmhouse of Ingolfr and Hallveig are a unique archaeological find, not only in Iceland but in the world.’ Although the hall was probably built a generation or two after the initial wave of settlers arrived in Iceland, the remains of the building, together with the nearby fragmentary turf wall predating the 871 tephra layer, were preserved in situ with a museum constructed over the site which the exhibition guidebook notes was designed to act as ‘A shrine of national consciousness’ (Figs 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8).

According to the Sagas, Ingolfr’s decision to create the first settlement at Reykjavík was not to everyone’s liking. In the Book of Settlements, it is noted that one of Ingolfr’s slaves, Karli, expressed dismay at the location, which he felt compared poorly to many of the other regions through which they had travelled in their quest to find the wooden high-seat pillars that had been cast overboard on first sighting Iceland: ‘We have made an ill-fated journey through fine lands, if we are to settle on this remote headland.’ To underscore his disgust with Reykjavík, Karli ran away from his master. Nevertheless, despite Karli’s dismay, there are a number of good reasons for choosing to settle in this particular part of Iceland. Reykjavík possess a large and sheltered bay with a number of low-lying grassy islands on which domesticated animals could have been left to graze in safety, unable to stray yet easily located and quickly herded. Bone assemblages dating to the Viking Age which were excavated from a site in central Reykjavík in 1944 highlight the importance of animals such as pigs, sheep, goats and cattle to the early Viking settlers, with the remains of domesticated animals constituting 55 percent of all bone finds from the early settlement period. There is little doubt that fish and birds must also have contributed a major part to the diet of the Viking settlers, although their smaller bones are less likely to survive intact or be spotted by archaeologists than the larger bones of domesticated animals. Of particular importance was the great auk, a large, flightless bird that, although hunted to extinction in the mid 19th century, was probably found all around Icelandic coasts during the Viking period. Relatively easy to catch, and contributing a good deal of meat, the great auk was a major source of food for the early settlers, and a quarter of all bird bones recovered from Viking Age sites in Reykjavík belong to the great auk.

Perhaps the most valuable animal living on Iceland during the early decades of Viking settlement was the walrus. While these mammals are only rarely seen in Icelandic waters today, at the time of the initial settlement of the island the large creatures – which can measure up to 3.6m (12 feet) in length and weigh as much as two tons – were common along the western coast, and seem to have bred in a number of locations around the island (Fig 13). Place names in and around Reykjavík, such as Rosmúhlavanes (Walrus Peninsula), strongly suggest that the animals lived and bred in the area near the original settlement, while walrus bones and tusks have been unearthed from early habitation layers in the city, including three tusks from the recently excavated 10th-century hall in the centre of Reykjavík. The medieval Icelandic legal code (Grágás) refers to walrus hunting and the eating of walrus meat, while the hides of the animals also provided the strongest and most durable material for the ropes and rigging of Viking ships. Most of all, however, the prominent twin tusks of the walrus were a highly sought after commodity across medieval Europe, where the ivory was fashioned into highly prized works of art.

At the time of Ingolfr’s arrival in about 870, climatic conditions on Iceland appear to have been generally favourable for settlement. Ice cores from Greenland, which allow scientists to calculate the average annual temperatures running back through the centuries, indicate that temperatures in the late 9th century were similar to those of today. However, throughout the following decades temperatures steadily increased and, during the 10th century, Iceland would have been rather warmer than in presently the case. This in turn would lengthen the growing season of crops and provide the domestic animals the settlers had brought with them a better chance of surviving. Pollen recovered from Icelandic peat bogs certainly presents a clear picture of how the settlers rapidly changed the natural environment...
of the island. Within little more than a century of the initial settlement, the woodland of rowan, juniper and especially birch that had covered much of lowland Iceland had gone, the result of grazing by sheep and goats, and burning to clear land, while timber was also required for construction purposes and to make charcoal necessary for making iron tools and weapons.

As well as an improving climate, the settlement of Iceland may also have been partially motivated by the radical transformation that was taking place in the political system of Norway in the second half of the 9th century. In the Icelandic Sagas, the primary reason given for Ingolfur coming to Iceland was to escape the expanding power of King Harald Fairhair (c. 850–933), the first king to unite Norway under single rule. At about this time, many other Norse communities appear to have been looking to leave their ancestral homelands to establish new colonies in Iceland, Ireland, Britain and France.

Although the initial period of settlement in Iceland is regarded by scholars as drawing to an end about 930, the year in which the first Althing (the great parliamentary assembly where Icelanders would gather each year to make legislation and dispense justice) was created, Viking explorers continued to push westwards. In the late 9th or early 10th century, the ship of Gunnbjörn Úlfsson was blown far to the west of Iceland in a storm, running ashore on the coast of another unknown land. Gunnbjörn’s reports of this new land would lead Eric the Red to sail from Iceland in the early 980s and establish a new colony on the west coast of Greenland. It was one of Eric’s sons, Leif Ericson (c. 970–1020), who, also finding himself blown off course, discovered a country even further to the west that he would name ‘Vinland’ on account of the wild grapes that grew there; a land that many scholars assume must refer to the American continent (Fig 11). Up until the middle of the 20th century, there was a good deal of skepticism regarding the tales in the Sagas recounting the presence of Vikings in North America. However, the archaeological discovery and excavation of what was undoubtedly a Viking Age settlement at L’Anse aux Meadows in the north of Newfoundland in the 1960s proved beyond doubt that Nordic mariners had reached the shores of North America. Although L’Anse aux Meadows appears to have been built as a winter camp, and was only inhabited for about 20 years, DNA research published in the American Journal of Physical Anthropology in November last year, indicates that there are Amerindian genes in Icelandic communities that must have been added to the population by at least the 17th century, and which probably date back to Viking exploration of North America in the early 10th century (See Minerva, January/February 2011, p. 5).

Recent research into the DNA of the Icelandic population has also offered up new insights concerning the contribution made by Celtic people to the settlement of Iceland. Although the Sagas are very much the product of Scandinavian culture and their focus is therefore on the deeds of Viking communities in Iceland and elsewhere across the North Atlantic, genetic evidence has nevertheless highlighted the large contribution made by Celtic communities to the Icelandic medieval population. DNA has thus demonstrated that, while roughly 80 percent of men from the early generations who settled Iceland were Nordic in origin, about 50 percent of the women were of Celtic stock, captured from lands in Britain and Ireland by Viking raiders before being sold into slavery and brought to Iceland as concubines of the early colonists. Although this genetic contribution of the Celts to the Icelandic population is seldom mentioned in the Sagas, tales such as that of Melkorka Mýrkjartansdóttir, the beautiful daughter of an Irish king sold into slavery when aged 15 and eventually brought to Iceland by Hóskuldur Dalakollsson, are occasionally preserved in the Sagas (Fig 9).

Ongoing archaeological and genetic research is constantly refining our understanding of the settlement period of Icelandic history. Recent finds also increasingly indicate that there were Vikings, or perhaps the mysterious papar, on Iceland long before 870, predating the tephra layer that has proven invaluable to archaeologists attempting to date the earliest origins of the island’s settlement. Nevertheless, as things currently stand, the science tends to support rather than contradict the Sagas that tell of Vikings first established permanent settlements on Iceland in the latter half of the 9th century. However, regardless of what archaeology uncovers in future, there is little doubt that Ingolfur and Hallveig will forever be regarded as the founders of Icelandic society, establishing themselves at a site that continues to function as the nation’s capital (Fig 10).
The Mushroom museum

Elena Taraskina takes a look around the newly opened ‘Antiquarium’ in the southern Spanish city of Seville, where unique contemporary architecture houses the remains of the ancient past.

In late 1990s, construction of an underground parking lot in Plaza de Encarnacion (Incarnation Square), which covers more than 7000 square metres in the centre of Seville, began to reveal archaeological remains (Fig 6). As the extent and quality of the finds came to light, the construction project was effectively brought to a close and replaced by archaeological excavations that lasted until 2008, when a museum was constructed over the site (Figs 1, 3). According to site director Prof Fernando Amores (Fig 2), the archaeology carried out over the last decade has been of huge importance in allowing scholars to trace the sequence of urban development that has taken place in Seville over the last two millennia.

‘The excavations on this site have been differentiated according to five construction phases,’ explains Prof Amores. The first four phases covered the period of Roman occupation, and the earliest archaeology revealed by the excavations dates to middle of the 1st century AD, when the Roman city Hispalis expanded northwards to the banks of the Guadalquivir River (ancient Baetis). Here were located the port facilities that would prove to be the economic life-blood of the city throughout its long history. Unearthed 7.5–5m below current ground level, the 1st-century Roman city constitutes the first two phases of Seville’s urban layout. A fragment of the city’s wall was also unearthed from these levels and has allowed archaeologists to determine the northern limits of Roman Seville, which were previously unknown. These two Roman phases of urban construction also revealed a major road running east to west, and two interior end streets that provided access to various homes and warehouses. During the 1st century, areas in this part of Seville were devoted to manufacturing, explains Prof Amores: ‘The whole surface of these two phases has not been uncovered, but we do know of industrial facilities like a fish factory, where we discovered four basins, measuring 3 x 3m in area and 2.2m in depth, and with a passage aisle. The rest, in spite of its good state of conservation, remains unexcavated beneath other houses. Despite these establishments being commonplace along the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts of Spain (Hispania), the discovery of this specific factory came as a surprise given its more interior location. This could be explained by the fact that the sea was much closer to Seville during the Roman Empire than it is today. Remains of fish scales and skeletons have enabled us to identify some of the species that were salted in the factory, among them the sardine.’

Further excavations have revealed a workshop with a stock of over 500 lamps bearing motifs depicting horse races, combat scenes, animals, and mythological figures (Fig 7). Another large building in this section of the 1st century Roman city seems to have functioned as a traveller’s inn (hospitium), while another excavated plot of land appears to have been used as a storehouse for grain.

The period running from the beginning of the 2nd century through to the first half of the 4th century makes up the third phase of the site and is characterised by a radical transformation of this part of the Roman city. Numerous houses were constructed at this time, with industrial establishments built among them. It is during this period that a standardised layout emerged among many of the Roman houses on the site, which were limited to a single floor, with the rooms arranged around a colonnaded courtyard (typically with brick columns) and central fountain. The dining room (triclinium), was typically designed to face southwards to take full advantage of the sunlight and the floors were often decorated with mosaics. It is these mosaics that have been used by archaeologists to differentiate the houses built in Roman Seville, with names such as Checkerboard House, Bacchus House, or Ocean House. Mosaics laid in courtyards commonly feature swastika motifs, while those indoors also frequently favour geometrical patterns. In spite of some mosaics at the site being rather unimpressive in style, original central pieces have nevertheless been discovered in the Nymph House (Fig 2), Parrot House, and Medusa House. Also dating to this period was another inn that, on account of its own distinctive mosaic, has been named Dolphins hospitium.

The archaeology dating from the fourth phase of the city, spanning the second half of the 4th century to the first half of the 5th century, appears to...
The last of the phases – running from the second half of the 5th to the early 6th century – saw another physical change as the older house was again abandoned, its building materials plundered, and a new, much larger house, the House of Sigma, built in its place. Its most striking element was the large cenatio, a huge rectangular dining room. On one side of the room was an apse, similar to those present in churches, where a semi-circular bench (the sigma), used for guests during receptions, was located. This house was paved with bricks and appears to have belonged to a person of importance, the finds of fragments of altar tables (mensae), and amphorae that may have contained liturgical wine brought from the Middle East, possibly indicate that the owner was involved in the trade of liturgical Christian items with the diocese. The close proximity of the river and the city’s port would certainly have facilitated such long distance maritime trade links.

The central plaza in which the excavation took place is a relatively recent addition to Seville, dating to the early 19th century during the French occupation. For more than two centuries before this, the site had been occupied by the Convent of Incarnation. The medieval remains from the site highlight the Islamic past of Seville (Ishbiliya, the Arab name of the city) when this part of the city consisted of two streets, a group of 12 houses, and a hostel (fondajo) that were probably built near the beginning of the 11th century. Following the Reconquista of Seville in 1248 by the Castilian king Fernando III (r. 1230–52), this part of the city was reoccupied by Christians (Fig 5) who kept the overall structure of the hostel intact, though the design of the central courtyard gardens was changed, drawing inspiration from the new architectural designs that were used across the city in the palace of the Alcázar. Some of the houses surrounding the hostel also appear to have been abandoned following the Castilian reconquest of the city and were used as animal pens.

Many of the Roman period houses discovered during the excavations at the site were preserved in situ and, together with the House of Noria, a building that dates to the Alhumad period in the 12th–13th century, have been placed on public display. These archaeological remains cover 4500 square metres, and with an additional 600 square metres of exhibition space, form Seville’s brand new Antiquarium. A modern-day architectural marvel, the building has been somewhat unflatteringly nicknamed ‘Setas’ (‘mushrooms’) by the local population (Fig 1). On the sprawling ground floor, the archaeology has been left intact, allowing visitors to gaze at the ancient fabric of Seville (Fig 3). Five mosaics have been maintained in situ, left as they were discovered, while six others have been removed, restored, and put back into their original places. Finally, two others, which lay outside the limits of the floor space of the museum, were removed from their original locations but are on display in the museum.

Although the official opening ceremony of the Antiquarium took place in April, there is still much work to be carried out before the museum is fully complete. There are still 19 mosaics currently undergoing restoration that are yet to be returned to the site, and some of the ancient wall脚ings also still require adequate restoration. Many additional artefacts found at the site need to be placed in the exhibition, while the audiovisual information also requires further development. Nevertheless, in spite of the work that is yet to be completed, Prof Amores believes that the museum has tremendous potential to inform residents and tourists of the ancient origins of Andalusia’s beautiful capital city.
Art exhibitions

Two Arcadian painters

Lindsay Fulcher traces the parallel lives of Nicolas Poussin and Cy Twombly – two brilliant artists divided by three centuries but united by a love of Classical antiquity – whose work is currently on show at the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London

In 1628–29 Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665), who had left his native France and taken up residence in Rome four years earlier, painted one of his most famous works, The Arcadian Shepherds (Fig 1), which depicts two shepherds and a shepherdess, witnessed by the river-god Alpheus, discovering a tomb in the midst of their pastoral paradise. On the tomb are inscribed the mysterious words ‘Et in Arcadia Ego’. One shepherd traces the letters with his finger, trying to decipher the cryptic inscription that warns him not to forget this fundamental truth. The hidden tomb causes them to pause, to end their revels and to ponder the mystery of life. Some 330 years later, the American artist Cy Twombly (1928–2011), who moved to Rome in 1957, created Arcadia, a work in which graffiti is scrawled on to a canvas reminiscent of one of the city’s many marble monuments.

Seeing the work of these two artists juxtaposed in a stunning exhibition at the Dulwich Picture Gallery is fascinating. The resonance between Twombly and Poussin is evident, held together by archetypal symbols of the Classical world – its gods and goddesses, its poetry and drama.

Cy Twombly had worked closely on preparing the exhibition, but sadly the artist never lived to see the end result, dying on 5 July, aged 83, just a week after the opening. It has even been speculated that Twombly had a premonition of his imminent demise, because of the work he had placed in the Mausoleum, the permanent sepulchral section devoted to the founders of the gallery. This is a memento mori, a single black rose, cast in bronze and mounted on stone placed on a velvet-covered box (Fig 11). On the side of the box is a metal plaque that reads ‘That Which I Should Have Done I Did Not Do’.

Although separated by 300 years, both Poussin and Twombly arrived, aged 30, as foreigners in Rome, and stayed on to become the leading painters of their eras. Both married women who enhanced their careers: Poussin the daughter of Flemish sculptor Jacques Dughet; Twombly his patron’s sister Tatiana Franchetti. Both artists explored numerous themes from Classical mythology in their work and both were given the honour of being asked to adorn the Louvre. Poussin went to Paris in 1640 to plan his decorations for the Louvre’s Grand Galerie, although he abandoned the project to return to his beloved Rome. Twombly, on the other hand, completed his commission for the Louvre and his Ceiling was unveiled in the Salon des Bronzes in 2010. Ceiling is a vast azure ground on which float spheres, orbs or shields, and the names of 4th-century Greek sculptors in Greek – another homage to the Classical world.

The Dulwich exhibition’s curator is Nicholas Cullinan, who is also Curator of International Modern Art at Tate Modern, sees the two painters and their lifetimes of work as devoted to studying, revivifying and making newly relevant for their own eras, subjects such as antiquity, ancient history, classical mythology, and the

1. Nicolas Poussin, The Arcadian Shepherds (c.1629) Oil on canvas, 121.6 x 96 x 6 cm. © Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth. Reproduced by permission of Chatsworth Settlement Trustees.


imaginary, idealised realm of Arcadia, to enfold the past within the present. He goes on to note: 'Subject matter and motifs that Twombly and Poussin have shared range from meditations on Arcadia and the pastoral, through to mythological figures such as Achilles, Apollo, Bacchus, Flora, Galatea, Mars, Narcissus, Orpheus, Pan and Venus, to name but a few.' Roland Barthes, one of the best commentators on Twombly's work, has also written: 'A single chain, constantly evoked, leads from the Greek gods to the modern artist, a chain whose links are Ovid and Poussin.'

An early photograph of Twombly, *Cy and Relics* (Fig 2) taken in Rome in 1952 by Robert Rauschenberg, shows him standing beside the giant marble hand of the emperor Constantine in the courtyard of the Palazzo dei Conservatori. Twombly's early and active interest in archaeology is revealed in a letter he wrote to Lesley Cheek, Director of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts who had provided him with a travel scholarship: 'I've just returned from digging at a Roman bath... North Africa is covered with wonderful Roman cities and in this part they are just beginning in the last year to excavate... I have hundreds of sketches to use for paintings.'

While in Rome, Poussin made drawings of ancient Greek and Roman statues, Trajan's Column, the Arch of Titus and the Argentariorium, as well as reliefs in Villa Medici and details from altars and tombs. His interest in archaeological finds is shown in his *Drawings after the Antique: Sacrificial Instruments*. At first Poussin was influenced by Venetian art, especially Titian, and drawn to an Epicurean view of life as his Bacchanalian scenes show 'with their drunken gods, carousing entourages, lecherous satyrs and nymphs with exposed white flesh, all abandoning themselves to intoxication or sleep', as Dr Katharina Schmidt describes them in the exhibition catalogue. Later on, she says, Poussin developed a more philosophical, Stoic and mystical Pythagorean outlook.

When Twombly returned to Rome early in 1953 he studied and sketched ethnographic objects and tribal artefacts in the Museo Nazionale Preistorico Etnografico. At first he was fascinated by ethnographic and Etruscan art, but after a few years his interest had moved on to idealised Roman classicism.

As Twombly has stated: 'White paint is my marble.' A later sculpture, a white painted sepulchral form by Twombly entitled *Pasargade* (Fig 6), made in 1994, is inspired by the marble tomb of Cyrus II (c. 600–530 BC) at Pasargade, near Persepolis in Iran. On the sculpture is scrawled: *Memory of Pasargade To separate the light from silence And the light from calm.*

At times Twombly seems to leave the coolness of marble tombs and to have been sucked into Arcadia and besieged by the gods Pan, Apollo and Bacchus. Twombly's *Pan of 1975* (Fig 4) shows a pair of leaves entwined about one another above the word 'PAN', a blood-red stain and the word in witty brackets '(PANIC)'. In Poussin's *The Triumph of Pan* (Fig 3) the god's cheeks are incarnadine. Living animals were torn apart, blood and wine was drunk, raw flesh was eaten in the secret rites of the maenads or bacchantes. The wildly orgiastic energy of Bacchus/Dionysius inspired the artist to scrawl the god's name in fiery red letters.

As Nicholas Culinnan says: 'Eroticism is a key concern for Twombly and Poussin and both painters have tackled the occasionally doomed aspect of love, at moments poised precariously between pleasure and despair.' Poussin's *Rinaldo and Armida* (Fig 8), set in the First Crusade, depicts the Saracen sorceress Armida falling in love with the Christian knight Rinaldo, resplendent in his golden antique armour, just as she is about to kill him. *Venus and Mercury* (Fig 9) also has two boys wrestling on the ground beside the god and goddess, while the sensual, earthy, goat-footed Eros is overcome by the more spiritual winged Anteros.
who represents ‘reciprocated love’ or ‘love of virtue’.

In Twombly’s Hero and Leandro (To Christopher Marlowe) (Fig 7) the doomed lovers are reduced to dribbling, rippling, flowing streaks of paint – redolent of the drowning lovers. Twombly’s drawing of 1978, Venus + Adonis (Fig 5), inspired by Book X of Ovid’s Metamorphosis, features a fleshy pink heart or perhaps buttocks and a graffited phallus. In Apollo and the Muses on Parnassus, painted by Poussin in 1630–32, nine poets gather round the god on the mountain outside Delphi by the Castalian spring, the gushing font of poetic inspiration. While Twombly’s Apollo of 1975 shows the god’s name forcefully inscribed in deep blue oil stick, with a list of his different guises and attributes, such as laurel, palm tree, swan, grasshopper, underneath.

It was the light of the region that inspired both Poussin and Twombly, together with their deep love of the campagna, the countryside. Twombly’s attraction to the rustic and the pastoral is always apparent. ‘Landscape is one of my favourite things in the world’ he said. In The Nurture of Jupiter (Fig 10) Poussin paints a land literally flowing with milk and honey as the infant god is suckled by a goat while a nymph fetches honeycomb for him from a wild bees’ nest in a nearby tree.

Nicholas Cullinan sums up his thoughts on the work of the two artists when he said: ‘Both Twombly and Poussin have been thought to be “difficult” painters who share a certain grandeur and austerity, albeit ones articulated in wildly different modes.’ Cy Twombly acknowledged his undying admiration for Poussin when he declared: ‘I’d like to have been Poussin, if I’d had a choice, in another time.’

‘Twombly and Poussin: Arcadian Painters’ is on show at Dulwich Picture Gallery until 25 September. For details contact 020 8693 5254; www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk.

Lindsay Fulcher is a member of AICA (The International Circle of Art Critics)
Trevor Austin explains the vital role played by metal detectorists in contributing to our knowledge of the past

At this time of year in Britain, it is not unusual to see a lone figure weaving through the bales of straw in a roadside field, following a determined pattern and swinging a metal detector back and forth. Even on wind-swept beaches in the depths of winter, resolute individuals can be seen steadily walking while waving their electronic wands before them. These metal detector users – commonly referred to as ‘detectorists’ – come from all walks of life. Whether builders, teachers or serving in the police or armed forces, they all share the desire to explore the past through the discovery of metal objects that, over the centuries, have been accidentally lost or intentionally buried in the ground. Detectors are sometimes labeled ‘treasure hunters’, and it is true that, over recent years, they have discovered many spectacular finds that are deserving of the term ‘treasure’. However, detectorists themselves would not use the phrase to describe their activities, and chancing upon finds of precious artefacts it is an exceedingly rare occurrence. Anyone taking up the hobby with the belief that they will uncover such items will quickly become disillusioned with metal detecting. Nevertheless, recent high-profile discoveries by detectorists have brought metal detecting into the media spotlight. For example, the Anglo-Saxon Staffordshire Hoard, found in July 2009, was purchased jointly by the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery for £3.285 million (Fig 3); the Frome Hoard, consisting of more than 52,000 bronze and silver Roman coins and unearthed in April 2010, was acquired by the Museum of Somerset for £320,250; the Roman cavalry parade-ground helmet discovered at Crosby Garrett, Cumbria, in May 2010, sold at auction for more than £2.281 million (Fig 2).

Other important finds have been unearthed by detectorists over recent decades, adding immensely to our understanding of the skills and craftsmanship possessed by past societies, and also capturing media interest and the public imagination. The Middleham Jewel, discovered in 1985 by Ted Seaton while detecting in the grounds of Middleham Castle, is a truly beautiful object, and anyone who has seen this medieval sapphire pendant cannot help but be impressed by the outstanding workmanship (Fig 4). The collection of 10th-century coins and artefacts revealed in the Vale of York in 2007 by father and son David and Andrew Whelan was the largest Viking hoard to be discovered in Britain since 1840. These and other spectacular finds were discovered by dedicated detectorists who have been practising their hobby for many decades, quietly unearthing objects and reporting what they find (with the permission of the landowner) to their local museum or Finds Liaison Officer. Perhaps the best example of the care and respect for artefacts shown by detectorists was in discovery of the Hoxne Hoard, unearthed in 1992 (Fig 5). Asked by the farmer to locate a lost hammer in a field, detectorist Eric Lawes instead began to find gold and silver coins, jewellery and spoons. (For a review of the entire hoard, see Minerva July/August, 2010, pp. 30–33.) Rather than removing any further artefacts from the soil, Mr Lawes immediately contacted the police and local council, and the following day the site was carefully excavated by professional archaeologists who were able to record what...
proved to be the largest collection of Late Roman silver and gold ever discovered in Britain, deliberately buried as Roman rule came to an end. Last year alone over 90,000 objects were reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) by members of the English and Welsh public, almost all of them metal detectorists. Each year the Portable Antiquities & Treasure Report brings thousands of important artefacts to academic and public attention (see this issue of Minerva, pp. 8–10, for the 2008 report). It is precisely this dedication to their hobby that characterises so many detectorists, most of whom will never discover valuable or historically important objects. However, they are rewarded by the enjoyment that accompanies the discovery of small metallic objects randomly lost throughout the countryside, each of which has the potential to offer the finder a fascinating window on the past.

Fig 3. A tiny fraction of the artefacts that comprise the Staffordshire Hoard. Found by detectorist Terry Herbert in June 2009, the Anglo-Saxon hoard provided new insights into the skills and artistic sophistication of craftsmen of the 7th/8th centuries AD.

Fig 4. The Middleham Jewel, with lozenge-shaped gold pendant and 10-carat sapphire. An inscription on the pendant indicates it was a charm against epilepsy. Found by detectorist Ted Seaton in September 1985, it has been acquired by the Yorkshire Museum in York for £2.5 million.

Fig 5. A display featuring part of the Hoxne Hoard. Found by Eric Lawes in 1992, the nearly 200 gold and silver objects, together with 15,234 coins was placed in the ground in the early 5th century AD.

Fig 6. Recently ploughed fields offer detectorists the best opportunity for discovering ancient artefacts, while searching such sites rarely conflicts with archaeological investigations.

Fig 7. The principal components of a modern metal detector.

There are many types of metal detectors on the market, with prices ranging from around £100 to well over £1000. Although almost any hobby machine will find buried coins and artefacts, the way they present the information to the user varies considerably. Today, even entry-level machines allow the user to adjust settings to discriminate between different metals. More expensive metal detectors allow the customisation of as many as a dozen different parameters, and while it takes considerable practice and skill to operate some of the top-of-the-range machines, once the detectorists has mastered them, they present a wealth of information in both audio and visual format. Rather than running out and buying the first metal detector that comes to hand, then heading to the nearest plot of land, would-be detectorists are advised to join a metal detecting club – preferably one affiliated to the National Council for Metal Detecting (NCMD). These organisations provide interested people with the opportunity to learn about the different machines currently in use, introduce them to the methods and techniques expected of responsible metal detectorists, and allow them to gain familiarity with some of the artefacts commonly found in their local area.
A metal detector is not a magic wand. The user has to understand how the machine operates and what information it is presenting. Metal detectors work by transmitting a signal that creates an electrical current in the transmit coil, which in turn generates a magnetic field. This causes electrical currents to flow in metal targets (called eddy currents). These then create a magnetic field that differs from the transmitted field. The receive coil detects the magnetic field generated by the eddy currents and amplifies it, extracting the signal that comes from the target from signals from other environmental magnetic sources, such as earth's magnetic field. The machine then translates this information into the familiar bleeping sound.

A detailed map showing the area to be searched and for the plotting of finds is essential, and if finances allow, a GPS proves a highly accurate alternative. You will also need a collection of plastic sealable finds packets, a pen and a pair of stout waterproof boots (obviously without metal toe caps). Most landowners will be willing to allow you to detect on their property, but you must obtain permission before venturing on to any land.

Recently ploughed land is the most rewarding landscape for detectorists to search (Fig 6). Cleared of crops, newly ploughed fields are easy to investigate and also provide fresh targets following each turn of the plough. However it is ploughing that accounts for much of the damage and corrosion visible on many coins and metal artefacts. Once removed from a sealed, anaerobic environment, metallic items soon begin to degrade as they are eaten away by chemical reactions. Detectorists who discover items brought close to the surface by the actions of the plough are therefore rescuing them from further degradation, or even complete destruction. The artefacts found in the Hoxne and Staffordshire hoards would not have survived in the wonderful condition in which they can now be seen had they come within reach of the plough. In the case of Staffordshire Hoard, damage is visible on some pieces, including the beautiful sword hilt fitting (Fig 10). Had the hoard remained undiscovered for even one more year, much of the magnificent metalwork would very probably have been smashed and ripped apart when the field next came under the plough.

The detectorist, Terry Herbert, therefore saved one of the most important Anglo-Saxon archaeological finds since the excavation of the Sutton Hoo ship in 1939. The Bronze Age Ringlemere Cup, unearthed by Cliff Bradshaw in 2001, is another prime example of an extremely rare ancient object recently damaged by the plough, and clearly demonstrates the value of metal-detecting as a recovery method that can save precious objects from the soil and make a hugely important contribution to our understanding of the past (Fig 8).

The best time to search fields is just after the harvest, although the stubble of cereal and oilseed rape can prove difficult to walk over and dig beneath. Another good time to investigate land is just before the new crop is drilled, when the earth has been freshly prepared, although this will depend to some extent on the type of crop being grown. Detecting on beaches is also popular (Fig 9), although the finds are generally from more recent periods of history and are often hidden among a profusion of ring pulls and bottle tops.

Woodlands are also a good environment to explore with a metal detector (Fig 1), although to avoid insects and undergrowth the wintertime is the best season to investigate these sites. Rather than just walking haphazardly across a field, decide how best to cover the search area. Some detectorists walk in parallel lines, while others prefer to first detect the corners and then cross the centre diagonally. While...
under the banner of ‘STOP’ (Stop professional and amateur archaeologists campaign orchestrated by some pro-
ill-informed anti-metal detecting in 1982, primarily to combat the
Detecting (NCMD) was formed
years, these pieces of personal orna-
ring found by detectorists over the
arguments. Judging by the number of
fingers or been thrown away during
requests from members of the pub-
relationship with
even more frequently, rings that have slipped off
fingers or been thrown away during
arguments. Judging by the number of
rings found by detectorists over the
years, these pieces of personal orna-
mentation have been lost in similar cir-
cumstances since prehistory (Fig 11).

Taking Our Past). From the outset, the
NCMD has been committed to
promoting best practice, encouraging
members to practice metal detecting in a responsible manner, and protecting
their rights to freely pursue the
hobby with landowners permission. The
NCMD also provides members with free public liability insurance, which all local authorities and many
landowners insist upon. The organisa-
tion has its own code of conduct, and
members found to be in breach of its
code will be expelled. Since its for-
mation, the NCMD has seen many
changes, but none so important as the
Treasure Act of 1996 and the accom-
ppanying Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) which began to come into effect the following year. The NCMD played
a significant part in the negotiations with the then Department for National
Heritage for both these programmes, but there are still those in the archaeo-
logical world who either fear or dislike
metal detecting. This is a great shame,
as the system in England and Wales is
envied by many other European coun-
tries whose portable antiquities laws are far more draconian and conse-
quently less efficient in protecting their
cultural heritage.

The NCMD continues to maintain that there is nothing to fear from responsible metal detectorists, whose hobby is crucial to the protection of historical artefacts. Metal detect-
ing is usually conducted in locations where archaeologists would have
no initial interest, and where metal
objects are under the greatest threat of
being destroyed by modern farming
methods.

In reality, detectorists and archaeol-
ogists have much in common, sharing
a love of history and a fascination with
objects from the past. While archae-
ologists remove these from sealed
stratified layers, most finds made by
metal detectorists are plucked from
the plough soil, and are generally already
out of context and in danger of immi-
nent destruction. Slowly but surely,
most archaeologists have begun to
acknowledge that responsible metal
detecting has greatly complemented
archaeology and has provided a key
service in helping us better under-
standing the past (Figs 12, 13).

Trevor Austin is the General
Secretary of the National Council
for Metal Detecting.

Minerva September/October 2011
Conflict and Cooperation

Annika Kuhn examines recent developments in the debate over the return of cultural property.

At the end of June, hundreds of Inca ceramics, textiles and bones were returned from Yale University’s Peabody Museum to their site of origin in the famous Inca city of Machu Picchu high in the Peruvian Andes (Fig 1). The artefacts arrived just in time for the celebration of the centenary of the discovery of Machu Picchu by Yale scholar Hiram Bingham (1875–1956), who excavated the site between 1911 and 1915 and removed many of his archaeological finds to Yale, where they have been kept ever since. At the same time as the celebrations, Peru played host to the ‘Second Conference on International Cooperation for the Protection and Repatriation of Cultural Heritage’, which took place in Lima from 4–5 July. It was the follow-up conference to last year’s meeting in Cairo, where delegates from 26 countries – which included Egypt, Greece, Italy, Peru, Mexico, Nigeria and China – had formed an alliance to tackle the combat against the illicit trafficking of cultural property and unite their efforts in demanding the return of their national treasures (see Minerva, July/August issue 2010, pp. 8–11). At the Cairo Conference, eight countries drew up individual ‘wish lists’ that set out those antiquities whose repatriation they considered highest priority. More than a year on, the delegates in Peru, representing 21 countries, met to take stock of what has been achieved so far.

In fact, the successful return of the Machu Picchu collection, which topped Peru’s ‘wish list’, marked the end of a long restitution dispute between Peru and Yale that had been negotiated at the highest political level. After a Memorandum of Understanding had failed in 2007, Peru filed a lawsuit against the university before a US federal court to claim the objects by legal means. It simultaneously launched a public repatriation campaign that culminated in protest marches in Lima and Casco and a request for support by Peruvian President Alan Garcia to his US counterpart, Barack Obama. The political pressure from the Peruvian government certainly accelerated the negotiations, and last November Yale finally agreed to return approximately 4000 objects to Peru by 2012.

A similarly forceful language of cultural diplomacy has recently been employed by the Turkish government concerning the Sphinx of Hattusha. This 3500-year-old artwork, part of a city gate of the Hittite capital of Hattusha (modern Boğazköy), was discovered in 1907 by a German-led archaeological team (Fig 2). Together with a second identical sphinx, the fragmentary sculpture was transferred to Berlin in 1915 for restoration, but while one of the pair of sphinxes was returned to Turkey just a few years later, the other remained in the Pergamon Museum. The arrangement may have been based on a joint agreement (for example, in terms of a division of the finds), but no documents survived that clarify the reason for the retention of the sphinx in Berlin. For decades Turkey has officially demanded its return, but it was not until this year that a new foray was launched by the Turkish Culture Minister Ertuğrul Gunay, who, while on election campaign in February, issued an ultimatum: the sphinx was to be returned by June, otherwise Turkey would cut cultural ties with Germany and withdraw the license for the German archaeological team excavating at Hattusha. It was clear that this was not an empty threat: German archaeologists had just lost their excavation permit for the ancient site of Aizanoi in the west of Turkey. For Prof Hermann Parzinger, the President of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, which administers the Pergamon Museum, this push by Turkey smacked of ‘gunboat diplomacy’, but he and the German government signalled their willingness to discuss the case. The negotiations in May resulted in a settlement of the conflict – in favour of Turkey. The sphinx was returned at the end of July and will be on public display in a regional museum near Hattusha from 28 November onwards. This date marks the 25th anniversary of Hattusha as a World Heritage Site. Strictly speaking, the sphinx was not ‘returned’ but ‘handed over’. In its official statement, the German government emphasised that both parties regard the decision as a ‘goodwill gesture’ and a ‘singular case, incomparable to other cases’.

The German government was obviously treading carefully to ensure that the case of the Hattusha sphinx was treated as a unique situation, in the
light of another repatriation claim that has come to epitomise the entire restitution issue. The bust of Nefertiti, which currently resides in the Neues Museum, Berlin, tops Egypt’s ‘Most Wanted’ list of antiquities currently held in museums overseas. Other iconic artworks from antiquity, such as the Rosetta Stone (in the British Museum) and the statue of Hemiunu (in the Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum, Hildesheim) are also on the list (Fig 3). Dr Zahi Hawass, the Egyptian Minister for Antiquities and initiator of the 2010 Cairo Conference, renewed his insistent demands for the bust of Nefertiti on 24 January, receiving an immediate response from Germany: Nefertiti will stay in Berlin. Nothing could better illustrate the complexity and volatility of the restitution issue than the events following Dr Hawass’ quasi-official demand. Just one day later massed protests against the Mubarak regime broke out across the country, and the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, as well as numerous other museums and archaeological sites, was subjected to looting and the destruction of ancient artefacts (see Minerva March/April 2011, pp. 4–5). The events have confirmed the fears of many experts who question whether cultural objects should be displayed in museums in their ‘countries of origin’ as long as their protection and security cannot be guaranteed. In this regard, the Neues Museum may be considered a ‘shelter’ for the bust of Nefertiti. Although such a famous sculpture would certainly not have found its way from the Egyptian Museum on to the illegal art market, the bust could well have fallen prey to collateral damage or even deliberate destruction during the looting spree. The demolition of the Buddha statues in the Bamiyan Valley by the Taliban in 2001 was a clear demonstration of the vulnerability of iconic cultural objects in times of political upheaval and conflict.

The adverse impact of a rapidly changing political and military situation on a country’s cultural heritage has alarmed the international community. With the eruption of revolutions across the Arab world, the possibility of the repatriation of claimed artefacts to countries like Libya or Syria now appears to lie only in the distant future. Instead, the safeguarding of the...
countries’ cultural heritage in situ has become the key priority with reports suggesting that the Libyan World Heritage Site of Ghadames has already been subjected to shelling, while the wonderfully preserved Roman city of Leptis Magna constitutes a potential military target (Fig 4). The revolutionary events did not discourage Zahi Hawass in his push for restitutions, and he forcibly announced that he would send an official request for the Nefertiti bust later in the year, along with alleged new evidence that the bust had been illegally exported from Egypt in 1913. Yet Dr Hawass’ close links to the old regime led to his dismissal from office in July, removing one of the most vocal campaigners from the repatriation debate. Although he was soon reinstated in a temporary capacity, his ability to influence Egyptian and international policy appears to have been weakened.

Demonstrations, presidential and ministerial interventions, media campaigns and threats to end cultural cooperation – why all this tenuous tug-of-war over cases like the Nefertiti bust and the Hattusha sphinx? International legal instruments that regulate the return of cultural objects do exist, above all the UNESCO 1970 ‘Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property’, and the complementary UNIDROIT 1995 ‘Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects’. As the names indicate, these conventions concern cultural property that has been stolen or illicitly trafficked. However, they are not retroactive, and as such they only apply to cases after the date of their ratification. The statue of the Venus of Morgantina, for example, was returned from the Getty Museum this year when it was discovered that it had been looted from Italy in the 1980s (Fig 5). Most of the big controversies, however, pertain to objects that were removed from their countries of origin in the 19th or early 20th centuries and, by the standards of the time, were not necessarily acquired or exported by illegal means. While many ancient artefacts were taken as prizes following colonial wars and punitive expeditions, other ancient treasures were removed with the agreement of the host country on the principle of the division of finds (known as ‘partage’), or sometimes presented to foreign governments and dignitaries as gifts. That said, countries seeking the recovery of these antiquities insist that the artefacts have been ‘stolen’ by referring to the right of a country to its heritage. The delegates at the Peru Conference have announced that they will set about reviewing the 1970 Convention and developing efficient legislative instruments accordingly.

It would appear, however, that a settlement of such controversies can only be reached by alternative means – mediation, conciliation and goodwill – rather than by quarrelling over the often unsolvable issue of the legality of ownership. In fact, a special intergovernmental committee was established by UNESCO in 1978 to assist such bilateral negotiations with regard to demands that are not regulated by the international treaties. Two of the three pending cases before the committee have recently been resolved: the aforementioned Sphinx of Hattusha and the Makonde Mask (returned from Switzerland to Tanzania in 2010). The third case, the notorious dispute over the Parthenon Marbles on display in the British Museum, has been pending since 1984, and the recovery of these masterpieces of Classical Athenian art tops Greece’s ‘wish list’ (Fig 6, 10). With Greece on the brink of bankruptcy, Andrew George, the Liberal Democrat MP for St Ives in Cornwall, re-opened the repatriation debate surrounding the Marbles in June, calling for their return as an economic and symbolic bailout by the UK: ‘As Greece hands over the flame to England, to start the countdown to the Olympics, perhaps it is the ideal time for Britain to consider giving something back in return.’ The Prime Minister’s laconic response that Britain does not intend...
to ‘lose its marbles’ is indicative of how the Parthenon sculptures – which the British Museum regards as belonging to the universal heritage of humanity – are often perceived as belonging as much to British national heritage as to that of the Greeks. In the same vein, a recent advert in a German local newspaper alluded to the topical immigration and integration debate in Germany by picturing the bust of Nefertiti and stating: ‘Berlin is Berlin when its most beautiful inhabitant has an immigrant background (Fig 7).’ It is therefore argued that the history of artworks such as the Parthenon Marbles and the bust of Nefertiti has not ceased with their dissociation from their places of origin, but continues into the present, shaping the histories of other countries. They constitute, as it were, a shared cultural heritage.

On the other hand, the past year has also seen indications of a willingness for cross-border cultural co-operation, with a growing number of countries eager to find mutually acceptable solutions. Austria, for example, is considering a temporary loan of the feathered headdress of the Aztec ruler Moctezuma (r. 1502–20) (Fig 8), for many years sought by Mexico as an iconic symbol of its national identity (and which was one of the artefacts on the Cairo ‘wish list’ last year), in exchange for a golden carriage of emperor Maximilian I (r. 1864–67). Experts are now examining the feasibility of a secure transport of the head-dress. The British Museum also made a seven-month loan to Iran of the famous Cyrus Cylinder, the so-called first declaration of human rights, and gave a replica of the cylinder to the National Museum of Tehran after the closure of the exhibition in April (see Minerva, January/February 2011, pp. 10–11) (Fig 9). France has reached agreement with South Korea to return the 300 volumes of royal manuscripts that were removed from the country by French troops in 1866 for an initial five-year loan, which may become permanent, ending a decade-long diplomatic controversy. All the manuscripts will be digitised before they leave France, and thus become universally accessible. Yale University’s role in discovering and preserving the cultural heritage of Machu Picchu will be acknowledged by Peru through the establishment of a joint International Conservation Centre, in which Yale’s research of the artefacts that are being returned to Peru will continue. Turkey, too, has announced intensified cultural cooperation with Germany after the return of the sphinx, particularly with regard to the forthcoming Pergamon exhibition in Berlin.

Is this a new chapter in cultural policies? The current dynamics, both in combating the illicit trade in cultural property and in the debate on the return of antiquities, cannot be ignored. The conferences at Cairo in 2010 and Lima this July have certainly contributed to the considerable political and public attention the topic has gained over the last year. It is remarkable how many decade-long irritants have been eliminated within this short period, with the outcome frequently being a win-win compromise rather than full restitution. But the tone of the debate has become harsher, and more impulsive and resolute action has been taken, while countries like ‘Turkey and Peru, now with the strong backing of a ‘repatriation alliance’, feel emboldened to push rigorously forward with additional claims, awakening fears of future mass demands. In his opening speech at the conference, Peruvian President Alan Garcia tackled the next item on Peru’s ‘wish list’, 100 ancient Paracas textiles held in the World Culture Museum at Gothenburg, Sweden, and announced that Peru will pursue legal steps to recover them.

The Lima declaration, issued at the end of the conference and signed by 16 countries, emphasises the determination of the attendees to strengthen their joint efforts in preserving and recovering their cultural heritage. Nations may suspend cultural relations with countries that, in their view, are in the possession of illegally acquired antiquities. At the same time it is acknowledged that resolutions to disputes can be reached in a spirit of goodwill and mutual respect. The next repatriation conference will be hosted by Bolivia in April 2012, with representatives from more than 100 national authorities. It is to be hoped that this broader scale of national participation will enhance a constructive and balanced dialogue on the issue of returning antiquities.
Eugenics in Egyptology

James Beresford reports on a new exhibition at the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, which explores how eugenics came to play an influential role in the science and politics of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

On 17 January, 1911, the great polymath Sir Francis Galton died in Haslemere, Surrey, aged 88. The theories of eugenics and interest in the classification of human racial features which were put forward by this pioneering explorer, anthropologist, inventor and geographer continue to generate controversy. As part of the events and exhibitions marking the centenary of his death, Dr Debbie Challis has organised 'Typecast', a small exhibition at the Petrie Museum, University College London, which focuses on the relationship between Galton and the eminent Egyptologist Flinders Petrie (1853–1942), after whom the museum, with its collection of 80,000 ancient Egyptian artefacts, is named.

As a young man Galton had travelled widely, taking a year-long tour through Egypt, Sudan, Syria and Palestine in 1845–46. Four years later he journeyed across south-west Africa, a feat which earned him the Royal Geographical Society Gold Medal, and led him to publish the expedition in *Tropical South Africa* in 1852. Galton also wrote the best-selling *The Art of Travel* in 1855, which provided practical advice for 'explorers, emigrants, missionaries or soldiers' in remote regions.

Galton was a cousin of Charles Darwin and, like his eminent relative, devoted much of his work to evolutionary theory. Although Galton's studies started with investigations of inheritance patterns in plants, he moved on to research the same traits in humans, taking careful measurements of various physical features and collecting information about the genealogical makeup of communities. Galton's research into the uniqueness and hereditary nature of fingerprints proved ground-breaking and paved the way for the scientific system of classification that remains to this day. More controversial, however, was his belief that careful measurements of parts of the human body, especially the size and shape of the skull, could provide scientific information relating to intelligence in different races and social groups. In 1869 Galton published the book *Hereditary Genius*, and in 1883 he coined the term 'eugenics' in his *Inquiries into Human Faculty*, in which he set out the science behind the idea of selective breeding of humans to allow 'the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable'.

It was also in *Inquiries into Human Faculty* that Galton first made reference to the work of Flinders Petrie, and correspondence between the two men would develop over
Eugenics in Egyptology

'I found stiff, unsized, common white of the Libyan Desert, published in 1837: Visit to the Great Oasis. Making them was described by George 19th century, and the technique used to. Squeezes had been used to obtain copies of the reliefs during the journey upriver. It shows clear traces of variations in the relief. The paper to be best adapted for the purpose. It should be well dampened and, when applied to sculpture still retaining its colour, not to injure the latter, care should be taken that the side of the paper placed on the figures be dry – that it be not the side which has been sponged. The paper, when applied to the sculpture, should be evenly patted with a napkin folded rather stiffly…[or] with the fingers. Five minutes is quite sufficient time to make a cast of this description: when taken off the wall, it should be laid on the ground or sand to dry (pp. 9–10).

One of the squeezes Petrie made in 1887 was of a depiction on the north wall of the Great Hall at Karnak, showing a captive from the powerful Mitanni state taken prisoner during one of the many military campaigns of Ramses II (r. c. 1279–1212 BC) (Fig 4). Seven years later Petrie published a photograph of the squeeze as part of his 1891–92 excavation report for his archaeological work carried out at Amarna, ancient capital of the pharaoh Akhenaten. It was there that Petrie reached the conclusion that the strange physical appearance of Akhenaten, with his thin, elongated facial features (Fig 7), reflected his Mitanni ancestry through his mother Queen Tiye (or Thyi) who, Petrie argued, had been a princess from the powerful state on the north-eastern borders of Egypt before becoming Great Royal Wife of Amenhotep III (r. c. 1386–1349). Pointing out the facial similarities between Akhenaten, Tiye and the captive depicted at Karnak, Petrie wrote: 'In a figure of a man from Mitanni from the town of Ianua conquered by Ramesses II, we see exactly the same physiognomy as in Thyi and Akhenaten. The precise parts which have just been noted as being characteristic of mother and son are all seen here in this man, who might be almost supposed to have been drawn from Akhenaten himself. The source of this peculiar face is the Mitannian blood of his mother Thyi.'

However, even Petrie soon came to doubt such a conclusion. Rather than depicting a prisoner from Mitanni, Petrie would change his mind and come to regard the squeeze from Karnak as portraying a man from the Canaanite city of Yenoam. While clay tablets from Amarna covered with Akkadian cuneiform – the so-called ‘Amarna letters’ – document diplomatic marriage alliances between Amenhotep III and close female relatives of King Tushratta of Mitanni, it now appears that Queen Tiye was not among these women. Instead, she is now thought to have come from the Upper Egyptian city of Akhmim and may even have been of Nubian descent. As such, Petrie’s theories that Akhenaten’s racial origins were derived from western Asia rather than Egypt are highly tenuous.

During his trip to Egypt in...
1887, Petrie also carried out excavations at Hawara in the Fayyum, where he unearthed numerous portrait panels covering the faces of Roman period mummies, some of which can still be seen on display in the Petrie Museum. According to the novelist and Egyptologist Amelia Edwards (1831–92), who was also a supporter of Galton's theories of eugenics, some of the mummy portraits looked 'distinctly Jewish in type.' This racial attribution would later lead to the Nazi scientist Prof Hans Günther referring to some of the mummy portraits in *The Racial Elements of European History* (1927) and *Rassenkunde des Jüdischen Volkes* (1930) to support his argument that the Jewish population in Europe was too large; ideas that were eagerly promoted in Germany during the Third Reich and would eventually lead to the horrors of the Holocaust. (For more on Hans Günther and the racial theories that led to Nazi sponsored expeditions around the world during the 1930s, see Minerva, May/June 2011, pp. 46–49.)

In addition to the Graeco-Roman mummy portraits, Petrie also excavated many ancient bodies while digging at Hawara, and their skulls in particular attracted the attention of those interested in eugenics. Petrie sent more than 40 skulls to the renowned German doctor and pathologist Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902) whose studies of cranio-metry contradicted the increasingly prevalent theories of the Aryan peoples and European racial supremacy. Long after the death of Galton's death in 1911, Petrie continued to promote eugenics. A prominent member of the Anti-Socialist Union, in 1914 he also became president of the British Constitution Association, which was fiercely opposed to the welfare state on the grounds that it would nurture the more undesirable elements of the British population. Eugenics was also central to Petrie's book *Janus in Modern Life*, published in 1907, which warned of dire consequences from the increasing numbers of children from the lowest classes in British life who were now surviving into adulthood as a result of government child welfare programmes: 'England produces over 300,000 excess of births over deaths yearly, and perhaps a tenth more might be added to that by care of infant life. But would that tenth be of the best stock or the worst? We must agree that it would be of the lower, or lowest type of careless, thriftless, dirty, and incapable families that the increase of population adds to. We must add that the lessening of birth-rate will be of the highest value for the modern world, and 'the society we live in still subscribes, if unconsciously, to many eugenic ideas and pseudo-scientific assumptions about inheritance.'

Petrie's interest in using measurements of skulls to determine racial attribution continued throughout his career, and even in the 1930s he was sending skulls excavated in Palestine back to London. His relationship with craniometry even extended beyond his death in Jerusalem in July 1942; on his instructions, his head was removed and dispatched to the Royal College of Surgeons in London for preservation and study. However, with heavy fighting taking place in North Africa and across the Mediterranean, the head was misplaced while in transit. Although many of Petrie's views are distasteful to modern sensibilities, he was echoing sentiments widely held across British and Western society, with influential writers such as George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells, as well as prominent politicians like Theodore Roosevelt and Winston Churchill were interested in theories of positive eugenics. However, it was just six months before Petrie's death in 1942 that the Wannsee Conference, chaired by high ranking Nazi SS-Gruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, had met in the Berlin suburb to decide how best to implement what Hitler had called 'the final solution to the Jewish question.' The subsequent Holocaust would lead to eugenics becoming utterly discredited. Nevertheless, as Debbie Challiss makes clear in the exhibition, the legacy of Galton and Petrie can still be felt in the modern world, and 'the society we live in still subscribes, if unconsciously, to many eugenic ideas and pseudo-scientific assumptions about inheritance.'
Perhaps best loved for his performance as the hapless Baldrick in the historical comedy series, *Blackadder*, Tony Robinson is also a successful author and highly thought of within political circles too, having served on the Labour Party’s National Executive Committee.

It was as a child, growing up in post-war Hackney, that he first developed a sense of the importance of history. ‘It’s a very good idea for parents to talk to their kids about their own life history and the experiences they had when young. It’s not just interesting or funny, but it gives children a perspective of history from very early in their lives. What really got me interested in history was when my father and mother told me stories about their lives during World War II. They were both ordinary working class people who, up until that time, hadn’t moved very far at all. And then suddenly, like so many other tens of thousands of people at that time, they were given a new mobility and presented with new possibilities, mixing with types of people they’d never have had the opportunity to meet before the War,’ he says.

Tony’s father’s first job had been at Stepney Workhouse, and tales of his experiences provided valuable material for Tony’s first foray into acting, playing one of the boys in Fagin’s gang during the original production of the musical *Oliver!* ‘I had very clear mental images of what conditions were like in such places,’ he remembers. ‘I had what you might call “residual reality”, because through my father I’d often thought about the workhouses of the past. One afternoon the boy playing the Artful Dodger bunked off school and they put me on in his place. My father dropped his work and came over to see me and I remember very clearly thinking that there was my dad who used to work in real workhouses when he was young, and now here was I recreating one of them while he sits in the audience watching. So even before I was a teenager, I had a clear sense of history, and its strange continuities and ironies.

‘The television work I’ve done has also helped me develop an understanding of how fluid history is, and how our perspectives are constantly changing. Characters from history who we were once taught were traitors might now be thought of as national heroes; or someone we’ve always considered the epitome of beauty in reality probably only had three teeth and a gummy smile! I really enjoy such contradictions and in my programmes I love to deconstruct history and provide people with new ways of looking at the past.’

Since 1994, Tony has been inextricably linked with the hugely popular archaeological series, *Time Team*, where a group of archaeologists, supported by historians, attempt to investigate a site in as thorough and scientific a manner as possible, over the course of just three days. A concept developed by Tim Taylor, the programme is fronted by Tony, whose infectious enthusiasm has helped deliver consistently high audience viewing figures, both in Britain and around the world. Despite the popular appeal of the programme, Tony and the team take the archaeology extremely seriously, and it has been noted that the number of publications of the sites that they’ve dug exceeds the combined total of all the excavations published by archaeology departments in British universities.

‘On *Time Team* we’ve always felt a strong responsibility to make sure the archaeology is conducted to the highest level possible. Rather than just cutting to the chase and featuring the finds from the excavations, we’ve always tried to portray what best practice in archaeology really is, and why we choose where to put our trenches; why we’re so careful to record finds on the dig; how we try and maintain a good relationship with the local community. Obviously we try and do all this in as entertaining a manner as possible, but the archaeology is nevertheless all there.

‘Archaeology isn’t treasure hunting. When I was a kid living near Epping Forest in north London, to most of us bird watching involved climbing trees and collecting eggs. Children today know that such a pastime is very destructive and by taking eggs they’re undermining the environment. In the same way, once a Roman pin or fragment of Anglo-Saxon sword has been taken from out of the ground, then it’s gone forever. More importantly, the narrative surrounding the artefact has also been lost.’

‘This emphasis on the stories and lives that lie
For 30 years, Tony Robinson has been a familiar face on television. Minerva caught up with the presenter of Channel 4’s popular and long-running archaeology series Time Team during a break in filming at one of their excavations taking place in an old industrial quarter of Swansea.

Tony Robinson is best known for his work on Time Team, which investigates British archaeological sites, as well as landmark buildings such as cathedrals and various other television programmes, as well as holding positions such as honorary president of the Young Archaeologists’ Club of the Council for British Archaeology, has brought him numerous awards, and he has been presented with a number of honorary Masters and Doctoral degrees from some of Britain’s top universities. In 2008, Tony was also presented with the James Joyce Award by the Literary and Historical Society of University College Dublin.

Despited all this, Tony considers himself first and foremost a storyteller. ‘The programmes I most enjoy making are the ones where we tell a really good story. There was one Time Team programme we made on the Scottish island of Mull where we located a tiny chapel dating to the 7th century, the very earliest period of Christianity in that part of Britain. We also excavated some human bones from underneath the altar, and they almost certainly belonged to the person who had created the chapel and who would later have been sanctified – so we found the bones of a saint. That was a tremendously exciting few days.

‘A lot of viewers ask how it is that we always seem to find the exciting finds on the last day of our digs, speculating that it could be some sort of television conceit. But it isn’t. On day one, we spend most of our time looking at what is already known of the site, and laying out what we’re aspiring to do, and identifying where the archaeology is likely to be located. On day two, we get down on top of the archaeology, and it’s only on day three that we really get into the archaeology and are able to properly interrogate it. So it makes sense that we tend not to find the best stuff until near the end of each programme. Fortunately, that happens to make for good TV!’

Tony came to national prominence in 1983 for his role in the British historical comedy Blackadder, which ran until 1989 and incorporated several key periods of British history beginning at the end of the Middle Ages, before sweeping through the Elizabethan period, the Regency era and World War I. Tony famously played the character Baldrick, long-suffering servant to the comically vicious Edmund Blackadder. ‘I’ve been very lucky to have played warm or unthreatening characters on screen, which seems to make people feel very easy about approaching me and sharing their experiences, or telling me their theories about history and archaeology. It’s obviously not the case all the time, but the fact that most people have got that perception about me is very heart warming. It’s an enormous privilege for a communicator.’

The co-writer of Blackadder was Richard Curtis, who would go on to pen the scripts for the hit films Four Weddings and a Funeral (1995) and Notting Hill (1999). Curtis also played an important role in developing Tony’s career. ‘While I’d left school at 16 with virtually no qualifications, all of the writers and actors I worked alongside were extremely well educated, and most had been to Oxford or Cambridge. However, when I suddenly developed a television profile I was asked by a number of publishers to write books, but I was really nervous about doing so: I simply didn’t see myself as a writer – how could I be, I’d never been to university! However, at that time in my life, back in the late 1980s, my passion was my young children, and it seemed appropriate for me to look to children’s books. I therefore asked Richard Curtis to help me, and we wrote several books together. It was an enormous privilege for me, and I feel that working with Dick gave me the equivalent of a university education from a man who has become Britain’s most successful screenwriter of the last 50 years.’

Together with Richard Curtis and Tim Haws, Tony has authored a series of books for children, most focused around Classical Greek mythology. He also created a series of television programmes featuring tales from the Old Testament, and a loose retelling of the legend of Robin Hood, Maid Marian and her Merry Men, in which he also appeared as the Sheriff of Nottingham. With a career that has covered a diverse range of historical periods, it is perhaps unsurprising that Tony insists there is no one single historical era that particularly fascinates him. ‘To me, it doesn’t really matter what period we’re focused on, or what artefacts are discovered, just as long as there’s a great story behind them. However, I would love to dig a Nabatean site. There are some very good examples in countries like Israel that haven’t yet been carefully excavated and which I’d love to have a crack at. The one thing I’ve been very keen on doing for a long time is World Time Team. It’s difficult to know if it will ever happen – after all, it would need very big budgets, and there would be problems getting permission to dig at some of the famous and carefully managed sites we’d like to work at – so I still don’t know for certain if it will happen. However, I have a very strong belief that it’s a programme that would work profoundly well, for British viewers as well as a global audience.’
Sotheby’s sale

Fig 1. Marble sarcophagus panel depicting the rape of Persephone, c. AD 190–200. H. 99cm; L. 177.2cm. Sold for $1,874,500. Lot 45.

Fig 2. Roman marble sarcophagus panel depicting the deceased gentleman with the nine muses, Mercury and Minerva, c. AD 130–170. H. 58.4cm; L. 216cm. Sold for $434,500. Lot 46.

Fig 3. Roman marble portrait head of a Greek poet, probably Hesiod, c. 1st century AD. H. 33cm. Sold for $1,706,500. Lot 42.

Fig 4. Roman marble figure of Melpomene, c. 1st century AD. H. 70.5cm. Sold for $242,500. Lot 47.

Fig 5. Roman bronze portrait of a bearded man, early 2nd century AD. H. 28cm. Sold for $872,500. Lot 51.

Fig 6. Attic red-figure hydria attributed to the Marsyas Painter, c. 375–350 BC. H. 31.75cm. Sold for $512,500. Lot 15.

Summer antiquities sales

Jerome M. Eisenberg reports on the spiralling prices set in New York during the sales held in early June

Sotheby’s

Continuing the excitement generated by last December’s record-breaking sales, the New York auction houses again produced admirable results. The Sotheby’s sale on 8 June featured several important Roman works of art, including a marble sarcophagus panel, c. AD 190–200, illustrating the rape of Persephone (Fig 1). With an illustrious 18th century provenance, including the collection of the 1st Marquess of Lansdowne, it deserved its estimate of $400,000–600,000, in spite of its missing its right end and having three heads restored in the later 18th century. This obviously did not deter two avid bidders and it ultimately sold for a surprising $1,874,500 (£1,140,901) to an anonymous bidder. (All prices in this report include the buyer’s premium.)

A second Roman marble sarcophagus panel, c. AD 130–170, depicting the deceased man with the nine muses, flanked by Mercury and Minerva (Fig 2), had been mounted on the wall of the ballroom at Lansdowne House along with the other sarcophagus. The muses sarcophagus panel, well restored by B. Cavaceppi in the 1760s, sold for a mere £4000 when it appeared at Sotheby’s, London, in December 1972. It last appeared at Christie’s, New York, in December 1998 selling for a more realistic $140,000. Now optimistically estimated at $300,000–500,000, it brought $434,500.

A striking Roman marble portrait head of a Greek poet, probably Hesiod, but known as the Pseudo-Seneca (Fig 3), c. 1st century AD, from a Norwegian collection, acquired in Rome between 1954 and 1958, was estimated at $300,000–500,000. Again, the estimate meant little to a dealer, obviously bidding for a client, who eventually won it for a stunning $1,706,500.

A Roman marble figure of Melpomene, the muse of tragedy (Fig 4), c. 1st century AD, is one of only two known Roman copies of a Hellenistic sculpture of which only a small fragment remains. When sold at Christie’s New York in December 2007 for $85,000 its earliest provenance record was the collection of Sir Richard...
Careful research by Sotheby’s Florent Heintz traced it back to a sketch made in the 1540s by Frans Floris, where it is shown without the restorations, including the head and lower half of the tragic mask. Now estimated at $150,000–250,000, it was sold for $242,500, an excellent return for the 2007 investor. A fine life-size Roman bronze portrait of a bearded man from the Clarence Day collection (Fig 5), early 2nd century AD, first published and exhibited in 1982, and provided with an estimate of $250,000–350,000, brought an unexpected $872,500 from a European collector.

The Sotheby’s sale included a collection of Greek vases, marbles and bronzes from the collection of the artists Sideo Fromboloti and Nora Speyer, all acquired between the mid-1960s and the late 1970s, the most important of which was the only Attic red-figure stamnos attributed to the Marsyas Painter, c. 375–350 BC, featuring Hephaistos riding an ithyphallic mule, while a battle scene is depicted on the reverse (Fig 7). Estimated at only $50,000–80,000, it sold for $350,500 to an American collector. From the same collection, and originally acquired in 1976, was an Attic black-figure panel amphora, by the Painter of Berlin 1686, c. 550 BC, with two very closely packed departure scenes (Fig 8). Conservatively estimated at $40,000–60,000, it brought $254,500. Both vases were exhibited in ‘Greek Vase-Painting in Midwestern Collections’ in 1979–80.

Seven other Classical lots were hammered down for $100,000 or more, including a fine Attic red-figure stamnos by the Phiale Painter (Fig 9), c. 440 BC, with Dionysos flanked by two maenads, provided with an estimate of $70,000–100,000, which went on to realise $194,500.

A superb Egyptian hardwood mummy mask with inlaid eyes (Fig 11), 21st–26th dynasty (c. 1075–600 BC), acquired by a European collector prior to 1981, was estimated between $70,000–90,000, it still brought $266,500 in spite of the missing legs. The sale of just 98 lots realised $9,393,750 (£6,890,256) with an unusually high percentage of both 89.8 percent of the lots sold by number (just 10 lots unsold) and 93.9 percent sold by value, with 18 of the lots reaching a hammer price of $100,000 or more. Most of the top ten lots were acquired by anonymous bidders on the telephone. The percentage sold by value would have been even higher except that the cover piece, a superb Roman marble head of the Diadumenos, estimated at $500,00–700,000, was unsold.

Frederick von Schleinitz, was sold at Sotheby’s, New York, in December 1982 for $29,700 and was bought in at $42,500 when offered at Sotheby’s, New York, in December 1992. Now estimated at only $40,000–60,000, it rose to an unexplainable $278,500. A finely engraved Egyptian peridotite figure of the Horus falcon was once owned by Elie Borowski prior to 1978 and also appeared in the famous Swiss exhibition ‘Geschenk des Nils’ in that year before becoming the property of an American collector (Fig 10). Difficult to date, it could belong to the New Kingdom or as late as the end of the Ptolemaic period. Estimated at $70,000–90,000, it still brought $266,500 in spite of the missing legs.

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Christie’s presents Hope and Wilton House sculptures

The top three lots in the Christie’s New York sale of 9 June were all Roman marble sculptures. A fine headless Roman archaistic marble Isis (Fig 13), 1st–2nd century AD, had an illustrious and well published history, having belonged to Sir William Hamilton (1730–1803), who sold it at Christie’s, London, in March 1801. It was acquired by Thomas Hope (1769–1831) for £21 and remained in his family until 1917. It was sold at Sotheby’s, New York, in June 2004 for $209,600. Now estimated at $500,000–800,000, it sold for $962,500 to an overseas client.

Three powerful over life-size Roman marble torsos of Hercules (Fig 14), dating to the 1st–2nd century AD, from a California collection, acquired in the 1970s, estimated at $500,000–800,000, realised $602,500. The catalogue cover piece, an exquisite over-life-size Roman marble head of Apollo (Fig 15), from the famed Wilton House collection of the 8th Earl of Pembroke (1654–1732) was sold at Christie’s London in July 1961 for the astonishingly low price of £367. The estimate of $200,000–300,000 was no deterrent to two collectors, one of whom won the head for $902,500.

An over-life-size Roman marble head of Venus (Fig 16), dating to the 1st–2nd century AD, from the collection of Captain Spencer Churchill, last appeared at Christie’s, London, in December 1985. It brought $278,500 from a European collector, well over the conservative estimate of $100,000–150,000.

A Roman marble portrait bust of Hadrian (Fig 17), c. AD 117–138, from the collection of Captain Spencer Churchill, last appeared at Christie’s, London, in December 1985. It brought $278,500 from a European collector, well over the conservative estimate of $80,000–120,000. An over-life-size Roman marble head of Hercules (Fig 18), 2nd century AD, estimated at $200,000–300,000, sold for $194,500. A Roman marble portrait head of Plato (Fig 19), 3rd century AD, from a Swiss collection of the 1960s–70s, went for $158,500, well over its $70,000–90,000 estimate. There are very few relatively large ancient statuettes fashioned from gemstones, but one of them is a Roman chrome coloured chalcedony headless figure of an enthroned Mars or an emperor, Date late 1st–2nd century AD. H. 10.4cm. Sold for $434,500. Lot 167.

A shallow Roman silver bowl (Fig 21), 1st century BC–1st century AD, W. 15.9cm. Sold for $218,500. Lot 143.

A Greek Phrygian bronze helmet with the face-guard modelled in the form of a bearded face (Fig 22), c. 350–300 BC. H. 41.9cm. Sold for...
Christie’s sale

cloisonné (Fig 23), c. 3rd–2nd century BC, was accompanied by sections of the scabbard similar ornamented. It sold for $302,500, also to the buyer of the Apollo head, just above its estimate of $200,000–300,000. A lively Greek polychrome terracotta lion head spout from the cornice of a Doric temple (Fig 26), dating to the late 5th century BC, and coming from a late 19th–early 20th century French collection, was estimated at $60,000–80,000, but brought $242,500. Other antiquities reaching a hammer price of $100,000 or more included a small Greek marble statue of Aphrodite, a small Roman bronze head of Hercules, and a Roman bronze fulcrum terminal in the form of a mule head.

A pleasing Egyptian granite head of an official (Fig 25), late 18th dynasty, estimated at $80,000–120,000, was unsold when offered at Christie’s New York in December 2001. Now ambitiously estimated at $300,000–500,000, it actually succeeded in reaching a bid of $422,500 from a European collector. A finely modelled Egyptian bronze kneeling pharaoh (Fig 24), 30th–31st dynasty, acquired by the Lacour collection, Paris, in the first half of the 20th century, estimate $80,000–120,000, was won for $158,500. An Egyptian bronze cat (Fig 27), 22nd–26th dynasty, last sold at Sotheby’s, New York, in June 1999 for $68,500, now reached $146,500. An unusual Syrian copper vessel in the form of a hedgehog (Fig 28), of the late Uruk Period (c. 3000 BC), acquired by a Swiss collector in the 1920s–30s, was given what appeared to be an unusually high estimate of $150,000–250,000, yet it brought a remarkably high winning bid of $386,500 from another European collector. A Western Asiatic electrum jug (Fig 29), c. early 2nd millennium BC, estimated at $200,000–300,000, sold to a New York collector for the same price of $386,500. A striking Mesopotamian steatite panther (Fig 30), c. late 4th–early 3rd millennium, from the Conti collection, Lausanne, in the 1960s, estimate $150,000–250,000, realised $182,500. The Christie’s sale also produced a significant number of serious bidders, with 22 of the 141 lots sold bringing a hammer price of $100,000 or more. Eight of the top ten lots were bought by overseas collectors, all bidding by telephone. The sale of 202 lots totalled $10,353,125, with just 70 percent sold by number of lots and only 73 percent by value, because of the large number of pieces with ambitious estimates, including the most important piece, a Roman marble group of Pan and Hermaphrodite from the famed de Clercq collection.

Jerome M. Eisenberg PhD is the founder and director of Royal-Athena Galleries based in New York. He founded Minerva in 1990 and was Editor-in-Chief for the following 20 years.
Arms and Armour of the Imperial Roman Soldier: From Marius to Commodus 112 BC – AD 192
Raffaele D’Amato and Graham Sumner
Frontline Books, 2009
320 pp, colour and b&w illus
Hardback, £35.00

The study of ancient armies is of interest to a wide range of people, from scholars to war-gamers: while the former tend to write detailed histories after probing literary sources, the latter generally want reconstructions of ancient soldiers and equipment. However, there is also a middle way, as is presented in this book. This involves integrating literature and depictions that survive from the ancient world, together with archaeological finds. A great deal of speculation is also required, as much of the equipment featured on reliefs and monuments has never been found. It is a fundamental assertion of this book that the representations cut into ancient reliefs by artists and craftsmen should be taken seriously, even through artistic conventions and the skills of the artists must be taken into account. A book with such a remit must be provided with many illustrations, and happily this one is, and a wealth of material evidence covering the range of Roman arms and armour from 112 BC – AD 192 is presented. It is refreshing to see colour pictures rather than drawings, and a particular strength of the book is that the range of images allows the reader to examine primary evidence and make decisions for themselves. Reconstructed images of ‘typical’ soldiers are also presented, and relevant background history is also supplied. D’Amato and Sumner cover the entire range of Roman military equipment from across all the different regions of Rome’s far-flung Empire. Although there were attempts at standardising Roman weaponary and uniforms, kit was never standardised in the modern sense and soldiers’ tombstones clearly reflect personal taste, while the authors also suggest that weapons and armour two or three centuries old could remain in service. Soldiers recruited from various regions also mixed together, their weapons as diverse as their cultures. Roman military strategy also changed over time to counter new threats and enemies. What later art and cinema often popularly perceives to be a ‘typical’ Roman soldier was therefore only a small part of the Roman reality.

Although it rarely survives in archaeological contexts, leather would have been used for less expensive armour as it was cheaper than metal. It could also be formed and pressed into a variety of shapes making it more comfortable to wear than metal. Hardened boiled leather was used for armour even during the English Civil War (1642–1651) where the material proved effective in warding off cuts from slashing weapons, although it was rather less effective against thrusts from pointed weapons, which is why Roman soldiers wearing leather would also carry a shield. As the authors note, the fact that more leather armour does not survive to the present is not surprising because of problems of preservation. Organic materials are only preserved in very exceptional environments (such as in a desert or in cold and wet environments) while metal items are more likely to survive. However, just because metal armour survives does not mean that debate ends. Perhaps one of the most contentious areas involves what some term to be ‘parade’ armour. According to some scholars, richly decorated armour would not have been used for battle and instead served ceremonial functions. However, the authors suggest that the concept of parade armour did not exist in the ancient world. They cite the example that as recently as the Napoleonic Wars soldiers wore their most ornate armour into battle. Arrian in his Arts Tactica (AD 136) describes sports performed by cavalry (Hippika Gymnasia). Such displays would boost the morale and fighting spirit of the Roman soldiers involved, and would also impress attending dignitaries and serve to further cow conquered peoples. Arrian states that, during the martial displays, only the most distinguished soldiers would wear a helmet with a mask. However, would these masked helmets have only been used for sport and special occasions? The authors suggest not and argue that richly decorated armour would have presented a powerful image on the battlefield.

In short, this book is a mine of information relating to Roman military equipment. It is demanding of readers in that there is a vast amount of information that is presented and is far from a general introduction. On the other hand, to anyone who has a serious interest in the Roman Army, this book is essential reading. Murray Eiland

Roman Warships
Michael Pitassi
The Boydell Press
324pp, 25 colour plates, b&w photographs, diagrams and sketches throughout
Hardback, £50

Over recent years there has been increasing interest from both scholars and general readers in Graeco-Roman maritime history, and especially in ancient naval warfare. Michael Pitassi’s Roman Warships is therefore released at the same time as John Grainger’s Hellenistic and Roman Naval Warfare 336 BC–31 BC, and the two books cover many of the same topics. However, while Grainger’s work provides a straight narrative history of naval conflict from Alexander the Great to the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium, Pitassi has provided a text, liberally sprinkled with illustrations, that focuses completely on the ships that allowed Rome to create a vast empire, with control of the sea-lanes a principal requirement that allowed Roman domination of the Mediterranean region.

The first half of Roman Warships, entitled ‘Interpretation’, provides readers with a thorough understanding of the evidence – the literature, iconography and archaeology – available to scholars, and some of the problems in interpreting these sources. Pitassi does a good job in explaining the ‘shell-first’ method of ship construction used to build vessels throughout antiquity, and, with the aid of diagrams, also makes the highly problematic nature of the oar systems and rowing arrangements of ancient warships relatively easy to follow. Once readers have been acquainted with how the closely grouped sets of rowers propelled the different types of ancient galleys through the water, Chapter Three then proceeds to go through the various fittings found on Roman warships, beginning with the ram which was designed to punch holes into the hulls of enemy vessels or angled to ride up over their bulwarks. After examining those ship fittings associated with military applications, such as fighting towers and artillery pieces that dominated the decks of Roman warships, Pitassi turns to the equipment required to keep vessels afloat, and topics such as the nature of the sails and the rigging, anchors, pumps and rudders are all briefly dealt with.

The second half of the book
Paul Wright makes clear in the introduction that this book is intended to function as a resource for students and researchers, as well as for those with a more general interest in the ancient history of this part of North Africa. As such, *Snakes, Sands and Silphium* covers a wide variety of topics, using translated excerpts drawn from a diverse array of ancient texts. However, unlike most sourcebooks, which tend to group topics together, Paul Wright favours a chronological approach working from the 8th century BC through to the 6th century AD. Works by authors such as Homer and Pindar also take the reader back into the legends of the Bronze Age and the period of Minoan, Mycenean and Phoenician sea traders, together with the wanderings of the great heroes of classical myth. While such a layout makes it difficult for readers hoping to gain information about specific topics (and the lack of a general index also makes it difficult to find references scattered throughout 1300 years of Greek and Roman literature), Paul Wright makes it clear from the beginning that ‘Readers are invited to dip in and enjoy whatever may take their fancy’.

While Libya was the name given by most ancient authors to the entire continent of Africa, the extracts presented in *Snakes, Sands and Silphium* are focused on the land that lies within the borders of modern Libya, a land that, for much of antiquity, lay between Egypt to the east and the territory of the Carthagians in the west. Despite the large size of this region, few ancient authors ever actually visited Libya and, rather than eyewitness accounts, most of the writers rely on second-hand travel- lers tales, or other uncorroborated reports, which often forces us to treat much of the literature relating to this part of the ancient world with a great deal of scepticism.

Accounts of large snakes in Libya, many of which also had strange and dangerous powers, abound throughout the ancient literature, and it is clear why they feature in the title of the book. For example, writing in the late 1st century AD, Lucan recounts how blood from the severed head of the serpent-haired gorgon Medusa, who Perseus had slain in Libya, had seeped into the ground giving rise to a multitude of deadly serpents (p. 114). Compiling his famous work, *Natural History*, at the same time, Pliny the Elder also describes the basilisk snake which could reputedly kill with a mere glance: ‘It kills shrubs, burns green stalks and cracks rocks not only by touching them but also just by breathing on them’ (p. 124).

Given the fear of the serpents of Libya, it is therefore little wonder that Greek and Roman writers frequently refer to treatments for snakebite, with the medical digest of Celsus, *De medicina*, setting out a number of remedies that were apparently used to treat anyone unfortunate enough to have been bitten by a serpent from Africa, with a cupping-glass the preferred means of drawing out the venom, though if such a vessel is not to hand, then a man should then be summoned to suck out the wound (though Celsus warns that should the venom enter an ulcer on the gums or in the mouth then the man performing the sucking may also experience death).

Many of the extracts included in the book are concerned with trade. The foodstuffs and commodities obtainable from Libya motivated Phoenician and Greek merchants to explore and colonise the region, while during the Roman period products such as olive oil, slaves, gemstones and ivory were exported all round the Empire, while goods were also imported into the cities of Libya that prospered under Roman control.

One of the most sought-after of plants native to Libya was the silphion, the juice of which was called laser, leading the Roman's to name the plant laserwort. Described by Pliny as consisting of a very thick root, with a stalk that looked similar to that of fen- nel, and leaves resembling those of celer, it was thought to have numerous medicinal applications. It provided relief against chillblains, hard skin and corns on the feet, and for coughs and sore throats, toothache or tonsillitis. ‘It renders the poisons of weapons and snakes powerless when drunk’ while, in combination with substances such as ‘mouse dung and vinegar, it restores mangy hair’ (pp. 130–31).

Since February, Libya has been in the spotlight as part of the ‘Arab Spring’ as rebels opposed to the regime of Muammar Gaddafi have taken control of much of the eastern half of the country. The excerpts in this timely book demonstrate how this region of the Mediterranean has contributed greatly to the richness of ancient literature, history and myth.

*James Beresford*